"THE TRAGEDY OF UNBELIEF"

Matthew 13:53-58
3/25/2018

INTRODUCTION: Verse 53

***Beware of the dangers of unbelief!**

I. Unbelief keeps people from <u>seeing</u> Christ for who He is (v. 54-56)

II. Unbelief keeps people from <u>honoring</u> Christ with the honor He deserves (v. 57)

III. Unbelief keeps people from <u>receiving</u> from Christ what He has to give (v. 58)

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<u>Liar</u> - He knew He really wasn't God but said He was
<u>Lunatic</u> - He thought He was God but really wasn't
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Some people wrongly view Christ as a mere man (a mere mortal).

EX: thehumilityofChristinHisincarnation. Hesurrenderedsomuch. Hisdeitywasveiledfrom the eyes of men (SEE Christ syllabus).

***Beware of the dangers of unbelief!**

I. Unbelief keeps people from <u>seeing</u> Christ for who He is (v. 54-56)

V. 54

"His own country" - Nazareth, how home town, his own native town, where He grew up as a boy and worked as a young man.

"He taught them" - the imperfect tense suggests that He taught them on more than one occasion.

"Astonished" = amazed, astounded, overwhelmed.

"Whence hath this man" - Where did He get such awesome wisdom from? After all:

--He didn't go to a theological seminary
--He wasn't instructed by any big-named Rabbi
--He doesn't have the initials of a doctors degree by His name

"Wisdom" - His <u>words</u>

"Works" - His <u>miracles</u>

What Jesus <u>did</u> authenticated what He <u>said</u>.

They wouldn't even utter His name, although they knew it better than anyone else, but they just said: ***"this man"*** = lit. this one, "this fellow" used with an attitude of contempt or disrespect.

V. 55

"<u>the</u> carpenter's" - Joseph was a woodworker or builder. The definite article *"the"* indicates possibly that he was the only one in town, well known to all (Rienecker, p. 42).

Mark records them also saying *"Is not this the <u>carpenter</u>?"* (showing that they were also astonished that someone of such a humble, common trade could have such spiritual wisdom and mighty miracles).

"Is not this the carpenter's son?" - Answer: No.

Jesus was virgin-born. His birth had nothing to do with Joseph (Mt. 1:18-25).

"Is not his mother called Mary?" - Yes, her name is Mary; but she is not the mother of Jesus in the same sense as other children have mothers.

Jesus came from Heaven and miraculously entered her womb, whereas all other children have their origin in the womb of their mother.

"His brethren. . ." - they were not full brothers, but half-brothers, because they did not have the same father.

Among Jesus' half brothers, James evidently became the leader of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13) and the writer of the book of James, and Judas (i.e. Jude) became the writer of the book of Jude.

V. 55-56

These two verses prove one thing for sure. And that is that Mary did not remain a perpetual virgin as the RCC teaches. She with Joseph had four other sons and at least two daughters.

Jesus, who had humble beginnings, a humble and ordinary family (Joseph a carpenter, Mary a mother and housewife), a humble trade . . . How could He be the Messiah?

These people were neighbors of Jesus' family; they saw Him as a child. Perhaps their own children played with Him.

No doubt they observed His unusual obedience to Mary and Joseph; they wondered why He never got in trouble. They may have been amazed that He was never accused of wrongdoing. Perhaps they were taken back by His love for people, His kindness and graciousness.

They Bible is clear that He as a boy had favor with people (Lk. 2:52).

V. 56

In comparing Jesus with his half brothers and sisters, a sharp contrast was noted by the people of Nazareth. They knew He was different, but would not believe He was who He said He was.

Many wrongly judge others by their education, social status, name, wealth, prestige, roots or heritage, fame, hometown, etc. None of which tells you anything about the personal character of the person.

Many today wrong consider a famous preacher on the radio or TV as more believable (more knowledgeable, more trustworthy) than their own pastor. Why? Because of his notoriety, fame, and because of his coming to you from a distance.

