Honor Hometown Prophets

Text: Matthew 13:54-58

I. Introduction: It is very easy to let the abilities and spiritual strengths, of those closest to you, go unnoticed.

A. Oftentimes we have people in our life who have very unique gifts of the spirit and spiritual talents, but because they are close in our life, it seems all too common.

B. Then comes along someone we've never seen, we've never talked to, we've never watched live, and we become mesmerized by what we think is a spiritual person.

1. The odd thing about this is that we should be careful about who we honor and respect.

2. A so-called "Evangelist" can come into a church and preach, getting people all excited, but yet they have no clue about the personal spiritual walk of that man. He may or may not be a genuine follower of the Messiah.

3. Now it is perfectly acceptable to honor people who truly live and share the good news, no matter if they are close to you or far away. You must do so. My point is just that generally it is only those who we are not around regularly that we honor, rather than those we see on a daily basis.

C. This is going to be the point of my sermon today. I want to encourage us to honor the "laborers in Yahweh" that are close to us. I want us not to become calloused to the true spiritual giants that are in

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1 An evangelist (Greek euangelistace) simply means a "preacher of the good news." However, this refers more to a person who enters into an area that is unbelieving and preaches the good news to them in order to declare the message to lost sinners. And evangelist is not really as many people see it today - a preacher who goes into a church in order to "rev" people up.

2 The word calloused comes from the Latin word "callosus" which literally means "hard-skinned" or "tough" as pertaining to multiple substances. When Scripture talks about people having a hard-heart it could just as easily be translated as a "calloused heart."
our "hometown." We need to be sensitive to what the Spirit of Yahweh is performing right before our very eyes.

II. Matthew 13:54-58

A. *VERSE 54

1. Hometown = Nazareth
   a. *Luke 4:16a (parallel) "He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up." Remember that Nazareth is the place where Miriam was visited by the angel Gabriel in Luke 1.

   b. In our study of Luke we found that after Yeshua's parents brought him to Jerusalem to present him to Yahweh they returned to their own town of Nazareth (Luke 2:39-40) where Yeshua then grew up.

2. *He began to teach them in their SYNAGOGUE
   a. The Greek word "*sunogage(y)" simply means "an assemblage of persons."

   b. It is mentioned about 45 times in the NT. This is a place where the Israelite people would meet on the Sabbath for prayer, worship, and the teaching of the Hebrew Scriptures.

   c. The word "synagogue" like the Greek word "ecclesia" doesn't really even refer to a building, but because buildings were built for the purpose of assembling on the Sabbath they took on the name "synagogue" for their self.

   d. Passages like *Leviticus 23:1-3 and Deuteronomy 16:16 teach that we should assemble ourselves together on Yahweh's appointments. (*Miqra Kodesh = Holy Convocation = Set Apart Gathering = Rehearsal)
3. We then read that Yeshua was teaching the people, and they were astonished at his wisdom and his miracles. So we see from this that they DID recognize he had great insight and great miraculous power.

B. *VERSES 55-56*

1. Questions about who he was.

   a. Carpenter's son. It was common for fathers to teach their sons the trade that they already worked in. Yeshua worked with his hands. The word "carpenter" in the Greek can refer to either a blacksmith or worker with wood. Early Christian tradition speaks of Yeshua as a maker of plows and yokes for farming.

   b. The point here is that they are listening to Yeshua teach, and they are like, "How does he know all this if he's just a carpenter?" It's similar to the way people look at me sometimes when I'm explaining Scripture to them out on the job site. They are like, "What's up with this septic tank guy thinking he knows about the Scriptures?!?!"

   c. They then mention his mother and brothers. Sometimes the Roman Catholics make mention that the word "brothers" (Greek = *adelphos*) or "sisters" (Greek = *adelphay*) doesn't HAVE to mean what we think of when we hear brother or sister (sibling), but can be a remote relative. This is because they believe Mary never had any children besides Yeshua, believing in her perpetual virginity. The context here however fits much better to understand these "brothers" of Yeshua as children of Joseph and Mary who have just been mentioned.

   d. The point is that the people in Yeshua's hometown of Nazareth, were thinking and saying, "Surely this man can't be all that important. He's a carpenter. We know who his parents are, and we all know his brothers. He's just a common man."
C. *VERSE 57*

1. Offended? This word (skandalidzo) is the word that is often used in reference of "causing someone to sin."
   a. *Matthew 5:29* - "If thy right eye OFFEND thee, pluck it out."
   b. Matthew 18:6 - "But whoso shall OFFEND one of these little ones."
   c. A similar use is found here. It's not that Yeshua is causing them to sin by his wrong doing. What's happening is they are being filled with pride and envy (sins) because they don't want to accept that he has been endowed with these special gifts from Yahweh. The reason they are not accepting is because (1) he grew up in their hometown, (2) they know his family and his family is just common people (carpentry).

