

The Danger of Familiarity

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles and go to Matthew's Gospel. Matthew chapter 13. If you're visiting with us, there's a black Bible in the chair in front of you underneath that little seat.

If you go to the back of that Bible, they renumber the New Testament. So if you go to the back of that Bible and find page 11, that's where you'll find Matthew chapter 13, page 11 in a black Bible. Matthew chapter 13, a short passage, and yet important nonetheless. Chapter 13, we're gonna start reading in verse 53 to 58.

That's what we're studying this morning. Page 11 in that black Bible, Matthew 13, verses 53 to 58. I'll read and then we'll do our study. And it came about that when Jesus finished these parables, he departed from there. And coming to his hometown, he taught them in their synagogue.

[1:16] So they were shocked and said, Where is this one this wisdom and miraculous powers? Is not this the son of the carpenter? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?

And his sisters? Are they not all with us? From where then this one all these things? And they were caused to stumble at him.

But Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own house. And he did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.

After 40 years of an epic space saga, Star Wars cast of characters and actors have come and gone. But two, however, remain virtually ever present since the opening scene of the first movie. C3PO and R2D2. And the men inside their metal casing, Casey, excuse me, Anthony Daniels and Kenny Baker. But while the characters' bickering conceals a deep bond of lasting affection, they bicker throughout all of the movies and everyone gets a kick out of that, but you know they really love each other.

[2:40] For the actors, all there is beneath their metal shells is a decades-long feud.

They actually couldn't stand each other. Interesting. Baker saw Daniels as distant and snobbish, looking down on his co-star, both literally and figuratively, referring to how Daniels would never socialize or drink with castmates and was actively rude about attending conventions.

Daniels, meanwhile, viewed Baker's role inside the diminutive astromech droid as not really acting and not adding anything to the movie. He said this about R2D2, the actor, Kenny Baker, quote, he might as well be a bucket, end quote.

They knew each other so well and yet they couldn't stand each other. The old adage comes to mind. Familiarity breeds contempt. And in this situation, it's quite comical.

Although I found this picture the other day. It says familiarity breeds contempt and absence makes the heart grow fonder just means that when you go away, I really miss hating you.

[3:56] It's like, ouch. It's like, It's funny. But when it comes to the gospel, it's not funny.

When it comes to the gospel, familiarity breeding contempt is not funny at all. And here we come to this passage. Matthew is trying to communicate this to his readers in his letter, bow down and worship Jesus.

He is the Messiah King of Israel. That's his whole point in this gospel. And today what we will see is the danger of familiarity.

The danger of familiarity. The danger of being familiar with the gospel. Some of us, we know the gospel and yet we can just think of it as just, well, happenstance, commonplace, whatever.

The danger of familiarity. Statement for you. A few statements. Danger can potentially arise when we become too familiar with the gospel and especially with its messengers.

[5:16] Complacency, apathy, then incredulity can take over our passion for our king. It just becomes what we always do.

So then we become complacent. Then we become apathetic and then it just turns to unbelief. We just let the gospel become too familiar with ourselves or we let its messengers just be familiar. It can breed contempt. That's the danger. It can take over our passion for our king. Other statements to communicate to help as an introduction to our text.

We must not allow our familiarity with the gospel and those who proclaim it to begin to create in us a lack of trust in our king. Instead, we must continue to ask God to keep us tenderly soft to Jesus our Messiah King and to the gospel truth of the kingdom.

God, keep me soft to the gospel. Tenderly soft to the gospel. Here in verse 53, from this point all the way to chapter 19 verse 2 in Matthew's gospel, Matthew begins his fourth narrative discourse, his fourth main section and in this section he's going to focus on two main aspects, two main themes.

[6:47] First, the opposition to Jesus is going to increase which we end up seeing in the next section, the fifth section that results in his death. But also, he would prepare his disciples for when he goes.

He's going to start strengthening their faith. So opposition would intensify with the religious leaders but Christ Jesus would take time to strengthen the faith of his disciples, to grow them, to prepare them.

I'm going to go. I'm going to die. I'm going to resurrect. I'm going to be gone. This is how it begins, this section. And then we come to a somber reality of ministry.

