

# Familiarity Breeds Contempt

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[ 0 : 00 ] So far in Mark's Gospel, we've seen that the religious leaders already have developed outright hatred for Jesus.

! They want Jesus dead. However, the remainder of the population generally has received Jesus favorably. The people in Nazareth, Jesus' hometown, were an exception to that last statement. Many of the people in Nazareth were skeptical of Jesus from the start of his ministry. We'll see that skepticism again tonight when we study the time that Jesus taught in the Nazareth synagogue. Let's read Mark chapter 6, verses 1 through 6. Talking about Jesus, it says, He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him.

And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue. And many who heard him were astonished, saying, Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him?

[ 1 : 03 ] How are such mighty works done by his hands? Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, and Joseph, and Judas, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?

And they took offense at him. And Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown, and among his relatives, and in his own household.

And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching.

Here's the main idea for this passage. As prophesied, Jesus is rejected at Nazareth. Once again, as prophesied, Jesus is rejected at Nazareth.

Luke chapter 4, verses 16 through 30 also record a visit by Jesus to Nazareth, where Jesus taught in the synagogue. Based upon Luke's placement of that account just after Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, most conservative scholars believe that the visit to the Nazareth synagogue in Mark chapter 6, verses 1 through 6, is a separate visit that occurred several months to a year after that visit recorded in Luke chapter 4.

[ 2 : 19 ] As we go through the verses in Mark tonight, we also will treat this visit to the Nazareth synagogue as a separate visit from the one in Luke. Just be aware that nobody can definitively prove that this visit recorded by Mark is indeed a separate visit to the synagogue.

And if you study the passage on your own, you will find some solid commentators who believe the visit here in Mark is the same visit that is recorded in Luke chapter 4, verses 16 through 30.

Regardless, the main message of tonight's passage is the same. To provide some background for tonight's Mark passage, let's go ahead and turn to Luke chapter 4, and we'll look at verses 16 through 30.

We'll read about the Nazareth synagogue visit there because it provides additional information that will apply to tonight. Here are Luke chapter 4, verses 16 through 30.

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him.

[ 3 : 26 ] He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

And all spoke well of him, and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son? And he said to them, Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, Physician, heal yourself.

What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well. And he said, Truly I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. But in truth I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months. And a great famine came over all the land. And Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian. [ 4 : 56 ] When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. And they rose up and drove him out of the town, and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff.

But passing through their midst, he went away. Based upon Luke's record, Jesus is one of the few preachers whom a congregation tried to kill after that preacher's first sermon.

Multiple things angered the people. The passage that Jesus used from the Old Testament was a reference to the Messiah, and the quote he used came from Isaiah 61, verses 1 and 2.

Here are Isaiah 61, 1 and 2. By saying that the scripture was fulfilled in the people's hearing, Jesus made a clear claim to be the Messiah.

Then Jesus predicted that the people would reject him. Jesus noted that the rejection would be similar to how Old Testament Israel rejected the prophets. Both the widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian were Gentiles.

[ 6 : 28 ] Both lived during the time of widespread unbelief in Israel. Jesus' point by mentioning them was that God bypassed all the widows and lepers in Israel, yet showed grace to two Gentiles.

Those statements, in addition to Jesus' claim to be the Messiah, were what made the people ready to kill Jesus. If our passage in Mark tonight is a separate visit to the Nazareth synagogue, Jesus' decision to return to that synagogue likely surprised his disciples.

Most preachers would never return to a congregation that tried to kill that preacher during a previous sermon. But think of all the evidence we've seen that supported Jesus' claim to be the Messiah.

For people who were open-minded and knew their Old Testament, that evidence should have been convincing. After all, the number of miracles done by Jesus is growing.

Just in Mark, we've seen the healing of Peter's mother-in-law. Well, Mark chapter 1 said that many more miracles were done in Capernaum. We saw a leper healed also in chapter 1.

[ 7 : 36 ] At the beginning of chapter 2, we saw a paralyzed man healed. In chapter 3, a man with a deformed hand was healed. Chapter 3 then mentions many miracles again.

Apparently, Mark was getting tired of writing them all down. Then, going to chapter 4, we saw Jesus calm the storm and the sea. In chapter 5, we saw how he delivered the Gerasene demoniac.

