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## **Familiarity Breeds Contempt; Revelation Feeds Faith**

### **Mark 6:1-6**

There is an old saying... “Familiarity breeds contempt.” It means “The more you know someone and have daily access to their physical life, the more you are tempted to despise them – belittle them, think lowly of them.

This tendency can certainly cause trouble at many levels of human experience... in marriage, little by little spouses can lose their esteem for each other when they hang out together day after day, year after year. Children can lose respect for their fathers as they get older and see their feet of clay – their sin patterns and weaknesses and even just ordinary physical processes like sickness or aging.

But while this tendency – “Familiarity breeds contempt” can be damaging in many relationships, there is no case in which it is so dangerous as the case of Jesus of Nazareth. In our account today, the people who watched Jesus grow up from boyhood into young manhood, who knew his parents and his family, who watched him begin a trade as a carpenter, and who never saw any open indications of supernatural greatness, were secretly despising him now that his public ministry was in full swing. The text says they “TOOK OFFENSE AT HIM...” that is, they stumbled over him... especially his seemingly outrageous claim to be GOD IN THE FLESH. And they could not believe in him because of this contempt.

This very condition had been predicted centuries before Jesus was born, in the prophecy of Isaiah:

***Isaiah 53:1-3 Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? <sup>2</sup> He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. <sup>3</sup> He was despised and rejected by men,***

*a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

Isaiah spoke of the fundamental challenge of believing the central message, the truth about Jesus of Nazareth – that he was God in the flesh, the Savior of the world. The problem was the outer appearance... the humble circumstances of his physical life... that he “grew up before him like a tender shoot and like a root out of dry ground.” Jesus growing up in Nazareth before the onlooking eyes of the neighbors was in the most ordinary way, like any other boy physically.

“He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him; nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.” The outer look of Jesus was the problem... he looked like any other man. And that outer appearance kept them from seeing his true nature, his true glory as God.

Thus did they “despise and reject him”

The only possible remedy to this was faith... and before faith must come the miracle of REVELATION

As Isaiah said right at the beginning:

***Isaiah 53:1 “Who has BELIEVED our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been REVEALED?”***

The “arm of the Lord” represents his true power, his saving power... it is hidden and has to be revealed!! And if it is revealed, people will BELIEVE it.

So... everything comes down to the miracle of REVELATION

Book of Revelation: Revelation = unveiling, a pulling back of the concealing veil

- Not only a revelation of the future... as most people think it to be
- Not only a revelation of heaven, and all the worship that goes on there constantly
- Not only a revelation of the destruction of Satan and his evil forces

- Not only a revelation of judgment day and the eternal states of heaven and hell

It IS all of these... but it is much, infinitely much more than that

It is according to Revelation 1:1, “**The revelation of Jesus Christ**”

Why did Christ need to be “unveiled”? What hid him from our eyes? Was it not the humility of his lowly incarnation?

Charles Wesley, “Hark the Herald Angels Sing”: “**Veiled** in flesh the godhead see, hail the incarnate deity”

Only the eye of faith could pierce this veil and see the glory of God behind it

## I. Christ’s Eternal Glory Veiled

### A. The Amazing Humility of God the Son in the INCARNATION

***Philippians 2:6-8 [Jesus], being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,<sup>7</sup> but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!***

#### 1. Truly God... robed in glory, constantly worshiped in heaven

##### a. the glory of the pre-incarnate Christ

***Ezekiel 1:26-28 Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man.<sup>27</sup> I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him.<sup>28</sup> Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown***

##### b. the worship of the pre-incarnate Christ

***Isaiah 6:1-3 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.<sup>2</sup> Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two***

***they covered their feet, and with two they were flying.<sup>3</sup> And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."***

Before Christ came to earth, he shared all of the Father's glory, sat on the throne of the universe, and was the focus of perfect and constant adoration and worship by spiritual beings. He gave all that up to come to earth!

