

## REPAIRING BROKEN TECHNOLOGY

Mark 6:1-6; Eph. 2:1-10; Omar Behrens Funeral; January 6, 2020

Omar Behrens had the reputation as a “go-to” man if you needed something repaired. It was said that, if he could fit inside his repair shop in Granada – cars, trucks, school buses, tractors and other farm equipment – Omar could fix it for you. We all need someone like him in our lives, someone we can trust to do the job right, someone who has the servant’s heart and isn’t just doing it because it’s his job, but because he cares and wants to help. If you are a farmer during planting or harvest and some equipment breaks down that you can’t fix yourself, day or night, you need someone you can rely on. There’s a saying that, if your car breaks down you don’t ask your dentist for help, you go to a trustworthy mechanic.

After Jesus started His ministry, He moved from His hometown of Nazareth to Capernaum. And from there He began to travel around, preaching and teaching in synagogues, calling disciples to follow Him, and doing miracles as evidence that He was God’s promised Christ. After He had gained quite a reputation and following, Jesus went home to Nazareth and was given the opportunity to teach in the synagogue there on the Sabbath. How did that go for Him? St. Mark tells us.

**Many who heard Him were astonished, saying, “Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to Him? How are such mighty works 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.**

This is one of the few passages of Scripture that tell us something about Jesus between His birth and early childhood and when He started His public ministry. We know that Joseph, Jesus’ step-father was a carpenter, but St. Mark here tells us that Jesus followed in his footsteps and became a carpenter Himself. Actually, Jesus is called a *tektōn* (τέκτων) – the root of our word “architect” – which, in those days was someone skilled at working with wood, stone, and metal. Jesus had learned Joseph’s trade and worked at it until He was baptized and started His public ministry.

The people of Nazareth were used to going to Jesus to have things like furniture and wooden plows made or repaired. He was a craftsman using the technology of His day to make and repair things. The people of Nazareth were used to seeing in Jesus' hands a hammer and chisel, saw and plane, plumb bob and trowel. They weren't used to Jesus preaching from the Old Testament scrolls, or seeing Him lay His hands on sick people and heal them. They saw Jesus as the go-to guy if you needed a carpenter, but they couldn't see Him as God's Messiah and their Savior. They knew His mother, brothers, and sisters. Jesus of Nazareth couldn't be the Messiah, they thought, so they took offense at Him and rejected Him.

Omar did not reject Jesus as his Savior. Omar did not take offense at the Carpenter from Nazareth, but believed that He was One who took away his sins and saved him from death and hell.

Sometimes, people who are good at repairing things for others, people who are very self-reliant and don't like having to ask others for help – someone who likes to be in control and make his own decisions, someone who might be moved into an assisted living apartment and whose car was sold at the insistence of his children, who then went out and bought a new car and called the movers to move him and his wife back home, you know, someone like Omar – people like that sometimes struggle with being totally dependent on God for salvation.

But God's Word is clear: all of us are totally dependent on God for our salvation. We might be the best at whatever it is we do in life, and we might be the ones people come to to fix what is broken, but no one can fix his own sinful nature. In case we doubt that, consider what St. Paul wrote in Ephesians two: **you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked.** Every time we attend a funeral we have the perfect object lesson as proof of this. What can a dead man do for himself? Nothing! What can Omar do for himself, much less anyone else? The only solution to death because sin must be worked by the One who has no sin in Him, Jesus Christ.

The people in Jesus' hometown of Nazareth were offended by the mighty works done by His hands, but He would do even mightier

things. By letting the soldiers take a hammer and spikes in their hands, and drive those spikes through His hands into the wood of the cross, Jesus, the One who had no sin and death in His own body, took our sin and death into His body and died with them to defeat sin and death for us. St. Paul goes on in Ephesians two: **God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.**

God made Omar alive first spiritually at his Baptism as an infant, and even though his body has now died, yet will he will be made alive in his body when Jesus comes on the Last Day. Throughout his life he kept returning to God's house to have his sins forgiven by God's grace, waiting for the day when God would take him from this vale to tears to Himself in heaven. I think that one of the hardest things for Omar was when Janet couldn't come to church with him anymore, and then had to be cared for outside of the home. Omar might have spent most of his life helping others, fixing and repairing what of theirs was broken, but he could not fix that, nor could he fix what was broken in him. Only God can fix that, and He has in Jesus Christ.

**For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship.**

I can imagine Omar sitting down with Jesus and talking shop, telling stories of repairs they had done, people they had helped. They both worked with the technology of their day. Both were men who worked with their hands. The wonderful thing is that, even though Jesus had been a carpenter working with his hands, Omar did not reject Him as the Savior, but relied on Him for the forgiveness of his sins, life, and salvation. Omar was **God's workmanship**; God had created him, but he was broken in sin and unable to repair himself.

You don't go to a dentist if your car needs fixing. Omar put his faith in a Carpenter to forgive his sin and raise him from the dead. His broken down and dead body is not beyond repair for Jesus Christ, but will be raised to be made what God always wanted him to be, but never was, perfect and without sin. In the name of Jesus. Amen.