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| **The Lessons Appointed for Use on the** | http://www.lectionarypage.net/Art/Newshield.gif |
| Sunday closest to July 6 |
| Proper 9 Year B RCL |

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| ***Track 1*** |  |  |
| 2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10 Psalm 48 2 Corinthians 12:2-10 Mark 6:1-13 |  |  |

**The Collect**

O God, you have taught us to keep all your commandments by loving you and our neighbor: Grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit, that we may be devoted to you with our whole heart, and united to one another with pure affection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.*Amen.*

**Old Testament**

**2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10**

All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, and said, “Look, we are your bone and flesh. For some time, while Saul was king over us, it was you who led out Israel and brought it in. The Lord said to you: It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you who shall be ruler over Israel.” So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

David occupied the stronghold, and named it the city of David. David built the city all around from the Millo inwards. And David became greater and greater, for the Lord, the God of hosts, was with him.

**Psalm 48**

1 Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised; \*  
in the city of our God is his holy hill.

2 Beautiful and lofty, the joy of all the earth, is the hill of Zion, \*  
the very center of the world and the city of the great King.

3 God is in her citadels; \*  
he is known to be her sure refuge.

4 Behold, the kings of the earth assembled \*  
and marched forward together.

5 They looked and were astounded; \*  
they retreated and fled in terror.

6 Trembling seized them there; \*  
they writhed like a woman in childbirth,  
like ships of the sea when the east wind shatters them.

7 As we have heard, so have we seen,  
in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God; \*  
God has established her for ever.

8 We have waited in silence on your loving-kindness, O God, \*  
in the midst of your temple.

9 Your praise, like your Name, O God, reaches to the world's end; \*  
your right hand is full of justice.

10 Let Mount Zion be glad  
and the cities of Judah rejoice, \*  
because of your judgments.

11 Make the circuit of Zion;  
walk round about her; \*  
count the number of her towers.

12 Consider well her bulwarks;  
examine her strongholds; \*  
that you may tell those who come after.

13 This God is our God for ever and ever; \*  
he shall be our guide for evermore.

**The Epistle**

**2 Corinthians 12:2-10**

I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. And I know that such a person—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows— was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

**The Gospel**

**Mark 6:1-13**

Jesus came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, “Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. Then Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house.” And he 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.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.” So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

It is hard to go home some days. Each of us grows and becomes an adult person with independent thoughts and feelings, different and sometimes vastly different from our parents. We are not constrained to be who we were as children, thankfully. Still people’s expectations of us can get the better of us. To that end, I have often found this Gospel passage odd in way. Jesus too seems to be affected by the expectations of others. The quoting of a common colloquial aphorism of the time in the text, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town,” seems to drive this home. And so we see Jesus affected by the lack of faith of others all because they know who his people are. However, notice that it does not cause Jesus to stop being the merciful person Jesus is, he still heals people, just not as many. and he is amazed at their unbelief.

Jesus’s behavior then serves as a template for the disciples and for us. The disciples who are sent out, thus becoming apostles, from the Greek word *apostolos*, ones who are sent. This experience of seeing Jesus being rejected is in many ways helpful for both us and for the disciples. We live in a world where everyone wants to be successful. And I don’t nessarily mean successful in the ways of the world either. Yes, many want to have the nice house in the nice part of town, but even if you don’t, we want our good deeds to be looked on kindly. We want to be known for our good deeds too, or at least be recognized, even if only by our friends.

This need for recognition, reminds me of the youth group in the church in which my kids grew up. Caty-corner from our church was the Catholic church that ran a soup kitchen every noon day meal. On Fridays, our youth participated in serving the clients. Every year the rector of our church had to talk to the teens about not expecting the homeless to be grateful. Not always, but often the clients’ human dignity was beat down and downcast. Still our cultural expectation is that when someone does something nice for another, the recipient is supposed to be grateful. That’s not why we are Christians though and not why we participate in Christian ministries. The gratitude of another is not why we do what we do. We are not responsible for how our Christian ministries are received. How we are recieved, whether someone says thank you, whether it changes the politics or world by our actions, none of these actually matter—- what matters is the work.

This is not much different than the apostles spreading the name of Christ throughout the world. They learned from Jesus that sometimes it is received well, and other times not so well. They were given power and authority to proclaim Christ and heal. How this is received is not actually their responsibility. What they are responsible for is the action of doing it. Like the apostles, we are called by God, always. What we are responsible for is our own faithfulness, how we answer that call. With such assuredness, we can witness boldly and faithfully.

This very work, this spreading of the kingdom, we like to think this is something we do. I put forth to you, the work any of us do, is folded into the larger life of God. This is God’s mission. Our success or our failure matters not. What matters is we have faith and do as we are called. How any part of our doing, our sharing the Gospel, our inviting others to church, our inviting anyone to prayer, our helping the marginalized. Success or failure for us is not success or failure for God. God’s mission is much, much larger than what we can possibly imagine.

Further, not only are we all called regardless as to how well we are received, but Paul helps us to understand the cross and what the cross means for us. Just like Paul, on our journey of life and in our journey of faith, we will all suffer; suffering one way or another is inevitable and is part of the human condition. Yet, we are not called to just grin and bear our sufferings either. There are times when some of our thorns can and should be tended to. What we know is that Jesus through the crucifixion turned something hideous into grace raised up perfect, human vulnerability. It is this power that is made perfect in weakness by the world’s standards. Bold, faithful witness that is grace-filled and powerfully weak.

So suffer we will from time to time, knowing that the God who raised the Crucified One will raise us too, sufferers all. And work we shall, testifying to the mission of God, apostles all. By our love, by our service, by our words - and in all this, and above all, we give thanks, knowing that the results of the work depend finally on God, and what God promises in Jesus Christ, God will not fail to accomplish.