

HIGH SCHOOL REUNIONS! AREN'T THEY FUN?
WOW,,, BY THE LOOKS,,, ON SOME OF YOUR FACES,,,
PERHAPS NOT!

PERSONALLY,,, I AVOID THEM,,, LIKE THE PLAGUE!
BECAUSE,,, SOMETIMES,,, FOLKS CAN BE JUST TOO
CRUEL,,, CAN'T THEY?

SO MANY PEOPLE AT HIGH SCHOOL REUNIONS,,,
GATHER AROUND EACH OTHER *AND DO THE OLD:*

- (*) *DO YOU REMEMBER,,, SO AND SO?***
- (*) *BOY,,, THEY MUST HAVE HAD A TOUGH LIFE!***
- (*) *WOW,,, DON'T THEY LOOK OLD?***
- (*) *DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN JONESY DID THIS?***
- (*) *OR,,, WHEN MARY DID THAT?***

FRANKLY,,, I DON'T LIKE,,, PLAYING THE GAME OF;
"DO YOU REMEMBER",,, DO YOU?

LET'S JUST SAY,,, THAT SOME OF MY HIGH SCHOOL
MEMORIES,,, AND I'M SURE SOME OF YOURS,,, ARE
BETTER OFF,,, LEFT AS MEMORIES,,, OR,,, EVEN
BETTER YET,,, JUST PLAIN FORGOTTEN!

THEN,,, THERE ARE THOSE PEOPLE AT HIGH SCHOOL
REUNIONS,,, WHO JUST STAND THERE,,, LOOKING AT
JUST ABOUT EVERYONE,,, SAYING;

MY GOODNESS,,, HOW THEY'VE CHANGED!

BUT WHAT THEY'RE REALLY SAYING,,, IS;

- (*) *BOY,,, HAS SHE PUT ON A LOT OF WEIGHT,,, OR,,,***
- (*) *OH WOW,,, IS HE LOSING HIS HAIR? OR,,,***
- (*) *WASN'T HE SOOOO STUCK UP IN HIGH SCHOOL?***

THEN,,, THERE ARE THOSE PEOPLE,,, WHO SIMPLY
MUST,,, HEAR EVERYTHING ABOUT YOUR LIVES
STRUGGLES. NOT BECAUSE THEY CARE,,, BUT
BECAUSE,,, AS STATISTICS PROVE:

- (*) *90 % OF THE POPULATION,,, DOESN'T CARE ABOUT***
YOUR PROBLEMS,,, AT ALL,,, AND,,,
- (*) *THE OTHER 10%,,, WELL,,, THEY'RE JUST GLAD,,,***
THAT,,, THEY ARE YOUR PROBLEMS,,, & **NOT THIERS!**

THEY'RE NOT REALLY INTERESTED IN WHAT YOU'RE DOING,, THEY JUST WANT TO SEE,, IF YOU TURNED OUT,, THE WAY THEY ASSUMED YOU WOULD!

TODAY,, WE HEAR ABOUT A REUNION,, WHERE JESUS RETURNED TO HIS HOME TOWN AND WHERE HE CAUSED,, QUITE A STIRR.

JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES TRAVELED ABOUT 20 MILES FROM WHERE THEY HAD BEEN MINISTERING AROUND THE SEA OF GALILEE,, TO NAZARETH.

HE HAD BEEN TEACHING,, PREACHING & HEALING! NOW,, JESUS DECIDED TO GO BACK TO HIS HOME TOWN,, FOR A VISIT.

MAYBE JESUS JUST WANTED TO SEE HIS FAMILY,, HIS FRIENDS,, OR VISIT SOME OF HIS FORMER PLACES AGAIN,, AFTER BEING FOLLOWED,, CONSTANTLY,, BY THOSE CROWDS.

ST MARK TELLS US,, THAT JESUS WENT TO NAZARETH,, WITH HIS DISCIPLES AND *WHEN THE SABBATH CAME,, HE BEGAN TO TEACH IN THE SYNAGOGUE* AND *MANY WHO HEARD HIM,, WERE AMAZED,, ASTOUNDED AND EVEN OVERWHELMED,, AT HIS KNOWLEDGE AND HIS WISDOM*,, AND THEY WANTED TO KNOW,, WHERE HE OBTAINED SUCH THINGS.

THEY HAD HEARD THAT JESUS COULD WORK MIRACLES,, BUT THEY WERE CONFUSED,, ASKING: *"IS HE NOT THE CARPENTER,, THE SON OF MARY AND THE BROTHER OF JAMES AND JOSES AND JUDAS AND SIMON AND,, ARE NOT HIS SISTERS HERE WITH US?"* AND THEY TOOK OFFENSE AT HIM!

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, WHENEVER YOU'VE GONE BACK TO YOUR OLD HOMETOWN,, DON'T YOU LIKE TO THINK,, THAT AT LEAST SOMEBODY,, WOULD REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE? AND WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO THINK,, THAT SOMEONE WOULD GIVE YOU SOME SORT OF RECOGNITION,, SO YOU CAN KNOW,, THAT AT ONE TIME,, YOU BELONGED THERE!

