

Limiting the Lord

After Jesus returned from His temptations in the wilderness, Matthews Gospel tells us He "--- went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. Great multitudes followed Him--from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan."

And then, in the midst of this tidal-wave of popularity, Luke's Gospel tells us Jesus

went back to **"Nazareth, where He had been brought up."**

Yes, this was His first return visit to His home town, but unfortunately it ended in violence.

In fact, they tried to throw Him over a cliff.

Now, you would think that would be the end of it, but some time later, He returned. Yes, Jesus was willing to give them another opportunity to accept Him.

And besides that, He would be able to show His disciples, who accompanied Him this time, the quiet streets where He had grown up.

There was the carpenter shop in which He had spent so many hours in honest labour.

How small it seemed now.

And perhaps He met some of His old customers who wondered when He was coming back.

The new man didn't seem to have that special touch they were used to.

Yes, it was good to get back to familiar places.

And when the Sabbath rolled around, He was back in His accustomed place.

And Matthew 13:54-58 tells us "--- **He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this *Man* get this wisdom and *these* mighty works? "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? "And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this *Man* get all these things?" So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house." Now He did not do**

many mighty works there because of their unbelief."

Certainly, for the multitude that recognized Him as a mighty prophet, such preaching would have been entirely in order.

But in Nazareth, where He was only recognized as a carpenter, this same preaching was not appropriate.

"Where then did this *Man* get all these things?"

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But what I would like to think about right now are the words found in V 58---"**Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.**"

If we look at this verse in complete isolation, we might come to the conclusion that, because of their unbelief, Jesus had refused to do many mighty works.

But that's *not* the case.

If we read about this same situation in Mark Chapter 6, we find that V 5 says **“---He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*.”**

No, it wasn't the case of *would* not, but *could* not.

And for someone who had flung the stars into space, that was a shocking statement.

And yet this wasn't the first time Jesus required the confidence of others when performing a miracle.

Remember the father in Mark 9 who brought his son, with a mute spirit, to be healed?

And do you remember how this man asked for help?

V 22 **“But *if* You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”**

To be quite fair, he had already asked the disciples to help him, and they had failed.

However, approaching the Lord with a "**if You can do anything**" wasn't quite good enough.

And that's why Jesus said "**If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.**"

No, it wasn't a case of *if* Jesus could do anything, it was a case of "**If you can believe.**"

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And then there were the two blind men, in Matthew Chapter 9, who wanted to be healed.

V 28-29 "**And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." Then He touched**

**their eyes, saying, "According to your
faith let it be to you."**

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So, what about us?

Of course, we don't have the problem that
the people in Nazareth had.

We know Jesus is an equal member of the
Godhead with *unlimited* power.

But could it ever be said of us "**He did not
do many mighty works there because of
their unbelief**"?

Certainly, the path of obedience that God
has laid out before us cannot always be
accomplished by our own abilities, or
even the abilities of a carpenter.

So, let it never be said of us---"**He could
do no mighty work there.**"

We need to remember the advice Jesus gave to
the ruler of the synagogue when he was

told his daughter had died before they
could get there.

That's when Jesus said---"**Do not be afraid;
only believe.**"

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*"Fear not, little flock, from the cross to
the throne,*

*From death into life He went for His own;
All power in earth, all power above,
Is given to Him for the flock of His love.*

*Only believe, only believe;
All things are possible, only believe."*