FAMILIARITY BREEDS CONTEMPT

Mark 6:1-6
October 7, 2012

INTRODUCTION: A tourist, eager to see everything in the art gallery, fled from picture to picture, scarcely noticing what was in the frames. “I didn’t see anything very special here.” he said to one of the guards as he left. “Sir,” the guard replied, “it is not the pictures that are on trial here, it is the visitors.”

The gospels record that the Lord Jesus visited His hometown on two occasions after He began His public ministry at the age of 30. Here, we find Jesus leaving Capernaum to return to His hometown of Nazareth. Throughout His three years’ ministry, Jesus displayed concern for both His nation and His neighbors. Jesus was originally from Heaven, born in Bethlehem, and raised in Nazareth. The headquarters for His public ministry was Capernaum. Most of His early life was spent in Nazareth.

I was born in Lumberton, N.C., raised in Wilmington, N.C., but I have spent most of my life in Woodstock, Ga. Janet reminded me this week that she has lived in our present home longer than anywhere else. Most of my life, it will be 26 years and two months from today, has been here in Woodstock.

In Luke 4:16-30, we have a record of Jesus’ earlier visit made to His hometown. The fact that He returned in spite of their earlier threat to His life suggests courage and purpose of great intensity. The first occasion was marred by the assault made after His message in the synagogue. He took His text from Isaiah 61:1-2

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me,
Because the Lord has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,
And the day of vengeance of our God;
To comfort all who mourn.”

Their response:

Luke 4:28-30, “So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.”

QUESTION: Since His first visit a little more than a year earlier, it has been rumored about that He was the Son of God, with a message of Good News and a ministry of miracles. Jesus had just come through His shining hour. In quick succession, He has stilled a storm at sea, cast demons out of a mad man, healed a woman of an incurable disease, and raised Jairus’ daughter from the dead. His fame spreads like wildfire and wherever He goes, the common people hear him gladly. **If you deny His wisdom, how about His works?**
The people of Nazareth needed to heed the words of Hebrews 3:12.

“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.”

The second visit, recorded here in Mark 6, pictures Jesus returning as a Rabbi, followed by a band of devoted assistants. The citizens of Nazareth could not have been unaware of the miraculous nature of our Lord’s ministry, and yet His return to their synagogue was met with guarded interest and suspicion. Maybe our Lord had hoped that word had preceded Him and prepared His way.

Note how six short verses reveal so much truth about Jesus and His hometown. This text tells the story of a people who did not take Jesus seriously!

Unbelief Paralyzes Omnipotence

Shackling The Omnipotent

Tying The Hands of Jesus

I. FEARLESNESS OF THE SON OF GOD. 1-2a

A. HIS DEVOTION. 1

Their harsh treatment of Jesus did not keep Him from attempting to help His family and friends.

John 7:5, “For even His brothers did not believe in Him.”

His devotion causes me to beg the question, “How patient has God been with each of us?”

2 Peter 3:9. “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

How many opportunities has He given you to repent and believe the gospel?

SPECIAL NOTE: “His disciples followed Him.” That is what disciples are expected to do. Are you a follower who does not follow? A lover who does not love? Labels are to indicate what is in the bottle. Names should stand for natures. Be a following follower.

B. HIS DETERMINATION. 2a

Note where Jesus was on the appointed day of worship. He identified Himself with a place where the people of God teach the Word of God, in the house of God, for the glory of God.

The synagogues in those days were built in such a way that they pointed toward Jerusalem. He was facing Calvary; facing the cross where He was going to die for the sins of the world.

Jesus was determined to preach in Nazareth in hopes that someone would believe.
II. THE FAMILIARITY AT THE HOUSE OF GOD.  
2b-4

A. PEOPLE’S ATTITUDE. 2b

“And many hearing Him were astonished” – to strike by blow, being stung by a lick, amazed, flabbergasted; used negatively.

First of all, it is to their credit that they were listening, which is more than everyone does who goes to church.

Romans 10:17,”So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

“You could have touched me with your finger and I would have fallen over.”

The tragedy of Nazareth is that they asked the right questions with the wrong attitude.

B. PEOPLE’S ASSESSMENT. 2a-3

QUESTION: - Where, What, Is

Questioned several things:

1. Source of Christ’s knowledge
2. Character of Christ’s wisdom
3. Significance of Christ’s power
4. Majesty of Christ’s person

Seems as though there was amazement from His performances.

- His wisdom was criticized
- His work was criticized

Why? Jesus was commonplace to the people. They were too familiar with Him.

Phillip Brooks said it best, “Familiarity breeds contempt, only with contemptible things or among contemptible people.” The contempt shown by the Nazarenes said nothing about Jesus Christ, but it said a great deal about them. The people of Nazareth were not impressed with Jesus.

This can happen in a church, a ministry, with a vision or a passion.

We hear so much about Jesus and the things of God that they get to be commonplace and we are unmoved.

Many can miss worship of Him regularly and never give it a second thought.

The truths of the Bible become so ordinary that they don’t stir us anymore.

No country on earth has more opportunities to hear the Bible taught, to know God, to go to Heaven, then the citizens of America.
Prejudice so overrules all the evidence that they answered themselves, *v.3, “Is this not the carpenter…”*

Enchantment Comes From Afar.

Maybe you were brought up in a Christian home and the gospel is all too familiar to you; something you take for granted.

“The same sun that melts the ice, hardens the clay.”

The questions of verse 3 are rhetorical, self-contained with a sneer of prejudice and the sting of unbelief.

At the very best, they are saying that His birth is human and, therefore, He cannot be the Son of God. At the very worst, they are resurrecting the scandal of Mary’s pregnancy before marriage and smearing Jesus with the charge of illegitimacy.

Their prejudice produced a gap which was filled in with unbelief.

C. PEOPLE’S APPRAISAL. 3

“So they were offended at Him”

Wuest – “They could not explain Him, so they rejected Him.”

Once these questions are asked, a decision must be made. C.S. Lewis said, “*If Jesus is not the Son of God, He is a lunatic; if His words are not the Truth, He is a liar; if His power is not given by God, He is in league with the devil.*”

“offended at Him” – scandalized; they stumbled over Him. Their physical knowledge of Him prevented them from having a spiritual knowledge of Him.

It’s like saying, “Jesus is out to trap us like an animal being ensnared.”

III. THE FRUITLESSNESS OF THE WORK OF GOD. 5-6

A. JESUS’ MINISTRY. 5

Key Statement: “*Now He could do no mighty work there…”* This cannot mean that it had become an impossibility for Jesus to perform miraculous deeds, for had this been the case, He could not have healed the people upon whom He placed His hands. It must mean that within the Kingdom of God, certain laws are always in operation and that even the actions of Jesus were more or less governed by their requirements.
Hebrews 11:6, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

The people of Nazareth had permitted familiarity to breed contempt, and in the absence of real faith, the Lord found it difficult to release powers which could have solved their problems, healed their sick, and turned the night of their personal sorrows into a day of unprecedented joy.

William Scroggins, “Where moral conditions are wanting, God cannot work, but the few who want and welcome Him, He blesses.”

God and His Son can do anything, but they have chosen to limit themselves in accordance to human response.

**B. JESUS’ MARVEL. 6**

In the New Testament Jesus marveled on two occasions: here, and again in **Matt 8:5-10**

- Once in Nazareth – Hometown
- Once in Capernaum – Headquarters
- He marveled in unbelief
- He marveled in belief

Matthew 8:5-10, ”Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, ‘Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘I will come and heal him.’

The centurion answered and said, ‘Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.’ When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!’”