

Mark 6:4-6

*“Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household.” And He could do no miracle there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He wondered at their unbelief.”*

It is said, “familiarity breeds contempt.” That was true during the life of Jesus, just as it is today. In our passage Jesus returns home, not to where He was born, but where He was raised as the son of a carpenter and we see inspired teaching and miracles do not automatically produce faith. The response of the people of Nazareth stands in stark contrast to the faith demonstrated by Jairus and the woman with the hemorrhage in Mark 5. Although faith is not a pre-requisite for miracles, the unbelief of the people of Nazareth is truly staggering.

Jesus is not there to demand respect and admiration from the hometown crowd. But the doubts and murmuring raised about the credentials of Jesus block the people of Nazareth from receiving God’s blessings through Him. I am sure there was no shortage of the blind, deaf and lame residing in Nazareth with a desperate need of healing. But the doubt and suspicion of some can affect the entire community. The reservations about Jesus seem odd when you consider they were already aware of His miracles. Only the handful who came for healing received the blessing. The blooms of doubt produced the fruit of unbelief in Nazareth.

There is a lesson to be learned from the indifference of the people of Nazareth. As we seek to share with people in our lives, indifferent responses will often come from where it is least expected. Failure to produce fruit in others is the common experience for all who sow the seeds of the gospel. But we are not to lose hope and stop sharing. While Jesus was amazed at their unbelief, He was not paralyzed by it and continued on to other towns and villages. This is a lesson for the disciples which we need to take to heart also as we are met with doubt, resistance and scorn when we share the gospel.

But our passage also raises a concern for those who have “grown up” in the church as Christians. Does familiarity with Jesus breed contempt in our lives? Have we become bored with Jesus, unless He performs for us in dramatic ways? It is a serious concern because we can have a fascination with the new and exotic, only to be lead astray by what poses as truth. This may lead us toward mirages that only take us away from the faith of our youth. We must guard against the attitude of the synagogue of Nazareth that says, “I already know Jesus from the Bible stories. What can Jesus teach me now?”