ESSAY · AUGUST 9, 2018

The Power of Spiritual Expectation

Written by Bill Perkins

What you expect from Jesus will determine what you receive.

Isn't This the Carpenter?

When Jesus visited Nazareth, his hometown, his childhood friends and neighbors were initially impressed by his words (Mark 6:2). But then they recognized him. “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 then they took offense at him” (Mark 6:3).

Once they recognized Jesus, their expectations tanked. He wasn't a prophet. He was Jesus, the one who grew up with their kids. The carpenter and mason. Great worker. Good guy. But no miracle worker. The word for "offense" above could be translated, "scandal." They had exposed a charlatan and an illusionist. He may have fooled the people in Capernaum, but he wouldn't fool them. That’s when Jesus said a prophet is not without honor except in his home town and among his own relatives and household (Mark 6:4).

He Could Not

The Scripture then says: "He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them” (Mark 6:5-6)"He answered them, “Isaiah accurately prophesied about you hypocrites when he wrote, (Isaiah 29:13) ‘These people honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me." do no miracles there, but that he "could not" do any miracles there. Why? Because of expectations based on what they had seen from Jesus before.

She Expected

Just before this incident we find the story of a woman with a twelve-year flow of blood. She had spent all of her money on doctors and only gotten worse. Yet, this woman, who had *not* grown up with Jesus, expected to be healed if she could touch his robe. Consider this: Many people touched the Lord on that occasion and weren't healed. But because she expected healing power to flow from Jesus into his robe and into her, Jesus healed her.

Make no mistake, what you expect from Jesus is what you'll receive. Next week we'll examine this story from another angle and discover why we live with low spiritual expectations and what we can do to raise them.