

Pt 23 A Prophet Hath No Honour in His Own Country – John 4:43-45

A sermon series in the Gospel of John, by Pastor Byron Chesney at Porchlight Baptist Church www.pbcknox.com

John 4:43-45

43 Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee.

44 For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

45 Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

Last week we finished the 3-part mini-series about the Woman at the Well. We saw because of the simple testimony she gave that all the city came out to see Jesus and many believed. They asked him to stay with them for a while and he stayed 2 days there in Samaria teaching them.

That is where our opening text picks up from this morning.

43 Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee.

We find Jesus getting back to his itinerary on his trip back to Galilee. That is where he was heading before he stopped off in Samaria.

Although Jesus was born in a manger in Bethlehem, he did not grow up there. His mother Mary and his earthly father, Joseph lived in Nazareth of Galilee and that is where Jesus grew up.

If you recall, after Jesus was born and Herod tried to have him killed, Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt for a short period of time and then they moved back to Nazareth.

Matthew 2:23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

Jesus is called “**Jesus of Nazareth**” 17-times in the New Testament and 1-time as “**Jesus of Galilee**.”

There were 10 major cities in the Country of Galilee during Jesus’ day:

- 1. Nazareth:** The hometown of Jesus, where he grew up and spent much of his early life.
- 2. Capernaum:** Where Jesus performed many miracles and taught in the synagogue.
- 3. Tiberias:** A Roman city located on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.
- 4. Bethsaida:** Believed to be the birthplace of the apostles Peter, Andrew, and Philip.
- 5. Cana:** Famous for the miracle of turning water into wine at a wedding attended by Jesus and his disciples. This is where Jesus first began demonstrating miracles in public.
- 6. Nain:** The site of the raising of the widow's son from the dead by Jesus.
- 7. Magdala:** The hometown of Mary Magdalene, whom Jesus cast out 7-devils and afterwards become one of his most faithful followers.
- 8. Chorazin:** Together with Capernaum and Bethsaida, this city was criticized by Jesus for not repenting despite witnessing his miracles.
- 9. Gennesaret:** An area on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee known for its fertile land.
- 10. Sepphoris (Zippori):** Though not explicitly mentioned in the New Testament, it was a significant city in Galilee during Jesus' time, located near Nazareth.

44 For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

That phrase, “a prophet hath no honour in his own country,” is found in all 4 of the Gospels. It emphasizes the problem messengers of God often face in their hometowns or among their own people. Because they are familiar with the prophet's family, background, and ordinary life, they refuse to accept the person as a divinely chosen messenger and honor them accordingly.

I'm not a Prophet but I have some experience with this problem. At the Church I previously pastored I had started out as their Choir Director and that is how everyone got to know me, but when I was called to Pastor the Church, I did not receive the same respect as other Pastors had in the past because some people still saw me as the choir director. It didn't help matters that I also had to continue leading the choir as well as pastoring the Church. But, whenever someone new would come and join the Church, they treated me much more respectful than the members who had known me before I was pastor.

We just studied last week how the people of Samaria had accepted Jesus and honored him as a Prophet. They honored him so much they wanted him to stay with them. But we find when Jesus went to his own hometown of Nazareth, the people there would not accept him and were even offended by him.

Look with me at **Mark 6:1-6**

1 And he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow 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.

Most places where Jesus went, they were sitting on pins and needles waiting to hear what he had to say. People would come from miles around to get to sit under this great teacher and expounder of the Scriptures.

This particular Synagogue that he is teaching in, was the one that he had grown up in, when he was a boy in Nazareth. The one his family was members of and attended. Everybody would have known who he was. He was familiar to them. They had watched him grow up, had watched him play with the other kids, and probably heard him sing as a young boy. There was a familiarity with him. Sometimes that can be a good thing, but it can also be a bad thing, especially when you are wanting to be taken seriously.

All 3 of the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, tell of Jesus being rejected in his own Synagogue. Just because they have known him for 30-years they cannot reason within themselves as to how he is able to teach and preach like he did. There is no indication that Jesus ever attended Rabbi school or had any kind of formal training outside the home. From everything we know about him, he worked with his earthly father, Joseph, in the carpentry trade.

So, he isn't known to these people as some great teacher like the Pharisees and Scribes were and they are wondering how in the world did he get such wisdom?

Mark 6:3 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.

They were completely astounded. How on earth could this Jesus, whom they all knew had no formal education, had not been to rabbi school, had no book learning, was trained up as a carpenter, how could he speak words like this? How were these words coming out of his mouth?

Then one of them went and said it, **“Is not this the carpenter?”** Is not this the boy we know that ran around in the streets playing? Isn't his father, Joseph, just a poor carpenter? How is this possible?

And then what an awful commentary on the people: **And they were offended at him.** They were offended at him! Who does he think he is? What kind of stunt is he pulling? They think he is trying to make them look foolish and they were offended.

These people had the very son of God, the creator of the world, the Saviour of all men standing right in front of them, and they were too blind and stubborn to even see who He was! Instead they were offended!

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.

Here we see Jesus saying the same thing he said in our opening text in John 4:44.

He could have gone up the road just a little bit to another town and they would have gladly received him. They would respect him and honor his word and his great teaching. But not here in his own hometown, in his own Synagogue. Of all places that should have embraced him and honored him as their hometown hero, it should be these in Nazareth, but they were offended, and they loathed him.

In the Gospel of Luke, we are given much more detailed information about Jesus' visit to Nazareth:

Luke 4:14-30

14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, and he gave *it* again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, **This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.**

22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

23 And he said unto them, **Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.**

24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, **No prophet is accepted in his own country.**

25 **But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;**

26 **But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.**

27 **And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.**

28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way,

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45 **Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.**

Here, where it says when he was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, he obviously was not in Nazareth, but was in Cana which was the next town over from Nazareth.

It says that the Galilaeans **“received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast.”** This would have been when he was in Jerusalem for Passover. They had seen him heal people and because of that they **“receive him.”** This does not mean that they received him as the Messiah, it means they received him because of the miracles. May I remind you of the kind of people we are talking about here. Look back at

John 2:23-25 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. 24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men*, 25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

These people in Galilee are just like the ones mentioned in those verses. They didn't believe in him because of his Word, they only believed what they saw. This shows us that this belief was superficial. In other words, it wasn't a belief of faith in Christ, they were only caught up in the moment of the miracles.

How tragic to think of someone just getting caught up in the moment and making some kind of profession of faith yet didn't truly believe in their heart that Jesus was Savior. I'm afraid there are a lot of people that way. They have allowed their own heart to deceive them.

The Bible says in **Jeremiah 17:9-10** The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it? 10 I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings. God knows those who are truly saved and those who were just caught up in the moment.

The Bible also tells us in **Revelation 2:23b** ...I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

This should get all of our attention knowing that the Lord sees all and knows all. Listen to what it says in **1 Chronicles 28:9** And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.

The Bible says in **Proverbs 17:3** The fining pot *is* for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts. Not all who professed to believe in him because of the miracles actually placed their faith in him as Savior. Some may have and that would become evident as time went on; however, the majority only had superficial faith and it would soon leave and they would be with the crowd on his crucifixion day yelling out “crucify him.”