

05 July 2009
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(Joined in progress.)

...old friends. He is attended by his disciples so he is coming as a rabbi. Rabbis moved about the country as teachers and they had their little circle of disciples. This is how he came on this trip. He went into the synagogue and began teaching.

He was not greeted with wonder or understanding but with contempt. They were disturbed that a man who came from a background like Jesus' should say and do the things such as he was doing. Familiarity had caused a mistaken contempt. They refused to listen to what he had to say. They said, "Is not this the carpenter?" In other words, isn't he just a common person? In other words, what gives him the authority to teach us?

The word for carpenter is tekton. The word means more than a carpenter. It means someone who could build a house, build a chicken coop, or who could build or repair anything you needed, mend a roof, build a wall, repair a gate. He was a craftsman or handyman.

During the British Labour movement a man named Will Crooks who was born into a poor family and one of his recollections was seeing his mother crying because she didn't know where the next meal was coming from. He started working in a blacksmith shop as a young man with minimum wage and became a very fine craftsman. He entered municipal politics and became the first Labor mayor of one of London boroughs, Poplar borough.

In a crowd one day a lady commented with great disgust, "They have made that common man Crooks and he's no better than a working man." Well, Crooks himself standing in the crowd turned around and told the lady, "That's right madam. I am not better than a working man." Too often in our factories we look for the administration to be the one with the good ideas and the leadership when actually the workman is in a better position to lead and to improve the product.

The people of Nazareth despised Jesus because he was a working man. To us that is his glory because it means that God when he came to earth claimed no exemptions. He took upon himself a common life with all its common tasks. The accident of birth and fortune and pedigree has nothing to do with our true worth. We must always be aware of the temptations to evaluate one another by external and incidentals and not by our native worth.

Some said, "Isn't this Mary's son? Do we not know his brothers and his sisters?" The fact that they called Jesus *Mary's son* means that Joseph must have been dead or they would have said *Joseph's son*. Jesus was only 33 when he died and he didn't leave Nazareth until he was 30. Why such a long delay? Why was he lingering in Nazareth

until he was 30 while a world was waiting to be saved? The most likely reason was the Joseph died young and Jesus took upon himself the support of his mother and his brothers and sisters until they were old enough to fend for themselves. He was faithful to his family and God gave him much to do in a short time. But the people of Nazareth despised him because they knew his family.

Sometimes when familiarity which should breed a growing respect actually breeds an increasing disrespect. Sometimes we are too near people to see their greatness. Jesus could do no great deeds in his hometown.

It is true that if people refuse to be healed they cannot be healed. A desire to be healed and a faith in Jesus are necessary for one to be healed. Some of Jesus' greatest deeds were healing and his hometown would not let him. Jesus called the twelve to him [and] sent them out in twos. He gave them the power to heal and to cleanse unclean spirits.

Hospitality was a sacred duty in the Middle East. When a stranger entered a town it was not his duty to search for someplace to stay. It was the duty of the town to offer hospitality. If the village doesn't offer hospitality and didn't want to listen to them then they should shake the dust off their sandals and leave.

So we see that the mark of a Christian disciple is to be the utter simplicity, complete trust and generosity which is always to give and never to demand and like Jesus to love and to serve.

Amen.