**“if you come to a town where people … will not listen to you…”** (Mark 6.11)

My retirement soon might mean moving away; my life will no longer be described by my work –liberating or scary? Tempting to stay here or return to a former haunt. Both could be a mistake! Jesus, whose early ministry was beside Lake Galilee (only 30k from Nazareth, but in those days a great distance), returns to his home town and things do not go well. TEXT.

Not sure what Jesus expected. Going back to a place where you are known well, especially where you were brought up, is rarely a good idea. There will be many expectations and assumptions about you. In Nazareth people were amazed by Jesus’ words and deeds, but in a negative sort of way (early assessment of Fred Astaire claimed – ***“can’t act, can’t sing; can dance a little”*** – imagine *this* assessor’s amazement!).

That Jesus was *not* successful is a surprise. Did they think he was ‘up himself’ and so rejected him?

Paul was unsuccessful in Athens (Acts 17), did they think he was ‘up himself’ and so rejected him?

Jesus then sends out the 12 and, reflecting on his experience, he warns them – TEXT. They too might be rejected. v13 tells us of their success, with no mention, only hints, of failures. Matthew’s account (10.5-39) mentions persecution, rejection, division & later on (11.20-24) the unbelief of Chorazin & Bethsaida.

No one is ever a success for *every*one. What is success anyway? Is it greater quantity or deeper quality?

In Lord of the Rings, Boromir (successful warrior & favoured son) succumbs to the Ring’s lure; Faramir (mere leader of archers & unfavoured son) resists the Ring’s lure. Who was more successful?

In Invercargill you can find a bigger church, one with more young people & families, one nearer your home, one with groups that suit better, one with richer music, or with a more spiritual ministry; does this mean we have failed or gone away from God’s heart?

We have done well in the last 10 years, but there is yet more to learn, yet more growth of God within us.

As a parish we seek to be God’s people in our community, unsure of what this means in practice.

What should we do, given our opportunities, strengths and limitations? I hope a new presbyter will help you on this quest, encourage you to ‘have a go’, recognising that ‘failure’ is OK. TEXT. There is never need to “**shake the dust from your feet**” (v 11) if you only stay at home! The occasional fail is much better than not having a go. Jesus knew this, as did Paul.