

“Hometown Rejection”  
John 4:43-45, 48  
(Preached at Trinity, June 27, 2018)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As the Samaritans arrived from the city they begged Jesus to remain with them. He agreed to remain for two days.  
**John 4:40 NAU** - "So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days."
2. Now, as we come to **Verse 43**, the two days have expired and Jesus begins to make his way toward Galilee. This is difficult to interpret. We can read it as a continuation of **Verse 3** - "He left Judea and went away again into Galilee."
3. But **Verse 43** says Jesus is heading to Galilee *because* a prophet has no honor in his hometown. Galilee is the home of Jesus, so why would this be the reason He sets His sights on this region?  
There have been several approaches to solving this difficulty.
  - A. Some have pointed out that **Verses 4-32** are parenthetical. In **Verses 1-3** we find that Jesus left Judea for Galilee because the Pharisees had become aware of the popularity of Jesus. Jesus left the region to avoid their opposition. It was not yet time for Him to face arrest and execution.  
He makes a necessary stop in Samaria to bring salvation to the Samaritan woman at the well. With this mission accomplished He continues to Galilee. Since He was without honor in Galilee He would be less likely to attract attention.  
The problem with this explanation is we read in **Verse 45** that the people in his hometown region actually *received* Him. Even though they didn't receive Him as worthy of glory and honor, but only as a miracle worker to amaze them, He still will attract attention and infuriate the religious leaders.
  - B. Matthew Henry sees the homeland of Jesus in a more narrow sense. While Galilee was the home country of Jesus, it is more particular Nazareth. So, Jesus went to Galilee because he was rejected in His hometown of Nazareth.
4. The best way to understand **Verse 44** is in light of the previous verses. In **Verses 1-3** we read that Jesus was departing from Judea and heading to Galilee. He paused in Samaria. The Samaritans were in a state of enmity with the Jews and avoided one another. In such an environment, Jesus was received as the Messiah.
  - A. In contrast to His reception in Samaria, Jesus was now heading to His homeland of Galilee where He was rejected.  
**John 4:44 NAU** - "a prophet has no honor in his own country."
  - B. Why would Jesus go there? We can find the answer in **Verses 34-35**. Jesus was passionate about doing the will of the Father. He had been sent by the Father to redeem fallen sinners. He told His disciples:  
**John 4:35 NAU** - "lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest."

- C. The clearest answer to why He was going to the region that had not received Him is because these were people who needed Him. James Montgomery Boice points out, “at this point Jesus Christ moved his ministry to Galilee precisely *because* he had not been received in Galilee previously, and it was therefore the Galileans above everyone else who needed him. In other words, Jesus went to Galilee *because* the Galileans needed the gospel.”<sup>1</sup>
5. By going to Galilee, however, Jesus was ultimately sealing their condemnation. **John 1:11-12 NAU** - "He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. <sup>12</sup> But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name" **Matthew 11:20-24 NAU** - "Then He began to denounce the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent. <sup>21</sup> "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>22</sup> "Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in *the* day of judgment than for you. <sup>23</sup> "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. <sup>24</sup> "Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in *the* day of judgment, than for you."
6. We need to consider the great danger presented in this passage.
- I. The danger when familiarity causes us to reject the authority of God’s Word
- A. The problem with the Galileans is they failed to see beyond the Jesus who grew up among them. They were blind to His glory
1. They knew Him from a child. They knew of His former profession as a carpenter. They knew His parents and His brothers and sisters. Perhaps some even played with Him as a child. **Mark 6:3-4 NAU** - "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him. <sup>4</sup> Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his *own* relatives and in his *own* household."
  2. This text tells us they took offense of Him *because* they knew Him. How could this hometown man that they knew so well speak to them with authority? Because of their familiarity with Christ they hardened their hearts and continued in unbelief.
- B. The expression “familiarity breeds contempt” is the warning here.
1. The problem with spiritual leadership is it is hard to receive the voice of a man as a voice of authority

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<sup>1</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of John: An Expositional Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 338.