## B. "Veiled in Flesh": The Hidden Glory of the Incarnation

### 1. Central stumbling block of our faith: the incarnation

***John 10:30-33 "I and the Father are one."<sup>31</sup> Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him,<sup>32</sup> but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?"<sup>33</sup> "We are not stoning you for any of these," replied the Jews, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."***

### 2. A "Mere Man", claiming to be God

- a. physical body: face, eyes, hands, hair, certain height, tone of voice, personality
- b. normal development: infancy, boyhood, young manhood, full manhood
- c. normal family relations: parents, brothers, sisters
- d. normal physical issues:
  - got hungry and needed to eat
  - got thirsty and needed to drink
  - got tired and needed to sleep
- e. emotions: joy, anger, astonishment, grief, tears
- f. physical limitations: one place at one time, seeming frailty
- g. most difficult of all: death... and not just any death—death on a cross

3. YET for those with eyes to see and ears to hear, ample evidence of his deity
  - a. perfect moral character: absolutely sinless, constantly filled with love for God and love for neighbor
  - b. perfect knowledge of God's word, and an incredible power to teach it clearly
  - c. supernatural knowledge of hidden things... people's thoughts, events beyond his sight, the future!
  - d. astonishing power over God's world—the stilling of the storm, the large catch of fish
  - e. amazing power over demons... disease... even death
  - f. fulfilled prophecies
4. Christ's glory still there... but veiled in flesh
  - a. Mount of Transfiguration: a glimpse

***Matthew 17:2 His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.***

- b. Especially... Christ's atoning death: a perfect revelation of the attributes of God

God's perfect justice and wrath, the bloody death of Christ

God's perfect love... giving his Son that we might live

A glory only the eye of faith could see... the unbeliever sees only the grotesque, twisted form of a dead man, bloody and hideous

The believer sees the glory of God and their own salvation, and thus the sight becomes the most glorious in history

### C. Dishonor Only Temporary

1. Three Great Requests Made from Son to Father

a. Give me my glory

***John 17:5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.***

This is astonishing boldness if Christ were not eternally God, co-equal with the Father

b. Give me the nations

***Psalm 2:7-9 [God] said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession."***

The Father invited the Son: ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance... I will give you full dominion over all the earth...

Christ HAS asked this of his Father, and it has been given to him

***Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."***

Christ rules actively over all the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords... it is his by right, for the Father gave it to him

The fullness of this request will only come at the second coming of Christ...

***Revelation 19:11-12, 16 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. ... <sup>16</sup> On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.***

Christ's full glory will be seen only with the end of the age

Christ's authority over the nations is especially powerful in the calling out of chosen ones to be his people, his church, his loved ones...

***John 17:2 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.***

this is Christ's third great request which fully restores his glory

- c. Give me my chosen ones... their full salvation... forgive all their sins, adopt them as your children, protect them in this world, purify their souls until they are perfect, give them eternally perfect bodies, and bring them into heaven to see my glory

***John 17:24 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.***

## 2. Three Great Requests Will Be Answered YES

- a. YES, my Son: I will give you all your heavenly glory back... the glory we shared before the world began
- b. YES, my Son: the nations all belong to you NOW... You rule over them secretly every day... and You will return to rule over them openly later
- c. YES, my Son: the elect will all come to Christ... and be totally forgiven, totally saved, and will see Christ's full glory forever

God the Father is zealous to see Christ fully glorified... Christ laid down his glory temporarily, but the zeal of the Lord Almighty is to see the Son exalted to the highest place

## II. Christ's Glory Dishonored by Unbelief

### A. Christ Visits His Hometown

***Mark 6:1 Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples.***

- 1. Ministry base was Capernaum
- 2. In Mark 6, however... this is Nazareth, his hometown, the place of his growing years
- 3. Immediate ministry: teaching!!