Familiarity breeds contempt. The past two, three weeks, Jesus talked about the parable of the sower. Remember, the parable of the sower and all these different parables and he and his kingdom would be scorned, he'd be rejected.

Okay, so we get that, right? Remember, we looked at that three weeks ago. One out of four will believe, will bow down and worship Jesus. We looked at that. But what we didn't expect was this.

[8:01] We didn't expect to be from his own family. Remember chapter 12, verse 46 to 47? Remember John's gospel in John chapter 7?

With his brother, they said, oh, if you're really the Messiah, go up to Jerusalem and show their health of the world. And then John says, they didn't really believe he was the Messiah. And we didn't expect it from his own hometown, Nazareth.

What's striking from our text is that everything kind of zeroes in and narrows and focuses upon these five questions that the townspeople had for Jesus.

They would not believe. Why? Because they knew him. They grew up with him.

They saw the kind of person he was. Prophets are known by their familiar surroundings, their strengths and weaknesses. A reason some within the family of those in ministry stumble or fall away or reject the gospel.

[9:13] Now for Jesus, he didn't have any sinful weaknesses. He was perfect. But prophets of old, they were not perfect. And that familiarity can breed contempt.

Because they see the prophet and all his weaknesses. They're familiar with all the cliches, the catchphrases, but at the end of the day, they end up rejecting the prophet and really, the message, really, Jesus himself.

What's the danger of familiarity? The danger is allowing our hearts to grow cold and hardened to the truth.

Not to listen to the familiar prophet, even though what he says is right, true, biblical, godly, and gospel-focused. We let that obscure our seeing the truth.

So this passage, it serves as a warning to us all. Don't be like that. Love Christ and the gospel and the person speaking that truth in spite of the weakness and all the things you know about them because that's how they ended up responding to Jesus.

[10:44] Don't be like that. Love Christ. Ask God to keep your heart soft to the truth. Not just take advantage of the gospel, but let it always be fresh.

And this is one of the reasons why, not the only reason, but a reason why we celebrate the Lord's Supper to remind us afresh of the gospel. And there are tangible ways where you can touch it, you can taste it, smell it.

Hopefully the grapes doesn't smell that bad. I'm just kidding. But you can actually taste that and touch it, the gospel. So let's dive into the text and let's look at different aspects.

First, familiarity, verses 53 to 56. Here's Matthew's transitional statement. It came about when Jesus finished these parables. He departed from there, verse 54, coming to his hometown.

He taught them in their synagogue. Nazareth, this is about maybe five to six miles from where he was before. And yet he was not given a warm reception.

[11:50] There's no banner that said, welcome home, Jesus. No parade. He went into their synagogue and he taught them.

Now, a synagogue in the first century was very important in Jewish life, but especially for this small town. I mean, they probably did so many other things in that synagogue.

It was important for them in the small little town of Nazareth. And yet, when he was teaching, notice the response. said they became astonished.

Literally, they were shocked and skeptical, skeptical about what he was saying and the source of his power.

Maybe he was doing miracles there? It would seem like it. We don't know. It doesn't say that. I mean, later on it says he did some. We'll get to this question in just a second.

[12:49] But they, they're hung up with the fact that here he's teaching this and this is power. They didn't get it. Well, remember. Remember who Jesus was, is.

Jesus, remember, God's reign in his kingdom came in Jesus. He signified, he inaugurated God's rule by his words and works. God's kingdom had come in the Lord Jesus Christ.

His kingdom is here, it's now. In Jesus, from the perspective of Nazareth, the good old boy. That's how they view Jesus.

And that was their hang up. Their hang up was since he had, since when did he have such a form, become a formable person with such humble beginnings? Since when did that happen?

He didn't go to rabbinical school. So where'd he get the words or this teaching? He didn't get it from us.

[14:00] They were saying. He goes beyond the typical village sage. one writer put it like this. They exploded with a list of questions.

Notice. There at the end of verse 54. Where? From where this one, this wisdom and miraculous powers? He's one of us.

