

## Home-town boy: Mark 6.1-13

*Pilgrims in Nazareth, in a church that has grown around the traditional site of Mary's home in Nazareth. Many thanks to Anna for today's TFTD.*



My son hasn't left home yet (at 14 he is a bit young) but I have been told what to expect when he does leave and then comes back again. He won't be the same boy that left, he will pick up mannerisms, and habits and norms and values from wherever he goes and whoever he spends time with or lives with.

I remember a bit of this when I left home, and went off to university. I changed. I mostly remember it because my mum and sister still remind me and take the mick out of me for it. When I came back everything was "random" it was my new favourite word. "Oh that's so random", "oh mum you're so random", they thought it was hilarious and still do. But it was just something that everyone at uni was saying and I had adapted to them.

I am told to expect it to be hard when relationships like that change because it's hard when the little person that you helped walk, changed nappies and who learnt from you goes off and does their own thing.

Now imagine that that child comes back with a bunch of followers, not just friends but followers, and he goes into the church and teaches from the pulpit with real wisdom and authority and even does some miracles. That was what it was like for the people in Jesus' home town.

This boy that they had seen every day, laughing and playing with his friends; they had seen him fall over and cry; they might have told him off, or bossed him around; They might have read him stories and hugged him on their knee. That boy is now telling them that he is special, he is the son of God, he can do miracles and can forgive sins.

Who does he think he is?! That isn't coming home with a new vocabulary or even bringing a term's worth of dirty washing, what he is saying offends them.

Mark says that Jesus was amazed by their unbelief but I wonder if he was also sad. These people he had known all his life, that he had looked up to, he had leant from and trusted didn't understand him any more. He was different, why couldn't they see that and accept it?

Jesus said "Prophets are not without honour, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house." (4) I wonder if it is only prophets? Here Jesus was coming back to his family and home town changed and proclaiming the good news, yes he was the good news, but I know many people who have found faith and then gone back to tell their families the good news and had the same reaction.

But there is also the scenario the other way round, the child leaves with faith but in adapting to their new exciting lives it gets forgotten and the family are without honour in their child's life; their opinions don't count anymore.

It's hard when relationships like that change.

This passage actually doesn't give us any answers to this problem. Jesus "could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief" (vs 5&6) but that isn't the end of the story. We know Mary and his brothers visited Jesus, Mary was with him at his death and Jesus' brother James becomes a leader in the early church.

Somewhere along the lines at least some of these relationships were renewed, they did come to have faith in Jesus, and others who are not mentioned might have also. The changes were accepted and new family dynamics (be they weird family dynamics including the son of God!) were found. It is hard when relationships change, but people, grow and change, nothing in life is static that is something true for Jesus, his hometown and family as well as us and our families today.

This passage today shows me that Jesus understands families, he understands both the joys and pain families can cause; he understands how you can feel both close and far

away from loved ones at the same time. Jesus understands your family — however unique you think it is, however wonderful or messed up you think it is, Jesus loves it and is part of it. So when you do the hard work of praying for your family —standing in the gap for them — he is listening, loving and understanding.

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