***Mark 6:2 When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue***

- a. priority was always on the teaching ministry

***Mark 6:34 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.***

The people were perishing in sin because they did not know the Lord or his word... their greatest need was teaching, not physical food or physical healing

Jesus' teaching ministry was varied... he taught in fields, on the streets, at the temple, out in a boat

But one of his favorite places to teach was the synagogues, where the Jews gathered on the Sabbath

- b. synagogue the center of Jewish daily life... the place also of worship in their local community
- c. center of synagogue worship: the reading and explaining of the Old Testament scriptures
- d. Nazareth was also the site of Christ's earlier rejection by his own people

At the very beginning of his public ministry, after his baptism and his temptation in the desert, he had come to his hometown of Nazareth and on the Sabbath he went into the synagogue. At the appropriate time, he got up to read and comment on the scriptures; he took the scroll of Isaiah the prophet; unrolling it, he found the place where it is written

***Isaiah 61: The Spirit of the sovereign Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor!***

Then said, ***"Today, in your hearing, this scripture is FULFILLED!"***

They were amazed initially... but when he revealed that they would reject him, they became enraged and took him to a cliff to throw him off. But his time had not yet come and he was enabled to walk right through them and go on his way.

Now he has returned one last time... for this is last time he will preach in his hometown.

B. Amazed but Unconverted: Questioning, But Not Seeking



***Mark 6:2-3 When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. "Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What's this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles! <sup>3</sup> Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.***

Two great evidences God gave Christ to prove his deity: miracles and teachings

Hometown people took offense at both... although they were amazed

1. Amazed at Christ's supernatural wisdom
2. Amazed at Christ's supernatural powers
3. verse 2's "Amazement": in this case, actually a form of unbelief

series of questions... none seeking truth; verdict already reached

all questions are questions of origin

***Q1: Where did this man get these things?***

***Q2: What's this wisdom that has been given him that he even does miracles?***

***Q3: Isn't this the carpenter?***

***Q4: Isn't this Mary's son?***

***Q5: Aren't his brothers James and Joseph and Judas and Simon?***

***Q6: And his sisters, are they not with us?***

The series of questions are probing at the roots of Jesus' astonishing person and powers... but completely without faith!!!

***Conclusion: They took offense at him.***

Literally... they STUMBLED over him; SKANDALIDZO... the stumbling stone.

Note: their shock at watching Jesus grow up from a boy with family surrounding him... a normal Jewish boy if they were unwilling to look closer... it proves the total normalcy of Christ's upbringing

Completely refutes spurious “Gospels” (like apocryphal Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew) which has accounts of the growing boy Jesus using supernatural powers in a boyish manner:

One miracle Jesus performed at age eight:

Jesus (and the whole town) knew that a lioness had given birth to her cubs in a nearby cave. Jesus went into it, and the lioness and all her cubs adored him. The cubs played with him. People did not know what was happening inside the cave and were very sorrowful, thinking Jesus had been killed. Suddenly, he walked out of the cave with all the lions. The people did not come any closer. Jesus chastised them for not recognizing him when even lions knew who he was. Then Jesus and the lions crossed the Jordan, which parted for them. Jesus dismissed the lions, telling them to "Go in peace." With that, Jesus went home.

**UTTERLY FALSE!!!** Jesus never did any miracles in Nazareth until this time... his childhood was completely normal

### C. Family Ties: Familiarity Breeds Contempt

1. Already seen this in Mark 3
2. Christ’s own family did not believe in him and went to take charge of him saying “He’s out of his mind!” (Mk. 3:21)
3. How much more his neighbors did not believe in him!!
4. Again, strong evidence of Mary’s other children: they are listed by name... James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas... and at least two sisters

This refutes any doctrine of Mary’s perpetual virginity

5. Contempt clear

***Mark 6:3 And they took offense at him.***

they completely rejected Christ...

6. Christ’s pronouncement:

***Mark 6:4 Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor."***

Christ clearly states: your unbelief strips me of honor... in other places I will have honor; among the poor and needy sinners, tax collectors, prostitutes, I will be honored; among the Roman centurions who are humble and needy, I will be honored; by the Samaritan woman and her village, I will be honored; by the children of Jerusalem, I will be honored; and by the Gentiles in Macedonia, Arabia, Libya, Rome, and even to the ends of the earth and the ends of time, I will be honored. But by my hometown and some of my own family, I will be dishonored.

Notice that the statement in verse 4 gets closer and closer to his immediate family... from the outside world in, in, and in closer... hometown to relatives to own house...

IN MY OWN HOUSE, I am without honor!

