



DAY THREE

THE DANGER OF FAMILIARITY

DAY 3 - JESUS ON MOUNTAIN-MOVING FAITH AND PRAYER

WEDNESDAY JUNE 8: MATTHEW 13:54-58 – THE DANGER OF FAMILIARITY

MATT 13:54 Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. “Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?” they asked. ⁵⁵ “Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother’s name Mary, and aren’t his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? ⁵⁶ Aren’t all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?” ⁵⁷ And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honour except in his own town and in his own home.” ⁵⁸ And he did not do many miracles there because of **their lack of faith**.

Jesus was back in Nazareth where he had grown up. Probably he was visiting his family. While they were not his priority now, Jesus still had a heart for his mum and brothers and sisters. Nazareth was a tiny village populated by only a few families. You can tell by the way the citizens can name his brothers in order that this was no metropolis. I lived in such a town for a few years when I was teaching. There were no secrets in Baralaba.

On a previous visit to the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus had almost been killed by a local lynch mob when he dared to say that Gentiles were included in God’s plan. But things had settled down now. Jesus had established a good reputation in the region and had many followers. He was welcome to speak in their synagogue again. Perhaps the villagers now saw Jesus as a local boy who had made good. Not too many celebrities came from Nazareth. It didn’t have a strong reputation. As Nathanael asked about Jesus, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” (John 1:46).

But just because Jesus’ hometown marvelled at his wisdom and power, didn’t mean that they believed in him. In fact, their familiarity with Jesus and his family seemed to be their major barrier to faith. They were impressed by his teaching and reputation, but they couldn’t get around his local roots. His family was as ordinary as everyone else in town. How could Jesus be anyone special. It is likely that even his brothers came to the same conclusion. John 7:5 says that they didn’t believe either. In the end, the village took offence at the authority and power of this local upstart.





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And what was the result of their lack of faith in Jesus? They missed the miracles. The healings. The redemptions. The exorcisms. The wonders. The grace. Probably they didn't bother to ask Jesus for anything. They didn't see the point. What could this hometown boy do?

Of course, we didn't grow up in the same town as Jesus, so familiarity is not likely to be a problem for us. Or is it? Maybe we are so used to the ordinariness of life that we have no experience or expectation of Jesus working in power. We have a commonplace Jesus who is with us, but not an authoritative, powerful Jesus who heals and saves and works in power. Maybe it could be said of our church, "Jesus did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith."

But what happens if we believe and then nothing happens? Most of us have been there. We may not have big faith for fear of being let down again. My son, who has had his fair share of significant disappointments, put it to me like this: "I believe with all my heart in Jesus' power to work miracles and I pray accordingly. If my prayers are not answered then I am absolutely confident that Jesus has a better way. So my faith in Jesus continues to grow whatever happens." That's what big faith looks like.

FAITH-FILLED PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

Personal Revival: That I will have a greater hunger to live close to Jesus and to hear and obey his voice.

Church Revival: That we will inspire and encourage each other to follow Jesus with all our hearts.

National Revival: That God will release the people of our nation from their oppression and open their eyes to the grace and freedom of the gospel.