2. Yeshua's statement to these people. (*verse 57b* - read again)
   a. Yeshua is calling himself a prophet. The word prophet refers to either a (1) foreteller of future events, or (2) an inspired speaker. Yeshua was both.
   b. Just read that first part - "A prophet is not without honor." This is Yeshua's first point. He recognizes that people honor prophets because they are spiritually wise, obedient to the Torah, love Yahweh, unveil the mysteries of Yahweh, etc.
   c. His second point is with the word EXCEPT. A prophet is not without honor EXCEPT in his hometown and in his household. In other words the text could read "A prophet has no honor in his hometown and household."
   d. *John Gill states in part on this verse, "...a prophet, or any teacher, or preacher, generally speaking, is more esteemed among strangers, who have no personal pique,
nor prejudices against him, and who judge of him, not by what he has been, but by his present abilities, doctrine, and conduct, than among his countrymen; who are apt to think meanly of him, because familiarly acquainted with him, and knew, if not his vices, yet his infirmities, and envy him any superior degree of honor to them, he has attained unto."

e. In other words, when we have spiritual giants around us all the time we become calloused to recognizing the gift that Yahweh has given us in a person. We seek so strongly to find someone else to encourage us, when we've got that someone right there in front of us, encouraging us and sharing wisdom with us, but we don't see it because he just a carpenter and we know all his family personally.

D. *VERSE 58

1. He did not do MANY, implies that he did some. The parallel text in *Mark 6:5 helps us out here ("So he was not able to do any miracles there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them.")

2. The text tells us that this was "because of their unbelief." Mark 6:5 says "He was not able to do." Now, are we to understand this to mean that the unbelief of men hindered the power of Yahweh working through Yeshua? I don't think this is the case.

3. I like what *Albert Barnes states in his commentary on this text (Matthew 13:58) - "We are not to suppose that his power was limited by the belief, or unbelief, of men. But they were so prejudiced, so set against him, that they were not in a condition to judge of evidence, and to be convinced. They would have charged it to derangement, or sorcery, or the agency of the devil. (Compare John 10:20). It would have been of no use, therefore, in proving to them that he was from [Yahweh], to have worked miracles. He did, therefore, only those things which were the proper work of benevolence, and which could
not easily be charged on the devil. He gave *sufficient* proof of his mission, and left them in their chosen unbelief, without excuse. It is also true, in spiritual things, that the unbelief of a people prevents the influences of the Holy Spirit from being sent down to bless them. [Yahweh] requires faith. He hears only the prayers of faith. And when there is little true belief, and prayer is cold and formal, there the people sleep in spiritual death, and are unbidden."

4. It wasn't that their unbelief "tied his hands behind his back" so to speak. Yeshua simply did not bless the people with many miracles because of their attitude towards a true prophet of Yahweh like himself.

III. Practical Thoughts (*4 Points*)

*1. **Are there spiritual giants in your life who you are not honoring?** Have you become calloused to people in your family or people close to you who really do possess spiritual gifts, but you don't realize it because they live in your hometown or their just a common person to you?

a. It's easy to love someone when you don't know their weaknesses. I've been to meetings before and met some very wise and knowledgeable men. However, when you get to know people you find out that all of them have weaknesses. That doesn't mean they are all rotten, it's just that we forget that people are human sometimes.

b. True love is when you look past the weaknesses and stand by people who love Yahweh. When you do this is helps encourage everyone to do better, to love stronger, to practice more righteousness.

c. Don't let your blessings become common. It's like living in my Log Cabin. It's very unique, I've only seen a few like it, but to me it has become normal because I live in it every day. People come to visit and their like, "Wow! This is an amazing place!" I'm then reminded of the blessing I have. Remind yourself of unique people around you. Someone who doesn't
know them would say, "Wow! You've really got a blessing to have them in your life!" All the while, you've taken for granted the person Yahweh has blessed you with.

*2. I believe Yeshua's statement in Matthew 13:57 is not one that has to be, it is just a general statement. What I mean is that I believe we can honor prophets in our own hometown or spiritual giants in our own hometown. It's just that, as Yeshua has taught us, it is not normal for this to happen. Let's break the normal though. Right here in this little assembly, let's recognize what Yahweh has blessed us with. We have some very gifted, talented, and wise brothers and sisters here, and on the phone ministry listening in. Let's not become calloused to this.

*3. If you are being dishonored, don't let it bring bitterness in your life. If you are serving Yahweh, praying, fasting, reading, studying, obeying Torah, following Yeshua, etc. and people still look at you as common, recognize that Yahweh and Yeshua are looking down from heaven, and they see what you are doing for them. *Hebrews 6:10 says, "For [Yahweh] is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you showed for His name when you served the saints—and you continue to serve them." Don't get bitter about people not recognizing what you do, just keep on keeping on.

*4. Finally, let's all put this message to practice. Yeshua's statement in Matthew 13:57 - "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his household" - is a generally true statement. It will be difficult to reverse that in our lives, but not impossible. Let's put honoring the spiritual people in our life as a priority, read this text every day when you wake up if you have to.