Is this not the son of the carpenter? Actually, literally, it's the son of a builder. What the word means, traditionally, though, translated as carpenter.

Joseph could have worked with stone. But regardless, notice what they're asking. We know his dad. We know his dad.

You can't be some miracle working prophet, let alone Messiah. Notice verse 55. Next part of verse 55.

[15:00] Is not his mother called Mary and his brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? We know his mom, Mary. And his brothers' names, his brothers.

And the sisters, notice he said, and his sisters, verse 56. Are they not all with us from where this one, all these things? Come on. It's Jesus.

He's a good old boy. Okay. This is Jesus we're talking about because familiarity had developed into contempt, sadly.

And here's where you see the contempt. Look at verse 57. And they took offense at him. Literally, they were caused to stumble or fell into sin because of him.

They disbelieved Jesus. They rejected Jesus. They're doing the same thing that the other cities had done.

[16:11] Remember Chorazin? In Matthew chapter 12, Matthew chapter 11? Remember Bethsaida? Remember Capernaum?

And if you remember there in the same passage in Matthew chapter 11, Jesus uses this word again, stumble. He said in Matthew chapter 11 verse 6, and blessed is the one who keeps from stumbling over me.

This past week I was reading in the book of Numbers. Numbers, I think it's Numbers chapter 9 through 12. And it was striking to me because in Numbers chapter 12, Miriam and Aaron began to question Moses.

And they said, wait, does God only speak through Moses? And it's Miriam first and then Aaron on purpose because Miriam was the one who was leading the show.

and she got her young brother to go along with her. What do you see here? The very thing that we're talking about here in Matthew chapter 13, familiarity, there's the family.

[17 : 32] We know Moses. God doesn't just speak to Moses. Who does he think he is? Some things just never change. Familiarity, breeding, contempt, and notice the danger.

There in verse 57, the next part, they were caused to stumble at him and Jesus' statement, he says, a prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own house.

The parable of the sower, sadly, fits this event. People who are well known are not at times regarded by those who knew them before they were well known.

That's how one writer put it. A prophet was given honor everywhere but at home because they all knew him.

At least they thought they did. Unfortunately, this truly is pathetic. And maybe they were jealous of Jesus.

[18 : 38] Maybe they were jealous of the popularity and he was so popular with people. Maybe that was the cause. We don't know. But whatever it was, they rejected Jesus ruling in their lives.

They refused to embrace his messianic identity and his kingdom message simply because they saw him grow up. And notice they acknowledge his wisdom and power.

But as Matthew says in chapter 13 verse 19, as Jesus said, they did not understand. He can't be Messiah.

He just can't be. They thought they were the ones who knew him best. No way. And once again, that sad truth of familiarity breeding contempt.

God said, so here's a great way for you to pray for me.

[19 : 44] Then my family would not hold me or really because of me and my weaknesses and how they see my weaknesses, that they would not hold Jesus at bay, that they would not reject the gospel of Jesus because we know Jim, he's our dad.

Because quite honestly, that's the part of this position, a pastor, that none of you will fully understand. You can come and not feel like singing.

I can't do that, can I? You can come and check out. Although I kind of checked out in that song.

I'm like, what are you playing? And I answered myself, I said, I have no idea. Where are we? I have no idea. Just go with it, Jim, just go with it.

Okay? No. We're all kidding aside. It's just, that's how it is. Realize this, and this is going to sound bad.

[21 : 07] I'm a living hypocrite before my kids. Because there will be times when I do not practice what I preach because I'm a sinner just like everyone else in the world. And yet, this is my job.

You see what I mean? See, and that's what you can pray that they will look past me and all my weaknesses and see Jesus the king.

I will never be the perfect husband and father, but Jesus is our perfect husband, is he not? And our heavenly father, he is the perfect heavenly father, is he not?

We look to Christ our king. not having said all that, there are some of you, you have a family member who doesn't know Christ, and you're possibly dealing with the same thing of familiarity breeding contempt, right?

You know what I'm talking about. Maybe it's a neighbor or another person that you've known for a very, very, very long time, and it's like you're saying, oh God, may they look not to me, but to Christ, right?

