

**“The Power of Negative Thinking!”– Mark 6:1-13 – Pastor Jeff Childs**

**The Power of Negative Thinking - Negativity** Last week I spoke of the Rev. Dr. Norman Vincent Peale and his “Power of Positive Thinking” but today we hear a story about Jesus and some people in his hometown who had what I would call, “The Power of Negative Thinking!” It was so powerful, that even Jesus could not do much there. *“He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.”* (Mark 6:5-6) This scripture tells us that he did do a few healings, but for the most part there was no great revival in Nazareth. The reception was not warm or even lukewarm, it was downright chilly!

Negative power can prevent people from even trying because they believe it just cannot be done, don’t waste your time. Have you ever found yourself in a situation where the atmosphere is negatively charged? I have found that it can just suck any positive energy out of the room. At the end of the day it seemed to do just that here in the synagogue.

Negative power can be infectious. Negative words can shape a child negatively. They grow up to be adults who are twisted and bent over. There are some among us this morning. They are in our families, some of our best friends and neighbors but they have been shaped, bent over by constantly being told they were stupid, they would never amount to much, or they were worthless. I wonder in the end of this story if these were some of the demons that got cast out by the disciples as they were calling people to change their hearts and lives. These were the ones being set free to know and receive the life-changing love of Jesus. Jesus comes to say, you are not worthless you are priceless as a beloved child of God, be healed and be set free!

Please note that negative power can also be positive! It can encourage someone to say, “Oh yeah? I’ll show you.” The Wright brothers’ workshop was in Dayton, Ohio. No one there believed that they would ever get their flying machine off the ground, especially their father who was a Methodist minister. He had said to his sons one of those infamous quotes, “If God wanted people to fly he would have given them wings.” Wilbur and Orville, looking to the future, not the past, left home and went to North Carolina, where they would not be treated as the local boys, to test their dream and to fly. Have you ever risen to the challenge that something can’t be done, or more specifically that you personally couldn’t possibly do it? Have you shared that story with anyone as a word of encouragement? Share your story.

Jesus seemed to turn this negative power in Nazareth into positive power as he went on to other villages and showed the disciples how to shake the dust from their feet when they met negative resistance and to move on. What might Jesus be saying to us and to our community? How reluctant or resistant are we to changing our hearts and lives and to fully following Jesus into his new-life living?

**Power of Positive Faith - Positivity** We all know that positive is the opposite pole of negative. And after thinking about all this negativity that Jesus encountered in Jerusalem, I wondered, what is the opposite of negativity? It has to be “positivity!” I thought I coined a new word, as I had not heard it before. But spell check on my computer liked it and with a little research I found it in my dictionary. Sadly it was just not in my day to day

vocabulary. How about yours? Perhaps we need to add it to our conversational English. Jesus put faith in the disciples. He encouraged them to try something they had not done before, to go out two by two to share with people the Good News! That's positivity in action. They went out to make a positive difference in the world one village, one life at a time.

Jesus did not give them a safety blanket or "all they would need" to go out. He sent them out empty-handed but spirit-filled. He had simply shown them how he operated and invited them to do likewise. In what tangible ways might we share this positive life-changing faith today? Share your story. Share your faith. (And if you run into negative thinking, shake a few sandals!) Remember Jesus positively believes in you. Alleluia and Amen.

### **Share Jesus with People**

Rev. Jeffrey B. Childs 6/20/24

Share Jesus with people,  
Through the things you do.  
When people can't see it,  
Give a Christ-like view.  
When we're stuck in old ways,  
Christ makes all things new.  
As Jesus' disciples,  
Do all you can do.

Jesus offers peace to,  
All humanity,  
Sharing divine grace and,  
Holy dignity.  
When we're overwhelmed by,  
Negativity,  
We can share Christ's love and,  
Positivity.