

# UNEXPECTED LEGITIMACY

## Lesson 3

### Matthew 13:53–58

#### RECAP

Take a moment to share about your experience with last week's "Spiritual Practice" and "On Mission" sections.

#### BIG IDEA

Jesus grew up ordinary, just like us. The people in His hometown, Nazareth, knew Him from the time He was a child. They had seen Him through every awkward stage and had watched Him apprentice as a carpenter under His earthly father, Joseph. They likely viewed Him as just the boy next door. Therefore, Jesus found the most skeptical and difficult place to live out His mission was where He was the most familiar.

#### CONTEXT

In **Matthew 13**, Jesus spent a great deal of time teaching the crowds around Him using parables. He used stories about things they would understand like weeds and fishing nets to reveal truths about Himself and His Kingdom. While some didn't understand His true meanings, it was becoming evident that the religious leaders were not comfortable with this revolutionary young Rabbi. (**Matthew 12:1–13:52**)

#### READ MATTHEW 13:53–58

*<sup>53</sup> When Jesus had finished telling these stories and illustrations, he left that part of the country. <sup>54</sup> He returned to Nazareth, his hometown. When he taught there in the synagogue, everyone was amazed and said, "Where does he get this wisdom and the power to do miracles?" <sup>55</sup> Then they scoffed, "He's just the carpenter's son, and we know Mary, his mother, and his brothers—James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas.*

*<sup>56</sup> All his sisters live right here among us. Where did he learn all these things?" <sup>57</sup> And they were deeply offended and refused to believe in him. Then Jesus told them, "A prophet is honored everywhere except in his own hometown and among his own family." <sup>58</sup> And so he did only a few miracles there*



2. “This was not the first time [Jesus] had spoken and taught in Nazareth. **Luke 4:14–30** states that Jesus went to Nazareth, ‘*where he had been brought up, [and] he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day*’ to read and teach.<sup>3</sup> At that time, the response was less than positive; in fact, the people had tried to kill him, but Jesus had walked away unharmed. This trip to Nazareth, therefore, is significant. The people of Nazareth were about to receive a second chance to believe.”<sup>4</sup> What do you learn about Jesus from His willingness to return to Nazareth?

3. How did the people respond to Jesus? (**13:54**)

“The Greek verb for ‘amazed’ (**13:54**) is ἐκπλήσσω/*ekplesso*, which literally means ‘to strike out of one’s senses.’”<sup>5</sup> Have you ever been that amazed by a teaching? How did you respond or react?

4. After amazement, they moved to skepticism. Why did they respond to Him in that way? (**13:55–56**)<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> **Luke 4:16** (NRSV)

<sup>4</sup> Barton, Bruce B. *Life Application Bible Commentary: Matthew*. Tyndale House Publishers, 1996. 277

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 278

<sup>6</sup> “Jesus’ brother James later became a believer, a leader in the Jerusalem church (**Acts 15:13; Galatians 2:9**), and the author of the book of James. Judas may have been Jude, author of the book of Jude. Nothing else is known of the other brothers and sisters.” Barton, Bruce B. *Life Application Bible Commentary: Matthew*. Tyndale House Publishers, 1996. 278

a. “Their preconceived notions about who [Jesus] was made it impossible for them to accept his message.”<sup>7</sup>  
When have your preconceived ideas made it hard for you to accept a spiritual message, past or present?

b. What needed (or needs) to change in your heart and mind for you to be able to accept it?

5. How did Jesus respond to the people in His hometown?  
(13:57)

a. Jesus was comparing Himself to Old Testament prophets who were rejected by those closest to them and by the nation as a whole.<sup>8</sup> Why do you think this comparison is significant?

---

<sup>7</sup> Barton, Bruce B. *Life Application Bible Commentary: Matthew*. Tyndale House Publishers, 1996. 279

<sup>8</sup> **Jeremiah 12:6**

b. Are there people who have a hard time accepting your witness? Why?

6. What was the result of the people's unbelief in **Matthew 13:58**?

a. The Pharisees and the people of Jesus' hometown wanted Jesus to perform for them and to prove Himself. However, God doesn't work that way. Jesus is not a genie granting wishes if we are good. He is our Father, our Lord, our Savior. What role are you giving God in your life?

b. Faith and belief require trust. What does giving God your trust look like for you on a day-to-day basis?

7. Each of these stories tells us more about Jesus, the unexpected King. What is one thing you have learned about Jesus from this lesson, and how will it impact how you live?

## **SPIRITUAL PRACTICE**

In **Mark 9**, a young demon-possessed boy was brought to Jesus to be healed. Jesus declared that anything is possible if you believe and the boy's father made the memorable and often quoted statement, "I believe; help my unbelief!"<sup>9</sup> Belief can be hard and messy as well as beautiful and miraculous.

What things about God do you find easy to believe?

What are some areas in which you find belief to be challenging?

Consider praying this as a breath prayer throughout this week: "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

Write down how you see God meeting you in your unbelief.

---

<sup>9</sup> **Mark 9:24** (ESV)

## **ON MISSION**

You may find that the hardest people to talk to about God are those who are closest to you—those who have known you for a long time, experienced your awkward phases, and have seen you at your worst.

What has been your experience sharing your faith with those closest to you? If you feel comfortable, share those experiences with your group.

What could it look like to share something God is teaching you with someone close to you who doesn't yet know God?

Spend some time as a group praying for each other as you take that next step.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

# SERMON NOTES

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for taking sermon notes. The box is vertically oriented and occupies most of the page's width and height.