

*He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. 2On 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! 3Is 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. 4Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house." 5And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. 6And he was amazed at their unbelief.*

*Then he went about among the villages teaching. 7He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. 8He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; 9but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. 10He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. 11If 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." 12So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. 13They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.*

I wish we were a church in the round today. I'd like to start out doing something many of you have done in stadiums: a wave. People stand with hands in the air, then sit as the wave goes by. No one moves but looking on from afar a wave is visible - like a wave out on the lake - water rising and falling yet giving the appearance of moving - a wave.

No one can be a wave alone - no drop of water, no fan at Jacob's field. But when brought together and ordered in movement, a wave passes by. Indeed when the water is piled into a tidal wave then in the wave is power to move rocks and trees and buildings. Yet without a wave the same water lies still.

Wherever Jesus went, there was a wave. Faith rose up, power to heal and change and love rose up where they had not been before. Jesus was like a wave sweeping through the land of Galilee. Though the people remained where they were, in Jesus' presence they were caught up in a great power.

Except in one town, Jesus' hometown Nazareth - in Nazareth they just stayed sitting.

Have you ever tried to start a wave down at Jacob's field? How many does it take? One? ten? thirty? a hundred? Your guess is as good as mine. How many does it take to stop a wave? I don't know that either.

But I know there was a wave that swept into Nazareth that day. Along the crest of that wave were healings and hope. The wave itself was faith in Jesus. Disciples and crowds, a

woman suffering from hemorrhages, a man whose daughter had died, many possessed by demons, all lifted up to wholeness and life in Jesus. Then Jesus came to his hometown.

Jesus taught in the synagogue, what others had heard, they now heard from him. And this is how they responded: *“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.

They were like a whole section that saw the wave coming and refused to be a part of it. Everything they said of Jesus was true, but they refused to enter into faith.

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A few stood up, a few sick people believed in him and were healed, but here was no wave in Nazareth.

What did Jesus do? Give up? Go back to being a carpenter? No, he gathered the twelve and sent them out, starting the wave all over again.

Once a week we all gather here. We raise up our hands to God in faith and in song and in praise, that there might be a crest of healing and love and forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Oh, each week there are some who refuse to stand, no faith - no hope - no joy. And each week there are so many empty seats, those who could be in their places adding to the height and depth of this wave of faith. But in the worship of God that lifts us here, the power of faith in Jesus Christ sweeps us up. There is power that is not in any of us alone. And healing and wholeness and love happen to us as we are a part of this wave of faith.

Waves in the stadium are just a way to pass time - entertainment. Sometimes the waves in the church are nothing more than that, a rise in emotion.

But when Jesus is the wave that raises you to faith, then from that wave you receive power to love and to follow him – power to give your lives for others. And the wave does not stay here, but moves out all week into the world where you are. The power of God sweeps you along in paths of love, in listening, in sharing, in serving.