Yet, thank God, his brothers would eventually repent and find salvation by trusting in Jesus... though they knew him originally in a fleshly way, God revealed him to their souls and they are spending eternity worshiping him in heaven!

But only because God REVEALED Jesus to them and worked FAITH in them, curing them of their UNBELIEF and their CONTEMPT

#### D. Unbelief Results in Few Miracles

***Mark 6:5-6 He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. AND HE WAS AMAZED at their lack of faith!***

1. Clear statement of link between faith and miracles
2. Other such evidence abounds:

[To the desperate woman, bleeding for twelve years]

***Mark 5:34 He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you."***

[To blind Bartimaeus] ***Mark 10:52 Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.***

The connection here is strong... he COULD NOT do any miracles there (except a few healings). He was restrained by their lack of faith.

### 3. BUT limitations to this idea

#### a. lack of faith does not prevent miracles

Jesus did many miracles where there was no faith at all: the stilling of the storm, the healing of the demoniac of the Gadarenes, the paralyzed man of John 5, the feeding of the 5000... all of these received benefits without any personal faith... none is even mentioned in the accounts

#### b. strong faith does not produce miracles

Faith is passive... a conduit of receiving from God what he intends to give... faith does not itself generate anything. If God does not will a miracle, it will not happen, no matter how much faith a person has

### 4. HOWEVER: Faith is the key attribute of the soul which Christ is seeking... by faith alone are sins forgiven

Thus the unbelief of Nazareth, Christ's hometown, shut down Christ's healing ministry by Christ's own choice!! Why bless this rebellious people with a stream of miracles that would only increase their guilt but not result in their conversion? So it was not God's will to do any miracles there, and so Christ did none.

### 5. Christ is free in the matter of miracles... he doesn't owe them and can do them or not

## E. The Shocking Dishonor of Unbelief

1. The true issue here: the shocking dishonor of unbelief
2. Christ was adored and glorified in heaven... mighty archangels hid their faces
3. Christ was dishonored and rejected on earth
4. Greatest dishonor to Christ is to disbelieve his claims

Unbelief does the greatest damage to the honor of Christ. In the heart of the unbeliever alone is Christ totally without glory

### III. Christ's Glory Unveiled by Faith

The Apostle John says Christ's flesh was no final hindrance to their view of his glory:

***John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.***

#### A. Faith Lives by Truth, Not by Sight

1. Faith receives the revelation of truth about Christ
2. No one else could speak the words Christ did
3. No one else could do the miracles Christ did
4. No one else could fulfill the prophecies Christ did

#### B. Faith Sees Through the Veil of Flesh

#### C. Faith Sees Glory Where Unbelief Sees Shame

1. Jesus' hate-filled enemies stood at the foot of his cross and mocked

***Mark 15:31-32 "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! <sup>32</sup> Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe."***

2. But since that day, Christ's faith-filled people from every nation have stood at the foot of the cross and seen a perfect glory shining from the Lamb of God
3. Faith sees the truth of the Cross... the Son of God did not come down from the cross so that by his shed blood his kingdom would include redeemed sinners from every nation

#### D. Faith Alone Save the Soul

Faith gladly receives from the Father the revelation the Father has to give... just like Simon Peter at Caesarea Philippi:

***Matthew 16:16-18 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"<sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."<sup>17</sup> Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.***

The Father gives this revelation: unveiling his Son in your hearts to see a radiant glory that will shine forever

***2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.***

Though no physical light has yet pierced your eyes and filled them with unspeakable beauty, yet in your hearts truth is brilliant...

E. Faith Alone Sees the Future Glory of Christ's Eternal Kingdom

***Revelation 21:23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.***

#### IV. Applications

Four ways people dishonor Christ

- A. Disbelieving his claim (to be God in the flesh)
- B. Disobeying his commands
- C. Delighting in his competitors (IDOLS)
- D. Delaying his coming (by not sharing the gospel)

Remedy: REPENT and BELIEVE THE GOOD NEWS

- A. Believe his claim... He IS God in the flesh; come to faith today
- B. Obey his commands... You honor him when you treat him as King
- C. Delight in him alone... Don't run after worldly idols
- D. Speed his coming by courageous, faith-filled evangelism and mission work

