The Gospel reading today, helps us to focus on 2 aspects of mission and ministry, firstly we will not always be appreciated for what we do, by people (God will always love what we do) and secondly and more importantly regardless of whether we are appreciated or not, we are called and appointed by God to be in mission and ministry.

I often imagine that Jesus would always draw a crowd, after all he was the big-ticket number, if only just to see what all the fuss was about.

Wandering Rabbi’s would always draw a crowd on the road they would be surrounded by people eager to listen and discuss and Jesus was no exception to this, Remember the story of Blind Bart - later in Mark we will hear of the crowd telling Bart to tone it down as they wanted to listen to Jesus.

The Rabbis were the teachers, the story tellers, and entertainers.

But Jesus was more than this, he was the one casting out evil spirits, the one who healed, the one who really got up the noses of the establishment when he came to town it was a big deal, it was like an England match- so what was going on here in today’s Gospel?

When Jesus entered Nazareth, it was not to a great fan fayre, no open topped bus waiting to take him and the 12 on a tour of the town, oh no! the golden key to the city remained firmly locked away, instead Jesus was met with a barrage of negativity, jealously and rudeness. Some commentators suggest that in this aggression and aggravation we can see here the shadow of the cross falling on Jesus’ ministry.

Who does he think he is – Mary’s son, the chippy, we know him, we know his family and there not all that!

But this hostility in the end is only harmful to them, for Jesus is unable to offer to them the healing, the ministry he has lavished on other. As to some degree the healing is not only dependant on God’s grace but on a person wanting to be helped as English shares in his commentary “The word will not produce spiritual growth where the capacity for response is barren, choked or scorched”.

Mark’s gospel is full of honesty, it is a Gospel that high lights the good the bad and the ugly and here we come across the ugly face of human reaction to the local lad done good.

The people got it wrong they misunderstood Jesus. The problem was that they based their opinion, as so many do, on a very narrow foundation; the people looked to what they knew and could see, his mother, (no mention of Joseph – rip?), his family, their occupation and status within the town, they were unable to open their eyes and minds to the bigger picture and also to the possibility that God was doing a new thing through him. God was acting powerfully through what they considered Ordinary people, working class people.

They judged the things of God by the values of the world and therefore missed out and what God had in store for them.

I wonder if to some degree we are like the people of Nazareth, quick to judge, to value people ..by what we think we know and assume, without looking at the situation through the lens of God’s love?

Maybe this rejection, this intransience of the home crowd helped Jesus to galvanise a plan to appoint the 12 and really up the mission of change.

If Pentecost is the birthday of the Church then the sending out of the 12 was its conception.

Earlier in Mark Chapter 3 v14-15 the 12 Disciples are appointed and promised that at some point they would be sent out to preach and cast out evil and today that day has come when Jesus decides that the Disciples are ready to fledge.

Jesus is sending them out 2 by 2 like beat bobbies, sending them out to share his ministry and mission. The disciples are being given a share in Jesus’ authority. However, this is a massive risk. As in Mark’s gospel the Disciples seem far from ready, we are told in 4:10 that they did not really understand what Jesus was teaching. When Jesus finished teaching and preaching to the crowds, he had to find a quiet place, sit the Disciples down and explain to them when he had preached about,

διδάσκαλος (didaskalos) -- an instructor, followers of the teacher Disciples

However, Mark also indicates that they were unsure of Jesus power too, not sure who he was! In 4:38 we are meet them on the lake in the eye of the storm, questioning if Jesus really cared for them, Mark 4:38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" and then in Mark 4:41 41 They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"- but yet Jesus still sent them out 2 by 2.

The implication of this seems to be that no amount of hearing, observing miracles, praying or being with Jesus will fully prepare us for the task of sharing in Jesus’ mission and ministry, but yet Jesus decided the time for them to be released into the wild was now.

We will never fully comprehend the mind and the majesty of God as like the people of Nazareth and like the first disciples the horizon of our comprehension is limited, and the lens through which we see God is dim. BUT that’s ok, as we are called to mission and ministry as we are, we will never be perfectly ready, we will never be able to answer every question, to have all knowledge and be able to satisfy the doubt of all people.

We need to be like the 12 rather than the Nazarenes we need to try and not judge by the standards of the world and also not be judged by them, we may not be perfect, we may not have perfect understanding, but we are the people God has called to proclaim his kingdom now.

Lets not miss the opportunity to see the kingdom of God by judging ourselves and others by earthly standards, lets be liberated to be the people God has called us to be, confident on his love for us and confident in our proclamation of the Gospel.

God wants to do wonderful things through bus mechanics, accountants, social workers, shop keepers, café owners, teachers – Through us, lets allow him to send us out in the power of the Spirit to live and work to his praise and glory