

Matthew 12-13 Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

The Outline for Matthew

- I. JESUS' EARLY YEARS 1-2
- II. JESUS' GALILEAN MINISTRY 3-18
- III. JESUS' JUDEAN MINISTRY 19-20
- IV. JESUS' LAST WEEK 21-27
- V. THE RESURRECTION 28

We are in . . .

- II. JESUS' GALILEAN MINISTRY 3-18

And have come to 'H.'

H. Jesus Is THE "Watershed" 11-12 [Explain]

- 1. John the Baptist's question • 11:1-19
- 2. Woe to those who refuse to repent & believe • 11:20-24
- 3. Jesus gives true rest • 11:25-30

CHAPTER 12

- 4. The opposition organizes • 12:1-42
 - a. 1-8 • Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath

1At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. **2**And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!"

Get the scene – [explain]

The Law forbade *work* on the Sabbath, but the question was raised, "What's work?"

So the rabbis had spent endless hours debating & defining what constitutes the kind of labor that's prohibited on the Sabbath.

Plucking grain was considered an act of *harvesting* – so this was banned under the rabbinic idea of the Sabbath.

Jesus shows them they had confused *their interpretations & traditions* with the Word of God itself.

3But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: **4**how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?"

David and his band of followers were on the lam from King Saul, running for their lives from his hot pursuit and were at the point of exhaustion.

They came to the remains of the tabernacle in a village called Nob and persuaded the priest to let them eat the ritual showbread because if they didn't, they'd starve. [1 Sam. 21]

The point Jesus was making is – a man's life is more important than a ritual.

5Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?

Jesus asks about the priests who work on the Sabbath when they offer their priestly service and go about the necessary tasks of the temple ritual?

They're allowed to work because the service they perform is a *sacred* service to God.

6Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple.

If the priests were allowed to work in the temple on the Sabbath day, then the disciples could be excused for snacking on the wheat as they followed Jesus through that field because there was One there who was greater than the temple, and the disciples were greater than the priests!

Of course, Jesus was referring to Himself as the One who was greater than the temple.

What Jesus was saying was this – if the priests' work in the temple can be excused because what they did was in direct service to God, then even more, the disciples could be excused because they were following Him, and their plucking a few heads of wheat was done in the process of serving Him.

This is one of the boldest claims Jesus made to being God – in fact, the very God the temple was built to!!!!

7But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless.

God had rebuked the people of old through the prophet Hosea (6:6) because they were going through the *motions of religion* while cheating and abusing one another.

God prefers inner & outer righteousness to empty religious rituals.

These guys who were getting all over the disciples' case for snacking on wheat were far more concerned with *rules* than either *God or people*.

Then Jesus makes it clear by *whose authority* He says these things -

8For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

The Lord of the Sabbath was Yahweh, their covenant God!

Jesus is claiming to be no One less than the same One Who spoke to Moses from the burning bush; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, the deity who gave the Ten Commandments to the Nation at Mt. Sinai.

b. 9-14 • Jesus heals on the Sabbath

9 Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue. 10 And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"—that they might accuse Him.

Jesus' enemies are now *laying traps* for Him – this is a first.

They've come to know Him well enough that they strongly suspect He'll heal a needy man, even if it defies their interpretations of the law.

Do you get this? They are accepting / admitting that Jesus can **HEAL!!!!!!!!!!** But they still are *against* Him.

11Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? 12Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

Great question – but one they refuse to answer because they can't answer it & still pull off their plot to condemn Him for breaking the Sabbath.

If they say “Yes” then they give Him permission to heal the guy.

If they say “No” then they come off looking like the evil conspirators they are. Jesus has the power to heal, and if there's a need present He can meet, then the good & right thing is to meet it. To *not* meet it would be wrong.

And besides, when Jesus heals someone, **is it work?**

No – because remember, as God & all-powerful, He exerts no effort when He does something!

13Then He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other. 14Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

Their attempts to trap Him & charge Him as a Sabbath-breaker have failed.

