

What We Can Learn From Christ's No-Miracle Zone

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

Jesus returned to Nazareth following a series of great miracles: calming a storm, delivering a wild demoniac, healing a woman with a long-term illness, and raising from the dead a twelve-year-old girl. You would think His hometown would welcome Him as a hero.

Not so. Not only did His hometown reject Him—the people closest to Him did the same: His relatives and even His own home. That must have stung. John later reflected on this when he stated: "His own did not receive him" (John 1:11).

The rejection of Jesus by Nazareth also shows, however, how much Jesus had remained hidden until He began His public ministry. No one who knew Him well expected that such powerful miracles and life-transforming words would flow from Him.

It is often the case that those closest to us don't see our value. We can be highly praised and regarded by others, but those nearest us may often cut us down. The praises from others are more than matched by the stinging criticism of those who should have been our best encouragers.

Mark notes that Jesus "could not do any miracles there, except lay His hands on a few sick people and heal them." Note that Mark didn't say Jesus "would not." He said "could not." Mark, therefore, is explicit in saying that the attitude of the homefolk actually prevented Jesus from doing His works. It is a sobering lesson on the need for faith (the kind of faith

illustrated by the bleeding woman and Jairus in Mark 5).

It was at Nazareth that Gabriel told Mary in the announcement that she, a virgin, was to give birth to a Savior: "For nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37). Now, thirty years later, the message of heaven has been turned on its head in the very place where "nothing is impossible" was first spoken. The refrain from most in Nazareth has become: "Nothing is possible with God."

Miracles don't come out of a negative environment. You can't have a constant attitude that demeans and criticizes and then expect wonderful things to happen. Let's not tie the Lord's hands with our unbelief.

However, a few people in Nazareth did believe in Him. They came for healing while most of the sick people stayed away.

Earlier in the Nazareth synagogue, many at first had been amazed when they listened to Jesus (see Mark 6:2). Now, He is amazed at them. There are only two times in the Gospels where it is recorded that Jesus was amazed. In Luke 7:9, Jesus was amazed at the faith of the centurion in Capernaum who sent friends to come and ask Him to heal his servant. Jesus was amazed that the Roman officer said that Jesus didn't need to come personally, but only speak the word of healing from a distance.

But at Nazareth, Jesus was amazed at His hometown's unbelief.

The people who knew Him best for thirty years didn't believe, and Jesus was amazed. A Gentile, an officer of an occupying power, who knew Him not at all, greatly believed and Jesus was amazed.

Would you rather Jesus be amazed at your unbelief, or be amazed at your faith?

A Prayer: *Lord Jesus, may I not write off as beyond help the*

very areas in my life where You want to do a miracle. May my faith cooperate with Your power.

*Excerpted from Dr. Wood's book, Fearless: How Jesus Changes Everything, available from Vital Resources. **George O. Wood** is the general superintendent of the Assemblies of God. For the original article, visit .*