



Overcoming The Familiarity That Breeds Contempt

"A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house" (Mark 6:4).

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Familiarity is like a two-edged sword and have its positives and negatives. When rightly used, it brings tremendous benefits. For example, familiarity with issues clarifies understanding and paves the way for effective problem solving. Similarly, familiarity with people lead to better understanding of their uniqueness thereby facilitating shared understanding and better relationships. On the negative side, some familiarity, particularly when focused on the negatives or prejudices can lead to contempt, with all the associated disadvantages. It was this type of familiarity that was the subject of this text.

"And he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples followed him. 2 And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? 3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him. 4 But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. 5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. 6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching" (Mark 6:1-6).

We learn the following from this text:

1) Jesus had gone with His disciples to "his own country". The disciples were very close to Jesus, but they did not allow their familiarity to breed contempt because they had a healthy perspective on Jesus as the son of God and received His teachings as the word of God. Others from the locality "were astonished" because they only viewed Him as "the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses...." (vs.3). This is the wrong type of familiarity that breeds con-

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tempt. The solution to this malady is to apply scriptural teachings from 2 Corinthians 5:16 - "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more".

- 2) The outcome of this negative familiarity is that "they were offended" at Jesus (vs.3). 1 Peter 2:8 makes it clear that Jesus is a "rock of offence" to those who "stumble at the word, being disobedient...". Furthermore, Luke 20:18 highlight the danger for such people "Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder". Truly, it is a "fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31).
- 3) In response to their being offended at Him, Jesus made the comment that "a prophet is not without honour, but in his own house" (vs.4). This may be true in the natural, but it does not have to happen among true Christians, especially if we focused on the spiritual side. Note that their being offended did not damage Jesus, nor His ministry, but only became an obstacle that prevented them from getting the miracles that Jesus came into the town to perform. When we despise others, we may actually be doing ourselves damage by creating barriers to blessings.
- 4) Verses 5 and 6 makes it clear that the reason Jesus "could there do no mighty work..." is because of their unbelief that was spurned and fed by their attitude of over familiarity with Jesus. What a price to pay for a wrong familiarity! This made Jesus to go about the villages teaching - probably leaving the unbelievers and going to surrounding villages.