PERHAPS THAT'S WHAT OUR LORD JESUS,,, MAY HAVE BEEN THINKING TOO.

WELL,,, THERE WAS AT LEAST SOME RECOGNITION THERE,,, BECAUSE THE RABBI'S,,, DIDN'T LET JUST ANYONE,,, TEACH IN THEIR SYNAGOGUES.

OBVIOUSLY,,, JESUS WAS RECOGNIZED AS A TEACHER AND HE WAS ABLE TO READ THE SCRIPTURES AND TEACH. NONE THE LESS,,, HIS TEACHINGS AMAZED THEM. AND THOSE WHO LISTENED TO JESUS SPEAK,,, WERE TAKEN BY SURPRISE!

BY; **THE POWER AND THE DEPTH OF HIS THINKING!** AND ALSO,,, BY THE FACT,,, THAT JESUS PERFORMED A FEW HEALINGS!

BUT AGAIN,,, THEY SAID: *“WAIT A MINUTE,,, DON'T WE KNOW THIS MAN? ISN'T THIS THE CARPENTER?”*

SO,,, WHERE DID THIS COMMENT COME FROM?

WELL,,, IF YOU'LL REMEMBER,,, JESUS GREW UP IN NAZARETH AND HE LIVED THERE,,, UNTIL HE WAS ABOUT 30 YEARS OLD,,, WHEN HE STARTED HIS MINISTRY! *SCRIPTURE TELLS US:*

THAT THEY KNEW THAT: *JOSEPH WAS JESUS' EARTHLY FATHER* AND,,, THAT *JOSEPH AND JESUS,,, WERE CARPENTERS.*

THEY KNEW,,, THAT *MARY WAS JESUS' EARTHLY MOTHER* AND;

THAT THEY KNEW,,, THAT *JESUS HAD BROTHERS AND SISTERS.* ***JESUS WAS NOT AN ONLY CHILD!***

AT A MINIMUM,,, JESUS' FAMILY CONSISTED OF EIGHT PEOPLE. THERE WAS: MARY,,, JOSEPH,,, JAMES,,, JOSEPH,,, JUDAS,,, AND SIMON,,, AND AT LEAST TWO AND PERHAPS THREE SISTERS (WHO WERE CHILDREN,,, FROM JOSEPH'S PREVIOUS WIFE,,, WHO HAD DIED.

NOW,,, THE CROWD WAS TRYING TO IDENTIFY JESUS IN THEIR MINDS. AND IT SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN TOO DIFFICULT,,, BECAUSE,,, JESUS HAD ONLY BEEN AWAY,,, FOR ABOUT A YEAR AND A HALF.

BUT THE SAD PART IS; THAT THESE TOWNFOLK,, HAD LITERALLY KNOWN JESUS,, “*ALL HIS LIFE*”,, AND THEY HAD EVEN WATCHED JESUS GROW UP!

PERHAPS SOME OF THEM,, HAD EVEN SEEN HIS CARPENTRY SKILLS. THEY SAW HIM DAILY,, YET,, AS ST. MARK TELLS US: *THEY TOOK OFFENSE AT HIM!*

“*TOOK OFFENSE AT HIM*” IN THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE,, MEANS:

THAT THEY WERE INSULTED BY JESUS AND IT CAUSED THEM TO STUMBLE,, AND TO BE REPELLED BY HIM!

AND THIS HINDERED THEM FROM ACKNOWLEDGING JESUS’ AUTHORITY. THEY COULD NOT SEE IN JESUS,, ANY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT HE,, JESUS,, WAS

“*GOD’S ANOINTED SON*”

THEY REFUSED TO ADMIT,, HIS DIVINITY AND AUTHORITY AND BECAUSE OF THAT,, AND THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS JESUS,, THEY WERE SPIRITUALLY DEAD!

AFTER THEIR REJECTION,, *JESUS SAID TO THEM:*

“ONLY IN HIS HOME TOWN,, AMONG HIS RELATIVES,, AND IN HIS OWN HOUSE,, IS A PROPHET WITHOUT HONOR.”

JESUS COULDN’T DO MIRACLES THERE! EXCEPT TO LAY HIS HANDS ON AND HEAL,, A FEW SICK PEOPLE!

JESUS WAS AMAZED AT THEIR LACK OF FAITH!

JESUS COULDN’T DO MIRACLES OR HEALINGS IN HIS HOMETOWN OF NAZARETH,, BECAUSE THE PEOPLE REFUSED TO SEE WHO HE WAS.

AND,, BECAUSE THEY REFUSED *TO LOOK BEYOND THEIR EARTHLY PRECEPTIONS OF JESUS,, THE CARPENTER,, TO THE SON OF GOD,, CONCEIVED IN THE FLESH*,, EVEN THOUGH THEY KNEW THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOMETHING UNUSUAL,, ABOUT HIS BIRTH.