It is wrong to judge someone by appearance and circumstance.

What was the problem of the people of Nazareth?

1. They thought Jesus was merely human (they knew Him "*after the flesh*" - II Cor. 5:16)

   (In Luke's account (4:1-30) – after Jesus boldly stated that He was the fulfilment of Isaiah 61:1, they attempted to throw Him off of the cliff in Nazareth!)

2. They walked by sight and not by faith (II Cor. 5:7)

Examples of people who didn't recognize Jesus for who He was:

John 1:10-11 - *"He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not."*

John 4:10 - *"Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."*

John 5:18 - *"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."*

John 8:19 - *"Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also."*

John 9:30 - *"The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvelous thing, that ye knew not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes."*

John 10:33 - *"The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not: but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."*

John 14:9 - *"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"*

Luke 5:21 - *"And the scribes and Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?"*

Luke 23:35 - *"And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others: let him save himself, if he be the Christ, the chosen of God."*

Mark 15:31-32 - *"Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others, himself he cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross. that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him."*

Acts 13:27 - *"For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him."*

Cp. I Cor. 2:8 - *"Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."*

The most fatal mistake a person could ever make in life is to live and die without realizing who Jesus was!

John 8:24 - *"for if ye believe not that I am (he), ye shall die in your sins."*

II. Unbelief keeps people from <u>honoring</u> Christ with the honor He deserves (v. 57)

The word "*offended*" (imperfect, passive) indicates that they allowed the influence of people, and situations and circumstances to cause them to take offense at Him over and over again. They repeatedly refused to believe in Him.

Something stood in the way of their believing in Him.

Jesus promised blessedness to whoever would not be offended at Him (Mt. 11:6 - *"And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."*)

"A prophet is not without honor" - Quoting a well-known saying, is the negative way of saying: "A prophet always has honor, except in his own hometown and in his own family."

"Honor" - to treat with value, respect, dignity.

Christ was to have equal honor with God the Father (John 5:23).

Unfortunately, familiarity often breeds contempt or less respect.

They wondered, "How in the world could a person from our own midst (from our inferior city - Jn. 1:46) possibly possess such wisdom and power?

Sometimes the hardest people to reach with the Gospel are those who know you best.

Jesus warned that your worst trouble will often come from your own family (Mt. 10:21, 35-36).

III. Unbelief keeps people from <u>receiving</u> from Christ what He has to give (v. 58)

Mark 6:5 says: *"He <u>could</u> do no mighty work"* - It's not that He did not have the ability, or that He was dependent on man's faith in order to do mighty miracles, but that the Father would not allow Him to perform miracles in front of the eyes of people who wouldn't believe no matter what He did.

Mark describes how Jesus did heal a *"few sick folk"* (6:5) (no doubt motivated by compassion)

Jesus was not in the business of performing miracles simply to entertain people; nor did He have to stoop so low as to prove Himself and thus compel people to believe. These people had already seen His *"mighty works"* (v. 54), and yet they still stubbornly refused to believe. Why should Jesus have to perform more? Such would only heighten their guilt and increase their condemnation (cp. Mt. 11:21-22).

Although the Lord Jesus has all power, He can do nothing in your life if you refuse to believe (Heb. 11:6).

Just as Jesus refused to continue to perform miracles for those who refused to believe, so He will not answer prayers today that are not prayed in faith! (Mk. 11:24; Ja. 1:6-7).

Jesus' experience with His hometown friends and neighbors must have hurt Him deeply. Luke says they were going to kill Him (Lk. 4:28-29). He loved them in a very special way because they had been his friends, his neighbors, and He wanted to do so much for them. But He was unable to, because they never recognized Him for who He was!

CONCLUSION:

They never realized who He really was -- the Lord of glory!

Do you see Jesus for who He is?

POEM: "You Call Me Lord"

If Christ were not the Messiah, the Son of God, the Savior of the world, Lord, then He is the worst imposter and most tragic deceiver in history.

Jesus is either:

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