In chapter 5, we also saw the woman healed who had bled for 12 years. And also in chapter 5, we saw Jairus' daughter raised from the dead. We might think that the people in Nazareth would have been ready to welcome back their hometown guy with open arms.

Jesus' miracles have made him popular everywhere else. His fame appears to be a case where a small-town boy ventured into the bigger world and became a star.

We might have expected the town leaders to put up signs at the city limits proclaiming Nazareth as the home of Jesus the miracle worker. Instead, we'll see that familiarity breeds contempt.

[ 8 : 48 ] So let's dig into Mark's account. We'll break tonight's passage into two sections, starting with verses 1 through 3. In those verses, we see the sad confusion.

So the sad confusion is your first set of blanks. Here is verse 1 of Mark 6 again. He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him.

Capernaum had been the headquarters of Jesus' Galilean ministry. From this point forward, that was no longer the case. The residents of Capernaum had received more than enough revelation to believe and to be responsible for rejecting Jesus.

Also, the hostility of the Jewish religious leaders and the proximity of Herod's palace, situated in Tiberias, made it too dangerous for Jesus to stay in Capernaum for a prolonged period of time.

Remember what we know about Nazareth. Nazareth was a village where Jesus grew up. It's about 25 miles southwest of the Sea of Galilee and Capernaum. In Jesus' time, Nazareth was a small,

obscure village.

[10:01] It was built on a rocky hillside, and it covered only 60 acres. In Jesus' time, the population was estimated to be 150 to 500 people.

Having grown up in this tiny place, Jesus probably knew almost everybody in town. Nazareth was so obscure that it is never mentioned either in the Old Testament or in the Jewish Talmud.

Yet it had been the Lord's hometown for almost three decades. The fact that Jesus took his disciples with him indicates that this was not a private family visit, but it was a visit intended for public ministry.

As part of their own ministry training, the disciples would be exposed to the hard-hearted rejection that characterizes unbelievers. Look now at the first part of verse 2.

It says, The Greek word translated astonished means to strike or to blast.

[11:08] So Jesus' teaching was mind-blowing for those who heard. The same Greek word appears regularly in the gospel accounts about Jesus' teaching. His authority and his miracles provoked amazement.

People were often powerfully struck by the things that Jesus said and did. Such was the case in Nazareth. The people freely acknowledged that Jesus' teaching was amazing and that the miracles they had heard about manifested great wisdom.

However, there was a unique element to the astonishment of the people of Nazareth. They were amazed that this teaching was coming from Jesus of all people.

The people were surprised to hear Jesus teaching like a rabbi and obviously training disciples like a rabbi when he was not a rabbi. Rather than believing the overwhelming evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, the people instead asked each other a rapid-fire set of five questions.

And those questions are listed from the end of Mark 6.2 to the first part of Mark 6.3. Here are those questions. Where did this man get these things?

[12:22] What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joseph, and Judas, and Simon?

And are not his sisters here with us? The townspeople knew about Jesus' upbringing. He had lived in the same town with them for almost 30 years.

Because Jesus never studied with a rabbi, he lacked in their estimation the proper credentials. And that lack of proper credentials prompted the first question, which was, where did this man get these things?

And that first question led directly to the next two when they said, What is the wisdom given to him? And how are such mighty works done by his hands?

We know that Jesus' teaching astonished the people, but consider how they must have known about his mighty works. We'll see in verse 5 that Jesus did not do many mighty works in Nazareth, except for a few healings.

[13:24] So the fact that the Nazarenes knew about Jesus' mighty works showed that the news of Jesus' miracles had spread across the region. Notice that the residents of Nazareth did not accuse Jesus of being empowered by Satan like the religious leaders had, but neither were they willing to acknowledge that his power came from God.

To maintain their disbelief, they looked for any explanation other than the obvious one that he was the Messiah. Like the hard ground alongside the road in the parable of the soils, their hearts were impenetrable and hard.

They had been given more than enough evidence, yet they obstinately refused to believe in Jesus. The answer to the first three questions should have been obvious.

