

Gaines Congregational United Church of Christ

July 7, 2024

Old Testament Reading; 2 Samuel 5:1-5

Responsive Reading: Psalm 48

Epistle Reading: 2 Corinthians 12: 2-10

Gospel Reading: Mark 6: 1-13

Sermon:

Give Credit Where Credit Is Due

By Rev. Jim Gardner

Summary: Incoming telegram: To God be the Glory! STOP He owns it all! STOP and END TRANSMISSION

Paul ends his Epistle reading with, “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” Or, in my words, “When we let go of our strength we make room for the strength of God.” Benjamin Franklin said, “God helps those that help themselves.” I think that Ben missed the mark. Oh sure, we have to do our share. But, when we think that we are so smart that we can go it alone, without the help of God I believe that God sits back and says, “OK kid give it

your best shot and when you fall flat on your face give me a call and I'll bail you out." I think that I heard somewhere that "God is our strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble." Maybe Ben should have said, "God helps those who help others." Anywho.

In our Gospel lesson Jesus comes home to His hometown and does not get a hero's welcome. Instead of the people saying, "Look, here comes that miracle worker we've heard so much about." No. They said, "Who the heck does this guy think he is? We know this guy. He grew up here and we know all of his relatives. Is he not the carpenter's son? We know his brothers and sisters and we know that he must be just a little bit out of his right senses."

"And Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.'" The passage goes on to say that Jesus was not able to perform any major signs but only could heal a few people by laying His hands on them. "And He marveled because of their unbelief,"

To God be the glory for great things He has done (and will yet do). This truth Jesus double downs on by sending His disciples to speak to, teach, and heal those who were willing to hear His word. Jesus told His disciples not to waste their time on those who would not even take the time to listen but to go to those

who were open to the word. “So, they went out and preached that people should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.” When a doctor gives medicine, it is the medicine that heals not the hand that delivers it. When Jesus is the medicine even His followers can dispense it with remarkable results.

Give credit where credit is due. God is good ALL the time. AND... giving credit where credit is due is always a good thing.

In the time of David there was a sort of rivalry between the tribes of Hebrews that lived in Israel and those that lived in Judah. However, David proved to be unbiased by successfully leading armies of both regions and so they set their territorial pride aside and made David king over all twelve nations and ushered in a time of dominance for the Hebrew people that they have not enjoyed since. PS, they gave credit to David and King David gave credit to God.

Miracles come in all sizes, from someone finding and returning your lost wallet with everything still in it to the Red Sea parting, saving the Hebrews and disposing of the pursuing army.

Our Psalm extols a great miracle that can be found in 2 Kings 7: 3-16. The back story is that Jerusalem had been under siege by the Syrian army so long that they were eating their war horses and even their babies, knowing that if conquered every last

soul would be executed by the conquerors. Hear the story, 2 Kings 7:3-16.

³ Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, "Why are we sitting here until we die? ⁴ If we say, 'We will enter the city,' the famine *is* in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall only die." ⁵ And they rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians; and when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise no one *was* there. ⁶ For the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses—the noise of a great army; so they said to one another, "Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us!" ⁷ Therefore they arose and fled at twilight, and left the camp intact—their tents, their horses, and their donkeys—and they fled for their lives. ⁸ And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank, and carried from it silver and gold and clothing, and went and hid *them*; then they came back and entered another tent, and carried *some* from there *also*, and went and hid *it*.

⁹ Then they said to one another, "We are not doing right. This day *is* a day of good news, and we remain silent. If we wait until morning light, some ^[a]punishment will come upon us. Now therefore, come, let us go and tell the king's household." ¹⁰ So they went and called to the gatekeepers of the city, and told them, saying, "We went to the Syrian camp, and surprisingly no one *was* there, not a human sound—only horses and donkeys tied, and the tents intact." ¹¹ And the gatekeepers called out, and they told *it* to the king's household inside. ¹² So the king arose in the night and said to his servants, "Let me now tell you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we *are* hungry; therefore they have gone out of the camp to ^[b]hide themselves in the field, saying, 'When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.' "

¹³ And one of his servants answered and said, "Please, let several *men* take five of the remaining horses which are left in the city. Look, they *may either become* like all the multitude of Israel that are left in it; or indeed, *I say, they may become* like all the multitude of Israel left from those who are consumed; so let us send them and see." ¹⁴ Therefore they took two chariots with horses; and the king sent them in the direction of the Syrian army, saying, "Go and see." ¹⁵ And they went after them to the Jordan; and indeed all the road *was* full of garments and

weapons which the Syrians had thrown away in their haste. So the messengers returned and told the king. ¹⁶ Then the people went out and plundered the tents of the Syrians.

Give credit where credit is due. If God can part the Red Sea, send one of the toughest armies in the history of the world running for their lives stripping off their armor so they can run faster without the horses they left behind. If God could guide the hands of a pilot named Sully to land an Airliner full of passengers on the Hudson River and even cause a small morsel of grain and a partial jar of oil to feed a family for weeks, then He can certainly save you.

Incoming telegram...To God be the glory! STOP He owns it all!

Hallelujah and Amen!