

**Sunday 22-May-22**

**Doubting King Jesus**

**2 Chronicles 36:15-23**

**The Fall of Jerusalem**

<sup>15</sup> The LORD, the God of their ancestors, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. <sup>16</sup> But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. <sup>17</sup> He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians, who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and did not spare young men or young women, the elderly or the infirm. God gave them all into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>18</sup> He carried to Babylon all the articles from the temple of God, both large and small, and the treasures of the LORD's temple and the treasures of the king and his officials. <sup>19</sup> They set fire to God's temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned all the palaces and destroyed everything of value there.

<sup>20</sup> He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his successors until the kingdom of Persia came to power. <sup>21</sup> The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfilment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah.

<sup>22</sup> In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfil the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and also to put it in writing:

<sup>23</sup> "This is what Cyrus king of Persia says:

“The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of his people among you may go up, and may the LORD their God be with them.”

## **Matthew 13:53-58**

### **A Prophet Without Honour**

<sup>53</sup> When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there. <sup>54</sup> 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. <sup>55</sup> “Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother’s name Mary, and aren’t his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? <sup>56</sup> Aren’t all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?” <sup>57</sup> 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.”**

<sup>58</sup> And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

### **Sermon: Doubting King Jesus**

It would be great to have your Bibles opened to **Matthew Chapter 13** beginning at verse 53

Let me **ask God for His wisdom and understanding first...**

Let’s pray...

## Context

- In the past few weeks, we've been **looking at Jesus' parables**
- A parable is: ***an earthly story with a heavenly meaning*** – a story that illustrates some truth about God, about Jesus and about the Kingdom of Heaven

[Slide 1 – Kingdom of Heaven is like]



- Jesus has been using **parables** to describe what the **Kingdom of Heaven** is like.
- In each parable – we see **two types of people** – those who accept Jesus and His **Word** – and those who reject Jesus and His **Word**
- In the parable of the Sower – **God's word** was **sown** in bad soil and good soil – in other words some people **believed** God's word and some **didn't**
- In the parable of the wheat and weeds – the **wheat** was the people who believed in Jesus – and the **weeds** were the ones who rejected Jesus
- In the parable of the fishing net – the **good fish** were the people who believed in Jesus – and the **bad fish** were the ones who rejected Jesus
- In our passage this morning – **Matthew 13:53-58** –

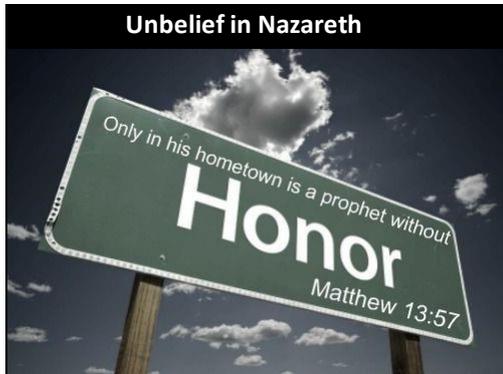
- We're going to see these parables play out in reality in Jesus' hometown of Nazareth
- The people of Nazareth – are the **bad soil** – they are the **weeds** – they are the **bad fish**
- They've already made their minds up about Jesus – and that's why Jesus speaks in parables – as He says – **back in v12**

*Whoever has [the ones who believe] will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have [the ones who don't believe like the people of Nazareth], even what they have will be taken from them*

### Unbelief in Nazareth (Matthew 13:53-58)

- So - we **pick up the story** in v53 – **Jesus** has **finished** telling **parables** – and v54 He **came** to His **hometown (Nazareth)** and taught in the synagogue

[Slide 2-Nazareth]



- Even though the **people of Nazareth were amazed** by Jesus' wisdom and miraculous powers
- They **doubted** **Jesus**
- They knew **Jesus** was from a **simple family background; and a carpenter's son.**
- They knew His **mother Mary** (assumption that Joseph may be dead by this time); and they knew His **brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas** (v55); and they knew His **sisters** (V56).