Jesus was and is the Messiah that he claimed to be. The people already had acknowledged that Jesus said astonishing words and did mighty works. They knew that Jesus never studied with rabbis, and they knew that Jesus' words and works could never have come from Satan.

That left one logical possibility. Jesus had to have been empowered by God, and therefore Jesus must be the Messiah that he claimed to be. Rather than embracing the obvious, Jesus' former neighbors focused on the irrelevant, throwing up a smoke screen of unrelated information to justify their unbelief.

[14:54] Though they admittedly were astonished by his teaching and amazed by the reports of his miracles, they refused to believe that Jesus was Lord and Savior. They were appalled that a homegrown laborer from their village, a common craftsman with no specialized theological

education or religious credentials, would claim to be the long-awaited Messiah of God.

The next questions asked by the people demonstrated typical human nature. When the people saw that they would be unable to discredit Jesus' words and works, they started belittling Jesus as a person.

Look at the first part of verse 3 to see those belittling questions. Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon?

Are not his sisters here with us? They knew Jesus as a carpenter. However, the Greek word here can mean carpenter, stonemason, or anyone who is involved in the craft of building.

It is the word from which we get our word architect, which means chief builder. Jesus likely worked with wood and stone. Builders in his day produced all sorts of things, from houses to cabinets to yokes for oxen.

[16:13] The people saw Jesus as an ordinary working man. In their opinion, he should have remained a villager and should have been content to be the local carpenter. In that time and place, builders did not have a lot of prestige.

They were not high on the social ladder. They were considered menial laborers. So the people looked at Jesus and said, what is this carpenter doing here teaching in the synagogue?

To the people in the synagogue that day, Jesus is nothing more than a commoner who works with his hands. He builds things and repairs things. He's a handyman and a construction worker.

He's a man's man, to be sure. Still, to those Nazarenes, his occupation was not impressive, certainly not the stuff of an esteemed rabbi. The derisiveness of the people's comments increased throughout the questions.

Notice that the people said that Jesus is the son of Mary. In almost every case, the Jews identified men according to their relationships to their fathers, not their mothers.

[17:21] Legally speaking, among the Jews, Jesus was the son of Joseph. And even if Joseph was dead by this time, as many people suspect, it still would have been customary to call Jesus the son of Joseph.

Instead, they called Jesus the son of Mary. Most likely, they still believed Jesus was an illegitimate son that Mary had conceived out of wedlock. Perhaps they were saying, Isn't he that carpenter who was the son of that woman?

We know that family. And if so, that comment is nothing short of ridicule. The tactic of using his family to demean Jesus continued with the remaining questions.

That fourth question ended with the naming of Jesus' brothers. The fifth question pointed out that Jesus' sisters were in the synagogue. We know that Jesus' brothers later became believers after Jesus' resurrection.

However, remember what the family initially thought of Jesus after Jesus began his ministry. We saw the family's opinion in Mark chapter 3. These verses are Mark chapter 3, verses 20 and 21.

[18:35] Then he, talking about Jesus, went home, and the crowd gathered again so that they could not even eat. And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, He is out of his mind.

Most of the family thought Jesus was a lunatic. Joseph had probably died at this time, so the only believer in Jesus' household likely was his mother.

The questions were posed as if to say, Jesus wants us to think that he is the Messiah, but his own family thinks he's a lunatic. If his own family members refused to believe in him, why should we?

Publius the Syrian around 2 BC is the first person recorded to have said, familiarity breeds contempt. Apparently, this was the case with Nazareth, and the local boy makes good named Jesus.

He was just too ordinary for the people. The Nazarenes were saying, Our minds are made up about this homeboy. We will not let the evidence get in our way, and nothing will change our mind.

[19:43] We've all heard that saying, Familiarity breeds contempt. It's the title of this lesson. However, that saying is only true in certain cases. Listen to this quote from a preacher named Phillips Brooks.

Phillips Brooks said, Familiarity breeds contempt, but only with contemptible things or among contemptible people. The contempt shown by the Nazarenes said nothing about Jesus Christ, but it said a great deal about the Nazarenes.

The questions that the people asked were never intended to get honest answers. They were intended to insult and to demean Jesus. The Nazarenes' hearts were so hard that they refused to consider the evidence that Jesus was and is the Messiah.

