

Some people hate to take vacations because they know when they get home something will be broken. It could be the plumbing, the garden, the air conditioning--Our homes punish us for being away. If you're on a business trip when something breaks at home your family saves it for you, just to let you know you were missed.

Jesus returns home in today's gospel after a little time away. And sure enough, something's broken. It's the people. He could expect illness; he had a reputation now for healing the sick. But he met another kind of sickness, much more pervasive: doubt. They knew him as a hometown boy, but he spoke now with a wisdom they did not recognize and worked miracles with a power they did not know. Wherever Jesus got this wisdom and power, they knew he didn't get it from them. They liked their own wisdom and power. People shouldn't need to bring it in from somewhere else. But here was Jesus, saying things and doing things that just weren't normal in those parts. So they doubted him.

Whenever the gospels tell a miracle story, it ends by saying everyone was amazed at what Jesus did. In this story, everyone is not amazed. Jesus is amazed. He's amazed at the unbelief of his family and friends. He could work no great miracle there.

Doubt can afflict our lives, our families, our neighborhood. When we doubt, we don't see the power of God; we see instead the frailty of humans.

There's a lot that's broken when we look around our home. Our society suffers from lack of respect for human life, from the disintegration of families, from racial prejudice, and from addictions. How sad it would be to come to church, to meet Jesus in our neighborhood, and to say, the miracles couldn't happen here. His power may work elsewhere, and his wisdom does not apply. Some people give up too easily on their neighborhood, on their family, and on themselves. They forget that the one who visits here is Jesus. If we see what's broken, we'll doubt for sure. If we meditate on Christ, we'll see his strength. Miracles can happen. There's no doubt.