- Knowing His background; they are **sceptical** that Jesus could be anything but normal; and definitely not supernatural!
- They were **accustomed to unspectacular things from Him**; He had grown up with them like any normal boy. They were **too familiar with Him**. They knew He hadn't trained to teach things of God, like Rabbis would – so they wondered where He could have got this wisdom and power (v55)
- They were **perhaps jealous of Him**; as He'd changed in their eyes.
- Rather than His hometown being proud of Him; His success has made them resentful of Him.
- As V57 says they actually took offence at Him -the word in Greek is where we get our English word scandalised – **literally they were tripped up by him – Jesus was a stumbling block to them!** - **Familiarity breeds contempt!**
- Just like we learnt from the parables in the past few weeks
- People either have open receptive hearts towards Jesus – or they have closed rejecting hearts towards Jesus. The people of Nazareth have closed hard hearts – and **have made their mind up not to accept Jesus**
- Now - remember - Jesus had taught some controversial things – which would have rattled people's cages:
- He taught things like:
  - *If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple.* (Luke 14:26)
  - *You cannot serve God and money* (Matt 6:24)
  - *If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. <sup>9</sup> And if your eye causes you to*

*stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.* (Matthew 18:8-9)

- *"... love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"* (Matthew 5:44)
- *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* (John 14:6)

- These sort of teachings – were **not so easy to take** – and **many resisted**.

### Application

- Don't we sometimes meet the same resistance just like Jesus did with the people of Nazareth - **when we share our faith with family or close friends**. Why is that?
- A few reasons:
  - If we haven't always been a Christian; our family knew us before we were a Christian and might not be so accepting of our new found faith and enthusiasm for God/Jesus/Bible.
  - They may not be able to handle us being different and it may make them uncomfortable or feel inadequate; and feel like we are better than them - so, they reject our sharing.
  - Or perhaps we're just too close – **that they're not going to accept our testimony about Jesus** – their minds are made up. For example, I'm sure we've all given our family advice which they've ignored – but then taken that same advice from someone else?
  - People are usually more receptive when someone comes to them with a clean sheet, carrying no history, and with no presuppositions made about them. **Familiarity breeds contempt!**

- Or perhaps they have difficulty in admitting that they sin – sometimes people think they're basically good – but that's not what the Bible says – **the Bible can be offensive**
  - Or perhaps they have difficulty believing in Jesus **without seeing Him**
  - Or perhaps we might be scared of being rejected by those closest to us; so, we don't share our faith. Therefore, **we please people, rather than God.**
  - Or sometimes we just don't have answers to tricky questions that our family and friends ask – so we don't share or give an answer. **We don't know the Bible enough to give an answer**
- How does Jesus respond to His hometown's unbelief?
  - See v57 – He **understands** that a *“prophet is not without honour except in his own town and in his own home”*
  - Notice, Jesus does not try to justify Himself to them. Instead, because of their lack of faith; Jesus did not do many miracles in Nazareth. It's like His supernatural power was limited by their unbelief. As Matthew Henry puts it: Unbelief is the great obstruction to Christ's favours! It's like Jesus is saying “why would I give you miracles when you don't even believe?”
  - On many occasions - before Jesus performed a miracle, He asked ‘do you believe, I can heal you?’
  - **Jesus never forces Himself on us - He knocks on the door - we have to open it!**

#### Another Application

- The people of Nazareth basically wrote Jesus off because of His family background and upbringing. I wonder if we write people off – before we even give them a hearing. Perhaps we knew them when they were young – [[example of young boy in](#)

church who returns as a man to preach in his home church - and we can't wrap our head around the fact that they have now matured and have learnt a lot]?

- We should **not judge people** by their background or their family connections; **but by who they really are now!**

### Unbelief in Old Testament (2 Chronicles 36:15-23)

- The unbelief Jesus found in Nazareth is **nothing new**
- It's all through the **Old Testament**
- Just like Kryptonite **deprives Superman** of His powers
- Unbelief is Israel's Kryptonite

[Slide 3-Kryptonite]



- In our OT passage from 2 Chronicles 36:15-23 – [[Please turn there now](#)]
- God sent many messengers again and again because He had pity on His people (v15)
- But they mocked God's messengers, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets (v16)
- So, the consequences of this continued rejection were that the **people of Judah** were **carried off to Babylon in exile** (v17-21)
- The bottom line is: there are **dire consequences for unbelief**.

Application

- Today – **there are consequences** for all who don't believe in Jesus and reject Him
- If people die not believing in Jesus – **they will be in a permanent exile** – in **Hell** – **separated from God forever**
- So, if we think about it – **what do we fear most?** Sharing our faith with someone? Or being scared of them ending up in Hell – and we're didn't share our faith with them?  
**How will we feel then?**

(pause)

### Unbelief Today?

- We've seen unbelief or lack of faith in Jesus' hometown (Nazareth) and we've seen unbelief or lack of faith in the Israelites of the Old Testament – what about unbelief today?

