

Monday, March 13, 2023  
Season of Lent  
Day 17

### **Matthew 13:53–58**

<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 offence 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.

### **Reflection**

During my short time in the Pentecostal church, with an undertone of the ‘health & wealth gospel,’ this incident would have been interpreted to mean that because the people lacked faith in Jesus, Jesus was not able to heal/exorcise very many people. The emphasis would have been: increased faith (belief) = increased healing (power). In other words, Jesus’s power is diminished by people’s unbelief. Perhaps that’s the way it reads to you too? If so, I’d like to offer an alternative reading.

Jesus comes home, he teaches the same message of the kingdom and he performs the same miracles of the kingdom that he has been everywhere else. But, this crowd knows him and they take offence. This is an issue of familiarity breeding contempt. How dare a simple worker try to take on a status of teacher and prophet? The result is that, because of the general attitude, people did not bring their sick and demon-possessed to him for healing and deliverance the way the other towns did. This is the continuation of the division the kingdom of God makes among people. This is Jesus’s parables that he just finished telling coming to life.

So, lack of faith does equal lack of miracles, not because Jesus’s power is diminished, but because it is not sought after. This is a good reminder to us too. Where in our own Christian walk do we see a lack of God’s power? What are we struggling with that we are not bringing to Jesus? Why is this lack of faith present? These are important Lenten questions! It’s amazing that in one breath we can declare that Jesus is Lord of all, but in the next moment decided that something is not worth bothering him about. Once again, sin is like addiction (or sin is addiction), where “it is not your drinking but your stinking thinking.”

As we journey through Lent, let’s determine to submit everything, no matter how small or common we may think it, to Jesus. Let’s see what miracles God will do if we turn everything over to him!

### **Prayer**

Lord, forgive us for faulty thinking, believing that we should not bother you over simple things (or whatever other excuses we create). Help us to give up everything about us to your lordship. Amen.