

## **Sermon: “Freedom” by Pastor Chris Eng**

Lectionary Text: Mark 6: 1 - 13, N.R.S.V.

Communion Sunday, July 4, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

Kailua Christian Church UCC Zoom Worship

The sound of someone’s voice can tell us a lot. Imagine sitting in church and listening to a gifted individual teaching the Scriptures. Jesus came to his hometown and began to teach in the synagogue, the Jewish temple. Many who heard him were astonished. Where did he get such wisdom? How was he able to perform great deeds of power by his hands? Immediately, they recognized him as the carpenter, the son of Mary (not son of Joseph) and thought of his brothers and sisters. They took offense at him. In other words, they could not accept who he was. And Jesus was amazed at their unbelief. They lacked freedom to believe.

This morning, I’ll speak about “*Freedom from what other people say about us when they see us.*” And I’ll include “*Freedom to be different from what we were educated or trained for.*” Today is America’s 245th birthday when we think about freedom in 1776 from Great Britain. Jesus said, “*And you shall know the truth and the truth will set you free.*”

1. **Freedom from what other people say about us when they see us.”** When Jesus appeared in his hometown Nazareth, the people had already identified him as the carpenter. But in saying that he was “*the son of Mary,*” this was a slight on the usual term, “*son of Joseph.*” Of course, they knew his family. But why did they take offense at him? Why could they not accept his wisdom and deeds of power as he taught in the temple? Something kept them from the truth. Jesus identified it as their inability to believe in who he was. What a twist from the usual observation that many were amazed at Jesus’ miracles and instead here he is amazed that these people don’t have faith in him.

Most of us are like these people. When we hear someone speak or see someone or are introduced to a new person, we start to form an opinion. If only we could wait, having the freedom to get to know someone as they really are. It seems similar to many who refuse to be vaccinated. Something keeps them from accepting the science.

2. **Freedom to be different from what we were educated or trained for.”** I smile when I read how Jesus called the 12 disciples and sent them out two by two to cast out demons and anoint the sick with oil to cure them. For those who need a lot of stuff, Jesus encouraged them “*to travel light.*” There were the 4 fishermen, Andrew, Peter, James and John, Matthew the tax collector, Simon the zealot and others. Jesus had such charisma that as he called the 12, they left their professions to follow as his disciples. Incredible! The Holy Spirit must have had something to do with it. They had this freedom!

Some of us can relate to making a significant change in our lives. We may have been in school or working at some job or pursuing some vocation or profession. Then the unthinkable happens. We drop out of school, quit our job and change our life’s focus. How does this happen? Looking back, I know of individuals whom God called to serve in ministry after they already began another career. I know of others who began the journey to be a pastor and discovered it was not God’s will. We all have the freedom to change our life.

**Conclusion.** There is a cost to freedom as we remember those who served our country. Today's passage invites us to be free to take the time to know someone before forming an opinion. I think we wish the same for ourselves as people meet us. And for Kailua Christian Church UCC, you members and friends have freedom to get involved in new ways. You may have served in a leadership role or volunteered in some capacity. Mark 6 reminds us that God calls us to care for others in a variety of ways. Perhaps it's time to do something different!