### [Slide 4-Unbelief]

- Well – let's briefly look at 3 things:
  - Our unbelief?
  - Our family and friends' unbelief?
  - Our community's unbelief?

### Our Unbelief?

- First then – our unbelief?
- We're not like the people of Nazareth and the people of Israel, are we?
- **BUT** - sometimes - we are though?
- Don't we have times when we doubt?
- Times when we don't believe God is there with us?
- Times when we doubt God will help us this time?

- Times when we doubt God is listening?
- Times when we worry about tomorrow? Instead of trusting God in all things?
- Unbelief is an enemy to Christians as well as non-Christians
- **Doubt leads to unbelief – unbelief leads to disobedience – disobedience leads to more doubt – and again to more unbelief**
- Instead, we must live - knowing - *God promises never to leave us or forsake us* (Deut 31:6) – So, *we need to walk by faith and not by what we see around us* (2 Cor 5:7) – and we need to *trust God in all things* (Proverbs 3:5)

### Our Family and Friends Unbelief?

Second – there's our unbelieving family and friends

As we've said it's difficult to tell them about Jesus?

What can we do?

- We can - Know our Bibles better – so we can answer their objections and questions – explain to them that the Bible has lots of people who doubted God – **Moses, David, Thomas, Peter and so on**
- We can - Give our testimony – explain why we believe in Jesus – what our faith means to us – rehearse it – **so it's logical and has an impact**
- We can - Pray for the Holy Spirit to enlighten them and give them open and receptive hearts

### Our Community's Unbelief?

- Third – there's our community
- **We have a rich harvest field of people who do not believe in Jesus**
- **Jesus commands us to share our faith** – in the Great Commission (Matt 28:16-20)

- Like Jesus we will be rejected when we share the Gospel. We are **not** to give up – but persevere – Jesus promises to be with us to the end (Matt 28:20)

### Conclusion (1 Peter 3:15-16)

To **finish up** then –

[Slide 5-Rejected/Accepted]

If we think about it – **Jesus' rejection in Nazareth** – eventually led to Jesus being rejected by His own people – because they had a wrong idea of what God's promised Messiah should be like and Jesus didn't fit their profile– and so He was rejected and He was crucified.

But because He was rejected and crucified – which by the way was all part of God's plan – because He was rejected and crucified – we are **accepted** as being right with God – if we believe Jesus died for us

**Jesus' rejection** – meant we were accepted

That's called **grace** – **God's undeserved favour on us**

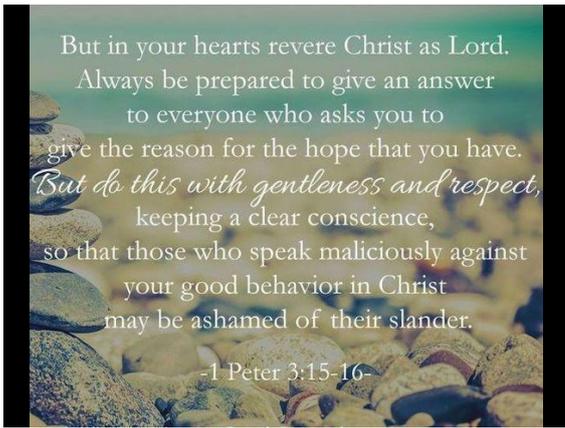
**Jesus saves us from exile in Hell**

So, I want to encourage us to take seriously **Jesus' command** to share the Good News of Jesus' death offering forgiveness and the Good News of Jesus' resurrection offering eternal life to all that we come across

**And the way we do that** – the Apostle **Peter describes in 1 Peter 3:15-16** – which we'll finish with:

[Slide 6-1 Peter 3:15-16]

Peter says...



*<sup>15</sup> But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, <sup>16</sup> keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.*

*Let's pray*

*Father God,*

*Thank you for allowing Jesus, your Son, to be the sacrifice for the sin of the world.*

*Thank you for Jesus' Word, teaching and example.*

*Help us in our unbelief and doubts by enabling us through your Spirit, to believe your promises, walking by faith and not by what we see and trusting in you, in all things.*

*Father, soften the hearts of our unbelieving family and friends. Help us to know and understand your Word more clearly, through your Spirit.*

*Give us opportunities to share our faith. Give us your words to say at the appropriate times. Help us to be bold in our witness, fearing you rather than human beings; and pleasing you rather than human beings.*

*In Jesus name, AMEN.*

### **Benediction (2 Corinthians 5:20)**

*<sup>20</sup> We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. AMEN.*