Their settled unbelief proved that the demeaning people were the contemptible ones. So what was their problem? Why were they unable to trust Jesus and experience the wonders of his power and grace, as had others?

Well, they thought they really knew him. After all, he'd been their neighbor for nearly 30 years, and they'd seen him work in the carpenter's shop. He appeared to be just another Nazarene.

[ 20 : 55 ] He was a commoner, and the people saw no reason to commit themselves to him. Just when we might have thought that the people's reaction to Jesus could never get any worse, look at the last sentence of verse 3.

The last sentence of verse 3 says, And they took offense at him. The noun form of this word, translated as offense, is skandalon.

That word comes over into English as the word scandal. These people were scandalized by Jesus. They were profoundly offended. They did not want to have any identification with him because he embarrassed them and he shamed them.

The people are scandalized by all this talk and hoopla about Jesus. He offends their personal sensibilities. His works they cannot deny and his words they cannot handle, but they do not care. In spite of the overwhelming evidence, they refused to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Without knowing it, however, the people were fulfilling Old Testament prophecy.

[ 22 : 03 ] The word skandalon also was used of a building stone that was rejected. When builders selected stones to be used in the construction of buildings, they examined the quality and strength of the available stones.

And their goal was to find the best materials. And some stones had to be rejected. Does the mention of a stone being rejected sound familiar?

Listen to what Isaiah 8, verses 14 and 15 say about God. Isaiah 8, 14 and 15 say, And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken. They shall be snared and taken. Listen to what God himself says in Isaiah 28, 16.

Here is Isaiah 28, 16. Therefore, thus says the Lord God, Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone of a sure foundation.

[ 23 : 19 ] Whoever believes will not be in haste. For another Old Testament cornerstone reference, listen to Psalm 118, verse 22.

Psalm 118, 22 says, The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. Jesus quoted Psalm 118, verse 22 in reference to himself in his debates with the Jewish religious leaders.

You can read about those in Matthew 21, 42, Mark 12, 10, and Luke 20, 17. We'll look at just one of them. Listen to Matthew 21, verses 42 through 44.

Here are Matthew 21, verses 42 through 44. Jesus said to them, In the same account, Mark and Luke also note that Jesus quoted Psalm 118, verse 22.

Then in the New Testament again, in Romans chapter 9, verses 31 through 33, Paul quoted Isaiah 28, 16. Listen to Romans 9, 31 through 33.

[ 24 : 57 ] But that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works.

They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, as it is written, Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. And whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

Now listen to what Peter said to the Jewish religious leaders following Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. This is after the leaders had Peter and John arrested.

In Acts 4.11, you'll hear Psalm 118, 22 again. And here is what Peter said in Acts 4.11 and also 4.12. Peter said, This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. In his first letter recorded in Scripture, Peter again quoted both Isaiah 28.16 and Psalm 118, verse 22.

[ 26 : 17 ] Listen to 1 Peter 2, verses 6 through 8. Peter wrote, For it stands in Scripture, Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.

They stumble because they disobey the word as they were destined to do. Do you see how the Old Testament prophecies from Isaiah and Psalms are fulfilled in Jesus, a builder himself who was likely familiar with using stones in his own work?

The actions of the Nazarenes that day also fulfill another Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah. Listen to how accurately Isaiah 53, verses 1 through 3 describe what we see here in Mark chapter 6, verses 1 through 3.

Isaiah 53, verses 1 through 3 say, Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

[ 27 : 32 ] For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Here's a quote from Jason Meyer. He said, It should come as no surprise that Jesus would be despised and rejected by men. He is the suffering servant of Isaiah 53.

The Gospel of Mark presents two images of the Son. Sometimes we see the royal image of the Son. That's his glorious divine identity. And at other times we see the servant image of the Son. His humble earthly origins. But we don't have to choose between them. Jesus is both. That is what people repeatedly fail to understand. The same thing is true today.

[ 28 : 36 ] Many are willing to acknowledge the historical Jesus of Nazareth. But people in Nazareth and the people today are wrong when they see only a carpenter, only a son of Mary, and only a Nazarene.

