

“At Home and Abroad” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Pentecost 7 July 7, 2024

- I. **Mark 6:4** – Jesus said, “A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.”
- II. **Why was Jesus rejected in His hometown?**
 - a. When you think about it, these were the people who knew Him best.
 - i. Some of them had grown up with Him from childhood.
 - ii. Others had watched Him grow up and known His mom, Mary and earthly dad, Joseph.
 - iii. It’s a little surprising that they were so negative toward His teaching of the Word and miracles.
 - b. Most of you know a little about the New York Yankees catcher Yogi Berra.
 - i. He was a Hall of Famer, three-time American League MVP, and won ten World Series.
 - ii. He had an awesome mind for baseball, even if he was also known for his wacky sayings like, “Baseball is ninety percent mental; the other half is physical.”
 - iii. Yogi Berra had all the credentials... so when he retired after the 1963 season, he was immediately named manager of the Yankees.
 1. Unfortunately, he got fired after just one year.
 2. The trouble seemed to be that some of the Yankee stars at that time like Mickey Mantle and Whitey Ford couldn’t bring themselves to respect their old teammate as a boss after knowing him all those years as “just one of the guys.”
 - c. I can imagine that the people of Nazareth were surprised – like a lot of other people who heard Jesus teach with authority.
 - i. In many other places in the Gospels, it tells us that Jesus spoke or taught with authority like no one had ever heard.
 - ii. Perhaps you’ve watched a person give a speech or talk about a subject and thought, “Wow, that guy knows what he’s talking about!”
 1. Yet, for Jesus, He was interpreting and speaking about God’s Word in a way that even the highest ranking religious leaders could not... because He was God.
 2. The strange thing is that Jesus did not have the worldly credentials necessary... as He wasn’t a trained rabbi, a Pharisee, nor had He worked His way up the typical religious leader’s path.
 3. On the other hand, Jesus did many signs and miracles to back up His teaching... but even more than that, the content was in perfect alignment with His Father in heaven.

- iii. Yet, even with these heavenly “credentials”, people who knew Jesus growing up in Nazareth couldn’t see Him as any more than a carpenter, Mary’s little boy, and this authority didn’t sit well with them.

III. **Is Jesus ever “too familiar” to us?**

- a. Did we grow up with Jesus in a way that makes Him so familiar that He has lost His authority in our lives.
 - i. Maybe we see Him as this gentle, loving guy (which He is, of course) who would never call us to repent of our sins (which is not true, of course).
 - ii. We really like the Jesus who sort of keeps to Himself, kind of like a nice neighbor... as long as they don’t start telling us what we need to do with our lawn or property.
 - iii. Some of us appreciate the lessons about life and the wisdom we get from Jesus, but the last thing we want to do is turn our lives over to Him...
 - iv. When we come into this sanctuary, is it more of a social club than a house of worship and praise?
 - 1. Is Jesus an afterthought – or is He the main point?
 - v. Jesus is God – and I wonder if we sometimes treat Him as just “one of the guys”.
- b. The authority of Jesus in our lives comes from several important places.
 - i. First, the Word of God gives us a clear picture of God the Father raising up His Son to become the Savior – and by faith we believe the inspired Scriptures which say that Jesus is that very Savior.
 - ii. Secondly, Jesus says that “all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.” (Matthew 28:18)
 - 1. Also hear a prophecy from the Old Testament Book of Daniel, “¹³ I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and He came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. ¹⁴ And to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.” (Daniel 7:13-14)
 - 2. Yes, the authority of Jesus as King of all things is absolute – and He is the absolute authority in our personal lives as well.
 - iii. Third, Jesus’ authority comes from His tenacious love and willingness to die on the cross for our sake... He is worthy of our trust and obedience to His authority for the sacrifice He made on our behalf.

IV. **The greatest miracle** and sign of all was the death and resurrection of Jesus.

- a. The cross was the goal... as sad and awful and sick as that sounds.

- b. Sin is the great curse that came to us from the first people – and only Jesus could be the one to break it... by His authority, which happened to also be through His sacrifice on the cross.
 - i. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:21, “For our sake [the Father] made [Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”
 - 1. Jesus became sin and was nailed to a cross – destroyed – and placed in the grave for our sake.
- c. The rest of the miracle came three days later as the Lord of life rose again from the dead to announce that sin is defeated, and He is the only one who can offer that victory to you.
 - i. Christ broke the bondage of sin and its authority in our lives, and through faith, we are offered the full and complete forgiveness of our sins by His authority!
 - ii. Putting the whole thing in perspective, we are so encouraged and blessed to have Jesus in our lives as the authority – and to respond to His love with all our hearts and action.

V. **When Yogi Berra was fired by his home team, he went somewhere else.**

- a. He went across town to the New York Mets and led them to a World Series.
- b. When Jesus was rejected by His hometown, He went on the road with His followers who trusted in Him.
 - i. He sent them out two by two into the world with very little to depend on but God Himself.
 - ii. They took the same message that was shared with them in authority... that the entire world needs a Savior to honor and follow.
- c. Many times, people who believe in Jesus are also rejected by those who know them best – as Jesus says that those who are likely to dishonor a prophet are his hometown, his relatives, and his own household.
 - i. I’m sure all of you have struggled at home with the message of Jesus and the authority He has in your lives.
 - ii. So, without giving up on those people entirely, it’s okay to go abroad and begin the same journey of sharing the love of Christ with others.
- d. What does Jesus say?
 - i. “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...” by baptizing and teaching. (Matthew 28:18-20)
 - ii. This is not a great recommendation, but THE Great Commission... it is a mandate from the One who has all authority.
 - iii. But more than just another burden like so many other things in our lives... this is not about “I have to...” but about “I get to...”
 - 1. We get to open the hearts and minds of other people by the Holy Spirit through being His witnesses in this area – the region – and the world abroad.

2. It doesn't have to be scary or intimidating – look at our Outreach Board and how they go to the Rockwood Market and set up a table... people come to them and get a Bible or Gospel bracelet.
 3. Many times, we are given the opportunities to be a witness for Jesus through living out our lives in obedience to Him
- e. Certainly, the Lord and authority in our lives has provided us with everything we need to share Him... as weak and helpless as we may seem... but remember what Jesus says, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.” (2Corinthians 12:9) Amen