

*“A prophet is not dishonored except in his hometown and among his own relatives, and in his own household.” 5And He could not do any miracle there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. 6And He was amazed at their unbelief. Mark 6:4-5*

Jesus announced His ministry in the synagogue in Nazareth, His home town. At first those in attendance marveled at His words, at first they believed, but then they began considering the situation, what they knew to be true in the flesh, by sight, *is this not Joseph's son?* These were a religious people, they were Jews in the local synagogue on the Sabbath and yet they failed to believe the miraculous announcement of the Messiah, they lacked faith. And we are told that Jesus was *amazed at their lack of faith*.

John wrote of the Jews of Jesus day in his Gospel, *He came to His own, and His own people did not accept Him. John 1:11* Jesus was with His own people, God's chosen people, and they stood back demanding He show them signs before they would believe. In Hebrews we are told, *those to whom it (the Gospel of the Kingdom) was first preached did not enter because of disobedience (Heb 4:6) the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it (Heb 4:2)* What was their disobedience, they failed to enter in with faith. Faith is described as *the evidence of things hoped for*. The Jews were *looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. (Titus 2:13)* Yet they miss His appearing because of their unbelief. Paul writes in the Book of Romans, *The just shall live by faith. Rom 1:17* So this passage shows that it is possible to be in church, consider yourself religious and yet be in unbelief, lack faith.

*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

*28And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, 29And 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. 30But he passing through the midst of them went his way, Luke 4:28-30*

So the people in Jesus home synagogue were so angry, because of being filled with unbelief, they were ready to kill Him. But *He passed through the midst of them*. Jesus wiped the dust off His feet as He left Nazareth and traveled on to Capernaum.

*31And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days (plural). 32And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power. 33And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, 34Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. 35And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not. 36And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out. 37And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about. Luke 4:31-37(Mark 1:21-28)*

Jesus traveled to Capernaum of Galilee and again He ventured to the local synagogue and spoke. There He had a different outcome, *they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power*. His teaching astonished them, *his word was with power*. And there in that synagogue, in this assembly of Jewish believers, was a man who had *a spirit of an unclean devil*. The spirit in this man recognized Jesus. He says, leave us alone, *thou Jesus of Naza-*

*reth. Then the man says, art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. This demon possessed man, or the demon in him, knew that Jesus was the Messiah. He also knew something even greater, that Jesus had come that He might destroy the works of the devil. This is something as believers we need to understand, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost. 1 Timothy 1:15*

*He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. 1 John 3:8*

Jesus commanded (rebuked, spoke sternly) the demon to come out of the man, *Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.* Then Luke states the demon responded and left the man, *when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.* The crowd was impressed because of Jesus authority *What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.* Later in Luke's Gospel after the seventy disciples Jesus sent out return they rejoiced saying, *"Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."*

When Jesus was in the desert, satan was there to tempt Him and then Jesus used Scripture, the Word of God to combat satans temptations. Believers must take this type of authority against the of satan in our own lives. At Capernaum it was the stern command that caused the demon to come out. The disciples experienced power by just using Jesus name, *the demons are subject to us in Your name.* It is not just the use of Jesus name that gives power but faith in the Lord and His power, *be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Eph 6:10* Luke in Acts tells of Jews (not believers) using Jesus name.

*13But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to use the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had the evil spirits, saying, "I order you in the name of Jesus whom Paul preaches!" 14Now there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, doing this. 15But the evil spirit responded and said to them, "I recognize Jesus, and I know of Paul, but who are you?" 16And the man in whom was the evil spirit, pounced on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. Act 19:13-16*

In His home town Jesus power had been limited, *He could not do any miracle there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.* It is hard to imagine Christ's power being limited but it was because of *their (the Jews of Nazareth's) unbelief.* Then He moves on to Capernaum and casts out a demon. What does this have to do with us as believers? We find ourselves in similar situations. We must note what Paul wrote to the Ephesians.

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Eph 6:12*

Paul tells the Ephesians to *be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Eph 6:10,11* To us, Paul's Christian brothers and sisters, Paul would say the same thing, *be strong in the Lord.* How many times have we heard those words and doubted they could be true in our own lives. The Bible is full of statements like God's command to Joshua, *Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."* Josh 1:9 We believe these statements are true but how can they be applied in our daily walk with the Lord? Paul writes in Romans 8:1, *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (KJV)* It is easy to feel condemned for not being a joyful and overcoming Christian.

The first step of faith is a matter of identity. Jesus stated, to be a believer, you must be born again, you must enter into newness of life. Paul wrote in chapter six of Romans, *Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4* Walk in newness of life, walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. A believer is one that is born again, born of the Spirit, a new creation. In Christ we have *New Identities* and we must strive to learn to walk in that new identity, *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Rom 15:13*

This *New Identity* is not something we earn by striving to live godly. It is the gift of God that we receive when we are born again. We truly become new creations as Jesus said, *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. John 3:6* When we begin to truly understand newness of life, the spiritual existence we get from God as Christians, God begins to grow in us a life of faith. Paul wrote, *it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Phil 2:3* Or as Paul wrote, *if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Cor 5:17* Paul gave up his Jewish identity to instead be identified with Christ, He counted *it all loss for the sake of knowing Christ (Phil 3:8), to walk by faith not by sight (2 Cor 5:7).*

Why did the neighbors of Nazareth not respond to Jesus? They didn't believe Him when He read from Isaiah, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me*. John wrote, *God gives him the Spirit without limit. John 3:34*. We are to be born of that same Holy Spirit as believers and with that power. *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 2 Peter 1:3*

*By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. 2 Peter 1:3 NLT*

Paul says to console those who are downtrodden, *Encourage those who are timid. Take tender care of those who are weak. 1 Thes 5:14* What if as a believer you are always timid and weak? If the devil can keep us from knowing our true identity in Christ and God's favor toward us, he can keep us on spiritual life support. If we fail to comprehend the unlimited power of God in us, *Christ in us the hope of glory*, we will be weak in our faith and unable to see God producing much fruit in our lives and the lives of those we wish to touch.

*15Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21far above all principality [rule] and power [authority] and might [power] and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. Eph 1:15-21*

*For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 1 John 5:4*

*What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? Rom 8:31* If God is for us who can be against us, may we hold on to this mighty truth. We need to live by faith in the truth of God's Word.