So they realize they're going to have to sit down with their best minds & come up with a strategy on how they can *destroy* Him.

Not just kill Him; they need to *destroy* Him in the public eye *first* so they can reclaim the ground they've lost to Him in popularity & influence.

c. 15-21 • Jesus' response to the opposition

15But when Jesus knew *it*, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all. 16Yet He warned them not to make Him known, 17that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 18“Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, And He will declare justice to the Gentiles. 19He will not quarrel nor cry out, Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. 20A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench, Till He sends forth justice to victory; 21And in His name Gentiles will trust.”

We took a look at these verses two Sundays ago.

d. 22-32 • the foolishness & danger of the opposition

22Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. 23And all the multitudes were amazed and said, “Could this be the Son of David?”

A few weeks back we saw *another* mute, demon-possessed man Jesus delivered & discovered that a mute possessed person was considered THE impossible case since getting the demon's name was considered the key to exorcism.

Here's another one that's healed, and the crowd is now getting really stirred up & motivated to declare Jesus as the Messiah.

24Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, “This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.”

As Jesus' popularity is rising with the crowd the Pharisees feel like they need to become more obstinate and resistant so they raise an even more outrageous objection.

They accuse Jesus of having power over the demons by wielding demonic power.

Beelzebub was believed to be a ruler among the demons and an especially potent spiritual force. The name means “lord of the flies.”

The Pharisees have become so frantic in their quest to do away with Jesus they bluster forth this inane & utterly silly remark.

Jesus addresses their reaction . . .

25 But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them:

Note that, He *knew their thoughts*. He not only heard the silly words they said but knew *why* they said them.

“Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. 26If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. 28But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Jesus shows them that *their* explanation for His power is *utterly absurd*.

Everything He did was an undoing of the *rule of satan*, and this is not the way a kingdom works.

You do not foil your own plans and undo your own accomplishments!

29Or how can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

Jesus had come to take back the devil’s captives. This could only be affected by first overcoming the devil’s authority & power which Jesus had amply demonstrated to anyone who was willing to see it.

30He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

Here it is again, Jesus is the watershed – you have to decide about Him, and there is **NO NEUTRAL GROUND**.

31“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.

32Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

It’s one thing to see the miracles Jesus did with the physical eyes and chalk it up to *illusion*, slight-of-hand, or even a *charlatan’s trick*.

But it’s another thing altogether to have the Holy Spirit pressing the truth of the person of Christ and the urgency of not resisting Him upon one’s heart & will, and turn away from *that*.

The whole ministry & focus of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ & bring people to a saving knowledge of Him.

To resist the Spirit is to say He’s lying, and that *cannot* be forgiven.

Let me put it this way – the only sin that cannot be forgiven is the sin of rejecting Christ, for in Him is the forgiveness *for all the rest of our sin*.

This is precisely what the Pharisees were doing.

Over the years, I've encountered lots of people who worry they've committed *the unpardonable sin*.

Generally, if someone is worried about it, chances are good they haven't.

If someone's committed the unpardonable sin, they wouldn't care!

Let's settle this issue – just what is the unpardonable sin?

It's rejecting the Holy Spirit's inner conviction of sin and witness to Christ's ability to forgive.

Let's say there's a chasm that separates two cliffs. The chasm is 300 feet wide.

One cliff is this life, and the other cliff is Heaven; hell is the bottom of the chasm.

The only way to get from one cliff to the other is via a narrow bridge.

That bridge represents Jesus Christ.

Now, some people try to run and jump, and some make it farther than others – but no one makes it much farther than about 30 feet, most only can jump half that. That's our good works.

Others build gliders & special contraptions they hope will carry them across.

But there are strong winds that eddy in and over the chasm and no one makes it much past 40 ft.

This represents the religions & moral philosophies of the world.

There is only one way to get from one cliff to the other – via the bridge. All other means result in falling to the bottom of the chasm.

Now, people can say they don't like *the fact* that there's only one way, but that doesn't *change the fact* there's only one way.

