



**NEW SCANDINAVIA  
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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*[Jesus] came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. Mark 6:1*

It's that time of the year: family reunions, community gatherings, graduation parties, birthday parties, Fourth of July parties... basically every party, camping, fairs, vacations. You get the point. It is a time when it seems like work slows down so that families can come together for celebration, trips, or simply hanging out.

But families, whether biological, community, or church, are a strange thing. Families know everything about us. They have seen us at our best and at our worst. They are our best friends, and arguments can hurt because they know us so well that certain words cut deep. I've been watching a tv series called *The Bear*, where the family dynamics play a huge part in how the family's restaurant connects with each other, their staff, and their customers and how family "issues" can affect a single person.

"Jesus came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him." There are so many questions that arise for me in that one simple sentence. I wonder if any of the disciples knew who Jesus was before they were brought together for this work. I wonder if Jesus warned his friends about those he may encounter, like Uncle Jimmy or "Richie"/Cousin.

I read this simple sentence and see the humanness of Jesus. Jesus returns to his hometown just like those who return for Dairy Days or Liberty Fest and our Mark 6 passage continues with the people of the community talking/whispering. "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." This has me wondering how we welcome others, either people coming home or people that are new to us. What do we say to or about them? What do we assume when we see them? And, what does it mean that Jesus comes "home" to our community as well? Of course, people didn't understand who Jesus was beyond simply being a local "boy," the same way we may not see beyond those we encounter from our community as well.

It has me thinking about how I look at others. Who are they? Why have they been gone so long? Why are they even back in town? In other words, how do I welcome those I encounter?

Just a thought.

God's Peace to you.

*Pastor Sara.*