They miss that Jesus is truly man and truly God at the same time. Let's move to the second section of tonight's passage.

In Mark 6, 4-6, we see the somber conclusion. Once again, we'll look at the somber conclusion. Here are verses 4-6 again.

Jesus said to them, Jesus was like an Old Testament prophet whose words often were rejected and who was dishonored most by the people who knew him best.

On many occasions, Jesus later warned his disciples that they could expect the same treatment. When unbelievers cannot refute Jesus' message, unbelievers will attack Jesus and anyone who speaks for him.

[ 30 : 09 ] The Pharisees and Sadducees ultimately responded to Jesus by resorting to such tactics.

Refusing to believe his teaching and miracles, but unable to refute his wisdom and power, they devised a plan to silence him permanently. The people of Nazareth illustrate Israel's blindness. Their refusal to believe in Jesus pictured what the disciples would soon experience, and what Mark's readers then and now would experience in the advance of the gospel. J.C. Ryle said, It is neither the lack of evidence nor the difficulties of Christian doctrine that make people unbelievers. It is lack of will to believe. They love sin. They are wedded to this world. In this state of mind, they never lack false reasons to confirm their will.

Look again at verse 5. It has generated much unnecessary controversy over the years. Verse 5 says, And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them.

[ 31 : 28 ] The controversy comes from the meaning of, And he could do no mighty work there. The issue was not that Jesus lacked the supernatural power to perform miracles.

Rather, there was no reason to do miracles in Nazareth. The purpose of his miracles was to attest to the truth and to reveal himself as the Lord and Messiah.

Jesus did miracles to lead sinners to saving faith. Because the people of Nazareth had already confirmed their rejection of Jesus, miracles were unnecessary.

God and his son could do anything, but they've chosen to limit themselves in accordance to human response. But even in this case, we see that Jesus healed a few.

Perhaps some did have faith, or some were too sick to have an opinion about Jesus. The statement clarifies that Jesus was not the kind of miracle worker whose primary purpose was to impress his viewers.

[ 32 : 30 ] Jesus' power was never diminished by unbelief. Nonetheless, the hard-hearted rejection of Nazareth was such that there was no reason to do many miracles there. Matthew's wording of the same account in Matthew 13, verse 58, emphasizes the reason why Jesus did few miracles in Nazareth.

Listen to Matthew 13, verse 58. And he did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Once again, and he did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. On one hand, Jesus' decision was merciful.

If he had done additional miracles in Nazareth, the unbelieving people's condemnation for rejecting him would only have increased. Hell would forever have been worse for them.

The people of Jesus' hometown would have been judged like the people of unrepentant cities like Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. You can read about those cities in Matthew 11, verses 20-24.

[ 33 : 39 ] On the other hand, the Lord's withholding more miracles was also a sign of judgment. The purpose of miracles was never to entertain the hard-hearted, but to move those who were open to the gospel towards saving faith.

Jesus told the Pharisees, An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except for the sign of the prophet Jonah. That verse is Matthew 12, verse 39.

Jesus' miracles were of no spiritual benefit for those who refused to believe. He had no interest in indulging ungodly curiosity. We have one more verse to look at tonight.

Look at Mark 6, verse 6 again. Talking about Jesus, it says, And he marveled because of their unbelief, and he went out among the villages teaching.

The word translated as marveled also could be translated as amazed. The New Testament records only two times when Jesus was amazed by people.

[ 34 : 49 ] Both involve faith or the lack of faith. On the positive side, Jesus marveled at the strong faith expressed by a Roman centurion in Capernaum.

You can read about that in Luke chapter 7, verse 9. But here in his hometown of Nazareth, it was the utter absence of faith that caused the Lord to be amazed.

When it became clear that Nazareth had rejected Jesus, he rejected them. The Savior left and began a teaching tour in other more receptive towns in Galilee.

For the inhabitants of his hometown, the outcome was horribly and forever tragic. And there is no other indication in Scripture that Jesus ever returned to Nazareth after this.

Astonishment and amazement bookend this passage. Jesus and his hometown are dumbfounded by each other. The Nazarenes were unable to get past Jesus' humble origins and familiar feel.