[22 : 26] And that's for you if you're here today. Don't look to me, don't look to other people, may you see your need for Jesus Christ and repent and trust him, because he will save you.

He is a gracious God. Slow to anger, abounding in his compassion, repent and say, God, I need you to save me.

Jesus, I believe you did die in my place for all my sins. I repent, I put my trust in you. He will save you. Look to Christ, look to the gospel, not to people.

We'll notice, back to our text, the results of not heeding, verse 58. and he did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief. Interesting statement from Matthew.

Notice that this was a matter of Jesus choosing not to do those miracles. See it. He's choosing not to do this.

[23 : 35] Why? Remember, he would not do some spectacular science to try to wow and please skeptics. He would not create some sensation.

Here, let me show you guys something. Let me try and wow you. Maybe you'll believe me now. Maybe we'll tap dance or do something to entertain you. Remember that Pharisees chapter 12

verse 38?

Teacher, we want to see a sign from you. It's like, are you crazy? What kind of a question is that? Jesus would not accredit himself by doing some stunning miracle.

The miracles that he did were acts of God's goodness not to fulfill some unbelieving skeptic's demand to perform. Perform for their whims.

Jesus wasn't about that. With those who allow familiarity to breed contempt and do not heed the danger sign, God withholds his grace.

[24 : 41] That's what you see. He will not do things to try to wow them back. Reminds me of Luke chapter 16 when the rich man says to Abraham, send someone back from the dead.

He says, no, they'll listen to someone from the dead. He says, if they do not listen to the law and the prophets, they will not listen to someone who's resurrected from the dead. God's not you must submit to the king.

You must bow down and worship Jesus the Messiah king of Israel. To what extent will the people who know Jesus reject him?

You'll get a taste of that next week. What I mean? Because the next section in Matthew's gospel, Matthew 14, John the Baptist is killed.

See, when Messiah is rejected, things happen. When there's a rejection, there's not just indifference, there's action that goes behind that.

[25 : 58] And you see it here with John the Baptist, which is kind of like, for lack of better terms, a sign of what's going to happen to Jesus himself. The next step for him is he will be killed.

That's how serious this is. Sum it up. Danger can potentially arise when we become too familiar with the gospel, and especially with its messengers.

Complacency, apathy, incredulity. It can overwhelm our passion for our king. It can take over. which is why we must not allow our familiarity with the gospel and those who proclaim it to begin to create in us a lack of trust in our king.

Instead, we must continue to ask God to keep us tenderly soft to Jesus our Messiah king and to the gospel truth of the kingdom. Keep us soft to that. And this is good.

I thought this is a great timing as it always is. As we will celebrate the Lord's supper together. That you will say, Father, don't let me take advantage of the gospel.

[27 : 16] Don't let the gospel just become something familiar to me. It doesn't really matter. It's about the gospel. I'm going to grow by the gospel. I'm going to love you more because of the gospel.

It's about Jesus and the gospel. So you can actually taste, touch, heal the gospel with the bread and the juice. And this is for you if you're here a Christian, you say, hey, look, I'm not a member from this church.

If you come from a church of like faith and practice and you've been baptized by immersion because we're Baptists, feel free to partake of the Lord's supper. It's open to you in that way. If you don't know Jesus, we encourage you not to partake.

This is for Christians to remind ourselves of the gospel. If you don't know Jesus, watch us and listen as we speak gospel words to you. We also want to encourage you, if you are a believer and you have something against someone you've not gone to reconcile with them, we encourage you, don't partake of the Lord's supper.

First go reconcile with that person. The next time that we come together partake with us in the Lord's supper. But this is a time for us, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, examine yourselves, remind yourself of your sin and how unworthy and yet the graciousness and compassion of God in Jesus.

[28 : 38] Don't forget that part. Don't forget the graciousness and compassion of Jesus in the gospel. So take a few moments if you would and let your mind think and dwell on these things and after a few moments of silence we'll have the men come and they'll pass out the bread we'll sing a couple songs a couple verses of a song but at this time just let your mind think and dwell on these things already at you who in here me you that you could me erro