They can *try* some other way, they are even free to *believe* there's some other way – but *they've been warned* that any way but the bridge is not only fruitless, it's ruinous!

The one *unmistakable, unpardonable error* would be to *reject* the bridge in favor of some other means of getting across the chasm.

In the same way, the one unforgivable sin is to reject the inner work and conviction of the Holy Spirit pointing out Jesus *as the only remedy* for sin, the only bridge that spans the distance from this life to eternity.

There is only one sin God **CANNOT** forgive, because it is the means of all forgiveness, and that is rejecting His remedy for our sin – His Son!

e. 33-37 • words reveal the heart

33“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. 34Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. 36But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Keep the context in mind – Jesus is still dealing with His opponents & their rejection of Him.

He wants them to take a good hard look at themselves, & they can start by

considering their *words*.

Are their words reflective of a heart that is filled with righteousness & love, or evil hatred?

In all their plotting against Him, they have spewed forth nothing but hatred & diabolical plans.

Jesus says, “Wake up! *Listen* to yourselves.”

What He says here, we would all be well served to employ; to listen carefully to what we say & then backtrack to what that says about our heart.

f. 38-42 • the opposition’s challenge

38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.”

This from the very guys who set the man with the withered arm in front of Him on the Sabbath day because they **KNEW HE WOULD HEAL HIM!** Absolutely insane!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

They are getting desperate now. They ask for a sign, but they had all the signs they need!

This is like people today who say they’d believe in God if He would just show them a miracle.

Like what – to make a person suddenly appear out of nothing? Would that do it?

Well then, there are miracles all over! They stand on a miracle. **THEY** are a miracle for God created the universe “*ex nihilo*” - out of nothing.

39 But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, [meaning another and another] and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Jesus was of course referring to the *resurrection* – a miracle they had plenty evidence of when He rose from the dead, but *still* did not believe.

Now Jesus draws some potent stories from their past to warn them of the danger they stood in because of their opposition to Him.

41 The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.

Jonah was a reluctant prophet, yet the entire population of Nineveh, many tens of thousands, and Gentiles at that, repented when he preached.

A far greater than Jonah was among them, but they refused to repent.

On the day of Judgment, the men of Nineveh would rebuke the Pharisees for their stupidity.

The thought of Gentiles rebuking Jews for their godlessness was shocking!

42 The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.

Among the common people who came to hear Jesus were some Gentiles, and He

draws on another story of a Gentile who came to hear wisdom from a man of God – The Queen of the South who came to Solomon.

She came from a great distance, and yet the Pharisees who were right there could not discern the even greater wisdom Jesus brought.

She would surely stand as a witness against them.

5. A warning to the opposition • 12:43-45

Now Jesus gives a solemn warning to the people, and specially to the religious leaders about what lies ahead if they follow through on their rejection of Him.

43“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. 44Then he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. 45Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation.”

Jesus had come to bring an end to the devil’s dominion in the land of Israel.

If the Pharisees don’t wake up and take advantage of the salvation God was extending to them in the person of Jesus, then when He left, the devil would re-assert his dominance in a manner manifestly more severe than before.

The destruction of Israel at the hands of the Romans in 70 AD was a fulfillment of what Jesus was saying here.

6. Even Jesus’ family must decide about Him • 12:46-50

46While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. 47Then one said to Him, “Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You.” 48But He answered and said to the one who told Him, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” 49And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! 50For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”

The parallel passage in Mark’s gospel says that there was talk among those closest to Jesus that he was losing it.

Mark 3:21 says, “When His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, ‘He is out of His mind.’”

You see, word’s now gotten out that the powerful sect of the Pharisees has organized against Him and is making moves to take Him down.

Who in their right mind would oppose the Pharisees, and if they found themselves on the bad side of the Pharisees, wouldn’t seek to make amends?

But Jesus seemed to delight in tweaking their up-tight noses and for this His loved ones thought He’d gone to far and needed a good talking to, so they came to try to reason with Him.