2. The authority of Moses was often despised and rejected
  - a. By Korah – Moses seemed no different from everyone else.  
**Numbers 16:3 NAU** - "They assembled together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You have gone far enough, for all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is in their midst; so why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?"
  - b. By his brother and sister, Miriam and Aaron – because Moses didn't seem like anyone special  
**Numbers 12:2-3 NAU** - "and they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?" And the LORD heard it.  
**Numbers 12:6-8 NAU** - "He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream. <sup>7</sup> "Not so, with My servant Moses, He is faithful in all My household; <sup>8</sup> With him I speak mouth to mouth, Even openly, and not in dark sayings, And he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant, against Moses?"
  - c. Part of the problem of Miriam and Aaron was they knew Moses. Miriam held him as a baby.  
 They knew all of his weakness and failures. He was but a man.
3. Timothy was despised because of his youthfulness
  - a. How could one so young speak with authority?
  - b. Paul's words to Timothy:  
**1 Timothy 4:12 NAU** - "Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but *rather* in speech, conduct, love, faith *and* purity, show yourself an example of those who believe."
  - c. Paul commanded Timothy to speak with the authority of the Word of God  
**1 Timothy 4:11 ESV** - "Command and teach these things."
4. Pastors often face the same tension
  - a. The congregation sees them as mere men. They discover that they are sinners too.
  - b. It can become easy to dismiss their words.
5. Perhaps you've experienced difficulty sharing the Gospel with family members—with parents or siblings. They know you so well. They've seen you at your worst. It is hard for them to hear you speak with such bold confidence.

- II. It is a fatal flaw when we fail to recognize the authority of the Divine Word
- A. No one has the right to reject God's Word, regardless of the messenger
1. Of course, Jesus spoke the Word of God because He *was* God – the Father's Word was His Word. Over and over Jesus declared His oneness with the Father  
**John 10:30 NAU** - "I and the Father are one."  
**John 5:17-19 NAU** - "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." <sup>18</sup> For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. <sup>19</sup> Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless *it is* something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner."
  2. Jesus spoke with Divine authority  
**John 14:23-24 NAU** - "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. <sup>24</sup> "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me."
  3. Their rejection of Christ was a rejection of God's authority. It was a rejection of the King of kings.  
 All the Galileans could see was this one who had grown up around them. They failed to see that He was God
- B. Pastors also speak with Divine authority if they are speaking the Word of God. Jesus told His disciples:  
**Luke 10:16 NAU** - "The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me."
1. God calls and equips pastors to speak His Word with authority. Edmund Clowney wrote: "God does call workmen in the Word with deepened insights to perceive the outlines of sound words with anointed lips to declare them. A stewardship of the gospel is committed to such men. Their message must be received as the word of God."<sup>2</sup>
  2. The weakness of the pastor does not diminish the authority of the Word. *Second Helvetic Confession* (1566): "Wherefore when this Word of God is now preached in the church by preachers lawfully called, we believe that the very Word of God is preached, and received of the faithful; and that neither any other Word of God is to be feigned, nor to be expected from heaven: and that now the Word itself which is preached is to be regarded, not the minister that preaches; who, although he be evil and a sinner, nevertheless the Word of God abides true and good."

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<sup>2</sup> Clowney, Edmund, *Called to the Ministry*, (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1964), 50.

3. The Word of God is the pastor's authority  
**Augustine:** "Yes it is I who admonish, I who order, I who command, it is the bishop who teaches. But it is Christ who commands through me." "The preacher explains the text; if he says what is true, it is Christ speaking."
4. Matthew Henry wrote: "It is just with God to deny his gospel to those that despise the ministers of it. They that mock the messengers forfeit the benefit of the message."<sup>3</sup>

#### Conclusion:

1. The hostility towards Jesus in no way caused Him to retreat. He knew His own country would not receive Him, yet He traveled there. Why? Because that was the will of His Father.  
**John 4:34 NAU** - "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work."
2. This was the prophetic word concerning Christ. We read in Matthew's Gospel:  
**Matthew 4:12-16 NAS** - "Now when He heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee; <sup>13</sup> and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. <sup>14</sup> *This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,* <sup>15</sup> "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles-- <sup>16</sup> "The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great light, And to those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death, Upon them a light dawned."
3. It was also because of His compassion upon humanity. He knew of their hatred and rejection of them, yet He felt sorrow for them.  
A. W. Pink – "When we hear Him testifying, "A prophet hath no honor in his own country," we can almost catch the sob in His voice. Two days only did He abide in Samaria. Now, He turns once more to Galilee, and He goes with sad foreboding. <sup>4</sup>  
**Matthew 23:37 NAU** - "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling."
4. Those closest to us will sometimes be those who turn away from our words. These are the ones who are of the greatest sorrow to us. But opposition must not diminish our work. We must continue to speak the unbridled Word of God.

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<sup>3</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*, (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1940.

<sup>4</sup> Arthur Walkington Pink, *Exposition of the Gospel of John*, (Swengel, PA: Bible Truth Depot, 1923–1945), 229.