[ 35 : 54 ] Jesus was astounded at their unbelief in light of what he said and what he did. This sadly foreshadows the unbelief of the nation of Israel as a whole, of many in our world today, and even many in some of our churches.

Nowhere on earth ever had the privileges that Nazareth had. For 30 years, the Son of God lived in this town and went about its streets. For 30 years, he walked with God under the eyes of Nazareth's inhabitants, living a blameless, perfect life.

But it was all lost on the Nazarenes. They were not ready to believe the gospel when the Lord came among them and taught in their synagogue. They would not believe that someone whose face they knew so well, and who had lived such a long time eating, drinking, and dressing like one of them, had any right to claim their attention.

They took offense at him. That previous quote was from J.C. Ryle, and he continued, There is nothing in all this that needs surprise us.

The same thing is going on around us every day in our own country. The holy scriptures, the preaching of the gospel, the public ordinances of religion, the abundant means of grace that we enjoy, are continually undervalued by people.

[ 37 : 16 ] They are so accustomed to them that they do not know their privileges. It is an awful truth that in religion, more than anything else, familiarity breeds contempt.

Ryle ended with a warning for us. Consider this if you're tempted to think that you never could be like the unbelievers in Nazareth, or like the unbelievers today.

Here's his warning. Ryle said, We can never be too much on our guard against unbelief. It is the oldest sin in the world.

It is the sin that especially fills hell. Whoever does not believe will be condemned. It is the most foolish and inconsistent of all sins.

It makes people refuse the plainest evidence, shut their eyes against the clearest testimony, and yet believe lies. Worst of all, it is the most common sin in the world.

[ 38 : 15 ] Thousands are guilty of unbelief on every side. They claim they are Christians, but in practice, they are really unbelievers. They do not implicitly believe the Bible and receive Christ as their Savior.

And here's the warning. He says, Let us go on watching our hearts, even after we have believed. The root of unbelief is never entirely destroyed.

We have only to leave off watching and praying, and a rank crop of unbelief will soon spring up.

Daniel Akin said, As we consider how Jesus was treated by his hometown, his own family, and his friends, it might be good for us to reflect on how we treat this servant king, and how we respond to the one who was rejected by the ones who were certain that they knew him best.

It is critically important that we see Jesus as he truly is, and as he is revealed in Scripture, not as we might hope, wish, or want him to be.

Hear that last sentence again. He said, It is critically important that we see Jesus as he truly is, and as he is revealed in Scripture, not as we might hope, wish, or want him to be.

[ 39 : 35 ] We saw the people of Nazareth ask several questions about Jesus. Akin challenged each of us to ask several questions about ourselves.

So here are these questions to think about as we close tonight. Do we show contempt toward the Jesus revealed in Scripture? Are we scandalized by the simplicity of his gospel?

Are we offended by the unfairness of its message that says a child molester or even a serial rapist and murderer on death row can be made right with God by repenting of sin and by expressing childlike faith in Jesus Christ?

Do we allow the biblical evidence to slay our biases and reshape our preconceived notions of whom Jesus must be for us to accept him and trust him?

Then here are some more. Have we become so familiar with Jesus, having been raised in church all our lives, that his words no longer convict, his miracles no longer astonish, and his death on the cross no longer strikes the chord of amazing grace?

[ 40 : 50 ] Familiarity can blind us to the greatness and glory of a Savior if we are not careful.

Spiritually inoculated at some point in life, we become immune to the real thing.

We must not come to Jesus on our own terms, but on his terms. This prophet was without honor in his own hometown. We cannot make the same mistake in our own hearts.

The consequences are eternal. Adoration is the only proper response to the one the Father has placed as the cornerstone. Tonight's passage teaches hard truths about the consequences of rejecting the true Jesus of the Bible.

But those hard truths are what make the good news of the Bible such good news. Remember Jesus' words in John 3.16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son so that whoever believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the reminder tonight that it is important for everyone to believe the Jesus of the Bible, not the Jesus that our world would have us believe.

[ 42 : 13 ] When we have questions about what Jesus would do, let us always go back to Scripture and let Scripture be our guide rather than anything in this world today. Help us be more willing to boldly share this message with others, especially as we come near to Resurrection Sunday.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. you