

**crazy** for these witnesses of X's miracles, to be filled with **unbelief!** The holy **soul** of Jesus was shocked at their unbelief - as you and I **should** be shocked when we witness unbelief/**hatred** toward Jesus. **APP** When you/I hear someone swear against God, we **ought** to be shocked! If we truly understood who God is, and what He has done for us, we **ought** to be grieved! We ought to be **upset** that someone is not aware of the greatness of our God. Maybe, of course, we along with the world, do not see the greatness of God. In fact that **is** the **reason** we are not upset at **sin** - we do not 'see' God for who He is and what He has **done for us** in Christ. Mankind's problem is that mankind is **ignorant** of God! That is why many theologies start their study with God, not man! Christ was upset because He was God and knew reality.

It was **because** Jesus was holy and pure, that He was offended and surprised at people's unbelief in Him. The less offended we are at sin, the more **unlike X** we are! Jesus never got '**conditioned**' to sin! You/I are so 'used' to observing, and committing sin, that we become **immune** to it and 'accept' it. Sin no longer shocks **us** - even **multiple murders!** Well, not so Jesus! Sin always disturbed His soul.

## **CHRIST'S RESPONSE**

We read that Jesus did **not** do **many** mighty works there! He **did some** "*He laid His hands on a **few** sick people and healed them*"[5] but nothing as outstanding as He did in other places! \*The reason seems to be that for Jesus to do greater miracles than what He had done in that place, would only have **further aggravated the sin** of the people. He would only have **increased** their **guilt!** He was saving **them** from **further** guilt and **punishment**, by withholding more manifestations of His Majesty and power! He would have only **angered** them further. As it was, He was **thrown out** of the Church - [see Luke 4:28]

That has a solemn **application** for ourselves! Is it because **we** have not **appreciated**, or indeed **acknowledged**, the work of God/Christ in our own midst, that nothing **spectacular** is happening? Despite what our generation feel about the economy, God/Christ has done wonderful things for our nation/generation. We are still living off the capital of the

Reformation! We're still a very **prosperous** nation. Just watch some TV programmes on the Third World. (I read that 923 million people are **undernourished** - almost 1 sixth of world population!) We in the West have all the benefits/privileges of modern technology to make daily life **comfortable**, and for **medicine** - not so in the Third World! Thanks to God's **grace alone!** Xns in communist/Muslim countries are **persecuted** for their faith - and will **not deny** the Lord Jesus despite being imprisoned and removed from their families! Not us!

We in the West, are blessed by the works of Christ - **nothing else!** Remember what Moses said to the Israelites "***Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may confirm his covenant that He swore to your fathers, as it is this day***" [Deu 8:17]

**APP** Do you know what is wrong with our western society? Do you know what is wrong with **public opinion**. This: **Because** of our **unbelief** in God/Christ, we have **assumed** a 'right' and 'entitlement' to all the benefits of life? We **think** life owes a great living - and all for nothing! Just because we are alive, we think everything should be excellent! What creates that kind of philosophy? Ans: A philosophy that does not believe in Jesus Christ - and **His Cross!!** Yet Jesus Christ walked this earth and people were **astonished** at His **wisdom** and His **miracles!!** And this also: "***they took offense at Him***"[3c]

People in the West can believe all sorts of things - aliens, Elvis Presley's resurrection - crazy things. Yet they do not believe in Jesus Christ! That is due to something. Unbelief in Christ. But it is **more** than that. It is **hatred** and **offense** of Christ. That is why an **US Court** has ruled a Xn mother must stop home-schooling her children and send her children to a Government run school to learn other belief systems. The Court accepted the girl is 'well liked, social and interactive with her peers, academically promising, and intellectually at or superior to grade level'. Yet they ruled she must be sent to a Government school. Why? The offense of Christ! So the 'powers that be' exercised their power! Same sort of thing is happening in the UK!

So, we see that Jesus “*could do no mighty works there*” was really the result of the **mindset**, **decision** and **position** of the people. The people had **already** made a **decision** that Jesus was, as one person said to me, ‘not for them’! And they did not **want** to be persuaded otherwise. It was a **moral**, not a physical **inability** that prevented more wonders been done! There was a **spiritual** reason for Jesus withholding His power. It was **not** that **Satan/demons usurped** the power of X!

Disappointed though Jesus was at the rejection of His own home town, that did **not prevent** the Word from being preached elsewhere - and **many** being healed! In fact, here it meant **growth** in the number of preachers, for Jesus “*called the twelve...to send them out...gave them authority...and they went and proclaimed that people should repent...many (not few) who were sick were healed*” [7-12]!

We must never think that the unbelief of the world, **frustrates** God’s plan. God’s plan always works out in the end. He is sovereign and what He has ordained will come to pass. But from a **human perspective** things may **appear** to be what they are not!

So for **us**, the recipients of God’s Word and truth, we have **great responsibilities**. We have to **respond** to the message of salvation. Jesus gives us great **encouragement** to come to Him in faith. He never turned away anyone! Many turned away from Him - but He did not turn any person away. Sure, some ‘went’ away of their own free will and choice. But Jesus only encouraged people, even the **worst** of sinners, to come to Him for life.

We make a big mistake in thinking that life consists in the accumulation of possessions and property and things! But Jesus said “*Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions*” [Luke 12:15]

No, life consists in **union with the Lord Jesus**. Do you want **security**? Listen “*your life is hidden with Christ in God*” “*When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory*” People in the world are **tired of life**! Never tired of life in Christ! “*I am come that they might have life...to the full*” [J10:10]

PRELIMS. Jesus has returned to His hometown after raising a little girl from death! They're "*astonished*" at 3 things. His "*wisdom*", His "*mighty works*", His pedigree; is He not the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and their sisters - so "*Where did this Man get these things?*"[2] What surprised them was the **greatness** of His **power** - but guess what? "*They took offense at Him*"[3c] Absolutely amazing how **prejudiced** they were! It is not the surprise of the people we want to look at tonight so much as the surprise of Jesus at their unbelief!

### **CHRIST'S SURPRISE**

At our BS this week, we looked at weeping with those weep and rejoicing with those who rejoice. We wondered how we could do that without being **hypocritical**! **Only** by **empathising** and entering into the **mindset** of the individual. (Empathising is a time **for prayer** - because you are '**confronted**' with an **emotion** that is **alien** to your present feelings and you are '**challenged**'! So you pray to give honest **thanks** for blessings on others and to resist being **jealous**. Or you are challenged to pray to seek **genuine compassionate spirit** to **grieve** with a brother or sister although you are busy with your own life! You pray to be what you **should be** in the situation you now find yourself!)

In order for us to understand Jesus' mind here, we must apply the same **attitude**, ie, we need to empathise and get into the **heart** of Jesus to understand His surprise. Some Xns think it is **impossible for Jesus**, the Eternal God, to be 'surprised' at anything that happens in His world! After all, He predestined everything, even the minutest details!! True, but here we are seeing the Eternal God as a **man** - with all the **limitations** of humanity. Jesus is the Second Adam **representing** His people. He has all the **deficiencies** of humanity (except **sin**)! He gets tired, weary, sleepy, hungry, thirsty, emotional, discouraged, hurt, angry, joyous, etc. Jesus also had all the **expectations** of humanity. He thought like us and reasoned like us, He became **accustomed** to life here on earth - just as a child does.

You see, **rationally** speaking, (and all humans rationalise) it was