

“A prophet is not without honour, except in his home town” Mark chapter 6 verse 4

Jesus grew up in Nazareth, in Galilee, in the north of Israel. His preaching and teaching ministry took him there in due course. The people there were astonished at his teaching. They knew him from childhood. He was the Mary's son, and his brothers and sisters still lived in the town. You'd think they'd be pleased that he had made something of himself.

But no. They were offended by him. Whatever he was now, they knew that he was just a carpenter getting ideas above his station. Their lack of faith actually limited his ability to do any miracles beyond a few healings.

These days, people in the public eye are often shamed in the press because of things they have done or said years before. What they have said or done since seems to make no difference. Ten or fifteen years ago they made an unguarded comment in the press or in an email, and that, apparently betrays what they are really like or what they really believe. It is as if it is inconceivable that anyone could ever change. Careers and reputations have been destroyed in this way.

Probably the greatest change that can ever come into someone's life is the one that happens when they become a Christian. Atheists have become believers, liars people of integrity, thieves have become honest, the adulterous have become faithful. The coming of Jesus into the life of a person brings radical changes, and their sins are wiped from their record. Nevertheless, I once heard a man whose mother had become a Christian call her a hypocrite because she was now speaking and behaving differently from the way she had when he was growing up.

But it is obvious that people change as they go through life. WE are all growing and changing all the time. We would all expect others to respect that in us, and to take us as we are now. We may have made mistakes in the past, but we would hope that people we knew then would accept that we regret them and would not want to make them again. I am shaped by my past, but God forbid that I should let myself be defined by it now.

Love “keeps no record of wrongs” says Paul. Just as, when we have come to Christ and received God's forgiveness, he will never again bring our sins back to condemn us with, so Christians are instructed to do the same. We may not forget what people have said or done in the past, but we must grant them the grace to leave those things there and be the people they are now.

Prayer

Father, thank you that you are changing me day by day and you have a perfect plan for what I will become. Help me to be continually open to the things in my life that need to change, and help me to work with you to make those changes. May I also have the grace to acknowledge that others also change, and not to judge people on statements they have made and things they have done in the past. In Jesus' name, amen.

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