



Small Group Guide

June 23, 2024

What did you hear in this morning's message that stood out to you? What was interesting, important, or confusing?

What strikes you about that old proverb that "familiarity breeds contempt"?

How could it be that the people of Nazareth admitted to Jesus' miracles and wisdom but still doubted in him?

What might be the connection between faith and Jesus' power to perform miracles?

No Honor In A Prophet's Own Town

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⁵ Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home." ⁵ He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. ⁶ He was amazed at their lack of faith.

Mark 6:5-6 (read vv. 1-6)

Having traveled all around the vicinity of the Sea of Galilee teaching, working miracles, casting out demons, Jesus now returns to the hills of his hometown. Mark doesn't explicitly name the town in this scene as Nazareth, but we glean that knowledge from other gospels (Luke 2:4, 30, 51; Matt. 2:23). Mark recounts in chapter 3 that there was already growing hostility and embarrassment rising among Jesus' closest relatives. But given the relative enthusiasm he has received in the surrounding villages on the Western side of the lake, we might expect this in Jesus's home town. The healed demoniac returned home to tell of what Jesus had done for him, amazing the people. We expect a similar response to Jesus.

That he was teaching in the synagogue on that Sabbath suggests a welcoming reception. The amazement of the crowds seemed to have followed him home (v. 3). However, enthusiasm and amazement led to questions of familiarity which led to their being offended; *scandalized*, is Mark's vivid word. As Mark pointedly points out, amazement without genuine faith (*pistis*) leads the crowd, even his own hometown neighbors, to demur and doubt. The crowds have been repeatedly amazed; now Jesus is the one amazed at their non-faith (*apistian*). Though it's a disappointment, but not a dead end. He soon sends out his disciples, recognizes the perilous fate of God's messengers in John's beheading, but continues his kingdom mission despite the variety of responses from the people.

Some Background

In Mark 6, Jesus is called "the son of Mary," which is the only time in any of the gospels he is called this. Some suggest that, given the increasing skepticism over Jesus' activities, that this is a veiled criticism— "We knew you as a kid, and Joseph wasn't *really* your dad..." Though perhaps more likely is that Joseph by this point in Jesus life had died. This is also the only time Jesus himself is called a carpenter (*tekton*). The term seems to have frequent use regarding woodworkers, but it also has wider usage as someone who works in a skilled trade: masons, builders, or craftsmen. The designation here is a way for the Nazareth locals to remember the years Jesus spent as a tradesmen among them, so to see him now becoming a roaming rabbi struck them with incredulity.

Reflections

How might we as followers of Jesus combat any sense of familiarity with Jesus that might lead to contempt? In what specific ways, if any, are you renewing your sense of wonder at who Jesus is and the way he has, and is, and will save you in your life? How might his recognition of unbelief among some, but willingness to continue his mission, instill courage and confidence in our walk with him this week? If you grew up in the faith and in church, how might we alter Jesus' saying by showing that though he's been among us a long time, we still give him great honor?