THEIR SPIRITUAL EYES,, HAD FAILED TO SEE JESUS,, AS THE MESSIAH!

SO BECAUSE OF THIS,,, WHY WOULD THEY BRING ANYONE TO JESUS FOR A MIRACLE,,, OR HEALING?

IT WASN'T BECAUSE JESUS DIDN'T HAVE THE POWER TO HEAL,,, OR FOR THAT MATTER,,, TO DO MIRACLES IT WAS BECAUSE OF THE "UNBELIEF" OF HIS PEOPLE!

REMEMBER,,, JESUS DIDN'T HAVE ANY DIFFICULTY AT ALL,,, HEALING THOSE FEW SICK PEOPLE,,, WHO DID SEEK HIM OUT,,, OUT OF FAITH! IT WAS CLEAR,,, THAT JESUS DID HEAL THOSE,,, **WHO CAME TO HIM!**

NO,,, JESUS DIDN'T HAVE ANY PROBLEM HEALING! THE PROBLEM WAS,,, SIMPLY,,, THAT THE PEOPLE DIDN'T SEE HIM,,, FOR WHO HE WAS,,, THEIR MESSIAH!

THESE PEOPLE DID NOT BELIEVE IN,,, AND DIDN'T TRUST IN JESUS,,, AND BECAUSE OF THAT,,, THE MAJORITY OF THEM,,, SIMPLY DIDN'T COME TO HIM,,, BECAUSE OF THEIR LACK OF BELIEF AND FAITH.

BELIEVING IN CHRIST,,, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, IS A CHOICE! IT'S A CHOICE,,, THAT EACH OF US HAS TO MAKE,,, ON OUR OWN!

JESUS ONCE ANSWERED A QUESTION,,, PUT TO HIM BY A CROWD,,, THAT WAS FOLLOWING HIM AND HIS ANSWER WAS PLAIN FOR ALL OF US TO SEE. IN JOHN 6: 28,,, IT SAYS; *THEN THEY ASKED HIM,,, "WHAT MUST WE DO,,, TO DO THE WORKS GOD REQUIRES?"*

*JESUS ANSWERED: **THE WORK OF GOD IS THIS; TO BELIEVE IN THE ONE HE HAS SENT!***"

WHEN WE BELIEVE IN CHRIST,,, NOT JUST WITH OUR MINDS,,, BUT WITH A DEEP AND HEARTFELT COMMITMENT,,, AND WHEN WE SURRENDER OURSELVES TO JESUS,,, WE'LL HAVE NO DIFFICULTY COMING TO HIM,,, FOR HIS SAVING GRACE,,, FOR HIS HEALING AND FOR HIS RESTORATION.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, WE KNOW JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD AND WE KNOW,,, THAT HE WAS NOT POWERLESS TO HEAL,,, EVEN IN HIS HOMETOWN.

IT'S SAD TO SAY,,, THAT THE PROBLEM IN JESUS' DAY
AND EVEN TODAY,,, IS THAT **MANY PEOPLE DID NOT**,,,
AND **MANY TODAY STILL DO NOT**,,, BELIEVE IN HIM
AND WHO HE IS.

BROTHERS ANS SISTERS,,, IN THESE PAINFUL AND
DIFFICULT TIMES,,, THAT WE LIVE IN,,, WHERE THE
HEALING AND SAVING POWER OF JESUS,,, IS SO
DESPERATELY NEEDED,,, **WE MUST FOCUS OUR FAITH
ON JESUS AND THEN SHARE THAT FAITH IN JESUS,,,
WITH ANYONE AND EVERYONE WHO NEEDS IT,,,**

NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES!

WHEN PEOPLE SAY TO YOU,,, THAT THEY DON'T
BELIEVE,,, THEN YOU,,, **AS A LIVING EXAMPLE OF
JESUS CHRIST**,,, CAN LOOK THEM RIGHT IN THEIR
EYES,,, AND SAY:

**WELL,,, I AM A BELIEVER!
I AM A CHRISTIAN CATHOLIC!
AND GOD LOVES YOU,,,
WETHER YOU BELIEVE OR NOT!**

**SO,,, LET'S OPEN OUR EYES TO SEE JESUS,,,
LET'S OPEN OUR EARS TO HEAR HIM,,,
LET'S OPEN OUR HEARTS,,, TO RECEIVE HIM,,,
AND TO GROW IN FAITH AND WALK WITH HIM.
LET'S LOOK AT JESUS,,, WITH A NEW SET OF EYES,,,
SO THAT YOU,,, JUST LIKE ME,,,
CAN EXPERIENCE,,,
THE TRUE LOVE OF CHRIST JESUS,,,
IN YOUR LIFE!**

***THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT
+++ AMEN+++***

(1,476) WDS,,, 6 PGS