In John 7:5 we learn that even Jesus’ own brothers did not believe in Him until after the resurrection!

It seems that they'd managed to talk their Mother Mary into going with them to persuade Jesus to cool it and lay low for a while.

What son can resist his mother's appeals?

Matthew's points in relating this at this point is to show that even His own family, those who'd been closest to Him growing up, His own mother who knew better than anyone Who her Son was, was not exempt from having to come face to face with the reality that Jesus is the watershed of eternity.

His own mother and brothers get in to heaven the same way as everyone else – by deciding Who Jesus is and then living a life in light of that decision.

CHAPTER 13

I. Teaching By Parables 13:1-52

1. Parable of the sower • 13:1-23

Since we covered vs. 1-23 and the parable of the sower last Sunday, we'll skip those verses tonight.

The important thing to note is Jesus' switch from straight-forward teaching to the use of parables.

The reason why He switched is explained in vs. 10-17.

Jesus began to teach via parables because of the growing opposition to Him from the Pharisees and scribes and the effect that opposition was having even among the common people.

There was a growing resistance to Him and the truth He brought.

With a significant number of people, His popularity is beginning to ebb and turn in the other direction.

The parables were a form of both grace and judgment; grace to those who genuinely sought truth, and judgment on those who rejected it.

As we saw Sunday, while the parables were understood by those who believed in Jesus as marvelous illustrations of the truth He taught, they were nothing more than meaningless stories to those who rejected Him, and a convenient excuse to ignore Him.

This first story, the parable of the sower, set the scene and pattern for the rest of the parables – it's message was simple – Be careful how you hear the Word of God!

2. Parable of the tares • 13:24-30

²⁴Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares [weeds] among the wheat and went his way. ²⁶But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. ²⁷So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' ²⁸He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' ²⁹But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of

harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.”””

Since Jesus interprets this parable later, we’ll leave further comment till then.

3. Parable of the mustard seed • 13:31-32

31 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, ³²which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.”

4. Parable of the leaven • 13:33

33 Another parable He spoke to them: “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.”

5. Reprise of 1.b. • 13:34-35

34 All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, ³⁵that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:
“I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.”

That’s from Psalm 78:2.

6. Parable of the tares explained & elaborated • 13:36-52

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.”

37 He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked *one*. ³⁹The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. ⁴⁰Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. ⁴¹The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, ⁴²and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

Jesus gives a total of 7 parable in this section; 4 we’ve already read and were spoken to the multitude from the boat in the cove at Capernaum, the last 3 were given just to the disciples.

And all 7 of them deal with the nature of the Kingdom of God as it exists in the world right now.

There is a principle of interpreting parables you ought to know – the parables are

true to life stories that are meant to illustrate a, that is, a singular, spiritual truth. Bible students err when they try to make every little part of a parable mean something and draw elaborate analogies and applications for it.

Every part of a parable is meant to reinforce one lesson – one point.

For instance – the parable of the sower is meant to get across the imperative of taking care how we hear and respond to God's Word, because you can't always tell which is the good soil and which is the bad.

The second parable – of the wheat and tares, teaches the truth that the people of the Kingdom of God and of this world live side by side, and will do so until the very end when the Judgment of God separates them according to their true identities.

The 3rd parable, of the mustard seed, teaches the same lesson.

The mustard seed is quite small, and when full grown, is a shrub – but in the parable, this seed grows into a massive tree – in other words, it's unnatural! And what comes to live in its branches are birds, which stand in the parables for the messengers of the devil.

Jesus' point in this parable is that the earthly manifestation of the Kingdom of God will start out good, but it will end up becoming a monstrosity which becomes the dwelling place of evil.

Looking forward from Jesus' point, what institution became the earthly manifestation of the Kingdom of God? The Church.

And while its initial days were a time of wonderful growth and fruit, it quickly became corrupt and monstrous and the dwelling place of unspeakable evil.

This continues to this very day!

The 4th parable, of the leaven, speaks the same truth.

