

## Interdependence Day

*Mark 6:1-13*

Our passage today contains two stories. I will reflect on the spiritual and theological perspective of these two stories, and our guest, Dr. Ron Williams, will then reflect on some historical and cultural aspects of the stories as we consider together what it means to be a **community** of interdependent people. To begin, let us begin in prayer together: e pule kākou: “Dear God of our elders, God of our kūpuna, help us to listen to one another in love, acknowledging that we are interdependent on one another in community. Amene.”

Our first verses talk about how Jesus struggled to be taken seriously in his own hometown. At first, the locals marveled at Jesus’ mana’o, but soon, they began asking one another, “Who does this guy think he is? We all knew him as a kid stealing mangoes from our trees—who does he think he is prophesying to us about the Kingdom of God? Jesus responds by confirming what they are saying, “Prophets are not without honor except in their hometown.” What can this mean? It is not a quote from the Hebrew Scripture, this is just a saying that everybody knew. But what is the kauna?

Throughout scripture there is caution to all of us to not reject “other people” because they are different. Our first verses here are this wisdom turned inside out. Just because someone among you is thinking differently, do not reject them. As human beings in community, there is often a strong peer pressure to be like everyone else. Here Jesus reminds us that it is human nature to want everyone to be the same, but that wisdom and humanity can exist in others not like us, and can also arise from people within our own ‘ohana. Love everyone Jesus always says, even those not like you, and those who have moved away and no longer think like you.

When we grow up with someone, it is difficult to imagine THEM going beyond US in wisdom or knowledge. Everyone still thinks of Jesus as that kid of Mary and not a prophet of God. But here, it is interesting to watch Jesus respond in a very human way.

I want to stop a moment and ask us how we would have reacted in the same situation. The town-folk here just take Jesus for granted. How have you felt when people have taken you for granted? It hurts, doesn’t it? So this is a call to see one another as we really are, to really see and listen to one another as if what we say matters. In the last two weeks we have discussed situations where Jesus really **saw** and listened to the people around him—and it healed them to be seen and listened to. Now this passage presents the opposite situation—where the locals cannot see Jesus as a prophet because he is too familiar. And what is the result of these people in Jesus’ hometown not listening to him? With less trust, there are fewer healings. Not being able to listen to Jesus, and with no trust and faith, the people of Jesus’ hometown reject the healing aloha that Jesus brings. They can’t see him clearly, and by that failure of sight, they are blind.

So where does that leave us today? In a moment we will present some recordings of Mama Alice Aki to Baby Alice. These kūpuna are right here in our midst. They have miracles to tell, but we must be willing to stop and listen. All of our lives are filled with miracles—unless we take each other for granted.

This is the kauna of our second story today: Jesus invites us all to listen to one another in love, to respect and treat one another in aloha as we go out into the world. We have prophets among us, just as in Jesus' day. If we listen, we will be surprised how we will be healed. Amen.