In this parable a woman puts leaven in 3 measures of meal. It's interesting Jesus picked that precise measure because in Genesis 18 that's the amount of flour Abraham told Sarah to prepare for the meal for the divine guests who stopped at his tent.

Leaven is a consistent symbol for sin, and here, the leaven is 'hid' in the bread until it has permeated the entire batch.

Bread was the basic staple of their diet at that time and to share a loaf of bread meant to share life.

This parable, like the others means that evil will be insinuated through the warp & woof of the earthly manifestation of the Kingdom of God.

Even while the Invisible, True Church is the communion of saints, it's visible fellowship will know the corrupting influence of the fake and fraud who infiltrate it like leaven infiltrates and corrupts a loaf of bread.

Jesus goes on to amplify these public parables with more told just to the disciples.

44“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

The treasure is hidden in the field. The man finds it, then re-hides it so that it will not be discovered by anyone else.

Then he goes, buys the field, and makes the treasure *legally* his!

The treasure is the true church and the field is the world.

The man is Jesus who gave all at the cross to legally redeem us.

But notice, until the end when He comes to claim His treasure, we stay hidden in the world!

45“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, **46**who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

This parable amplifies the previous – it’s the redeemed who are the pearl of great price.

47“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, **48**which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. **49**So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, **50**and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

This seventh parable affirms the same lesson as the previous 6 – that the earthly manifestation of the Kingdom of God will pick up and include some things that in fact are not really a part of the Real Kingdom.

It’s the task and duty of the angels at the final judgment to sort through what is and isn’t part of the Kingdom.

With what Jesus says in these parables, it ought not really be all that surprising to us when we hear about people in the church or even whole sections of the church which deviate from the straight and narrow of Biblical faith.

51 Jesus said to them, “Have you understood all these things?” They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.” **52** Then He said to them, “Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure *things* new and old.”

What Jesus says here seems a little steep and hard for us to grasp.

But what’s He’s saying is this:

The disciples were men who had been pretty well taught in the ways of God as revealed in the OT and the Law of Moses, that was the *old*.

Now, through Jesus’ teaching, they had learned new things, and the old things they new had been set in a new light.

It was this new, renewing and refreshing the old that would frame the foundation for the expanse of the Kingdom of God on earth.

J. The Rejection At Nazareth 13:53-58

53 Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there. **54** When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, “Where did this *Man* get this wisdom and *these* mighty works? **55** Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? **56** And

His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this *Man* get all these things?”⁵⁷ So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house.”⁵⁸ Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Jesus left Capernaum and went back to His hometown of Nazareth.

When He got there, He went in to the local synagogue, as would be the custom for a traveling rabbi, and He taught.

At first the people were astounded at His teaching, but then they began to grow uneasy.

They said to themselves – “Wait a minute, we know this guy, He comes from here!”

“Yeah – this is that Jesus whose parentage was in question, remember?”

“Oh yeah, and His mother and brothers and sisters still live here.”

“Who does He think He is? He’s gotten all uppity and thinks He’s something special now!”

“Why is it He never said and did these kinds of things here when He was growing up?”

“He goes off, makes a name for Himself, and comes back here expecting us to be all impressed with Him, like we’re supposed to treat Him special: ‘Local boy makes good!’ Well, if that’s what He thinks He’s got another thing coming.”

Jesus puts His finger squarely upon one of the problems anyone faces when they attain a certain level of status or influence – and that’s for the people who were closest to you when you were growing up and developing seeing you objectively.

Familiarity can breed a kind of prejudicial contempt that will keep a person from looking past their own conclusions.

People change, but the past and other’s memories of the past can be a hard prison to break out of.

Have you noticed how hard it is to talk to your own family and friends about the Lord?

They often seem to think you’re joking because they think they know you and effuse to give you a fair hearing because of that.

Because the people of Nazareth rejected Him outright, Jesus was unable to affect many miracles, simply because in their pre-judgment of Him they refused to come to Him.