

19. THEY LIKE JESUS (JOHN 4:43-45) 06/24/12  
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, ATCHISON, PASTOR LEE HENDON

I GREW UP IN MARSHALL, **TEXAS** - PROUD TO BE A LONGHORN FAN - HOOK 'EM HORNS! WHEN I THINK OF HOME I THINK OF MAR-SHALL & WHEN SOMEONE ASK ME WHERE I'M FROM I USUALLY SAY MARSHALL, TEXAS - HOME TO Y.A. TITLE & GEORGE FOREMAN. BUT I WAS NOT BORN IN MARSHALL. I WAS BORN IN ATHENS, **GA.** SO BY BIRTH, I AM A GEORGIAN EVENTHO I ONLY LIVED THERE FOR NINE MONTHS - GO BULLDAWGS! MY OWN COUNTRY, MY ROOTS, IN THE SENSE OF WHAT JESUS WAS SAYING, **IS GEORGIA.**

I THINK OF JESUS BEING FROM **NAZARETH** - THAT IS WHERE HE GREW UP. FAMILY ROOTS WERE VERY IMPORTANT STUFF TO THE JEWS. JESUS' OWN COUNTRY WAS BETHLEHEM, HIS BIRTH-PLACE, HE WAS FROM THE TRIBE OF JUDAH, THE HOUSE OF DAVID. NAZARETH IS IN **GALILEE**, BETHLEHEM IS IN **JUDEA**. AS A BIBLE STUDENT IT IS IMPORTANT TO CLARIFY THIS BECAUSE WHEN JESUS SAID, "A PROPHET HAS NO HONOR IN HIS OWN COUNTRY" HE WAS REFERRING TO THE REJECTION HE EXPERIENCED AT THE HANDS OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS WHILE IN JERUSALEM, JUDEA. THE LORD'S PROPHETIC ACTION OF CLEANSING THE TEMPLE & RESTORING IT TO A HOUSE OF PRAYER WAS TOTALLY REJECTED & OPPOSED BY THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS. BUT WHAT JESUS HAD DONE IN JUDEA AT THE TEMPLE MADE HIM A HERO, A CHAMPION WITH THE PEOPLE IN GALILEE. THEY RECEIVED JESUS WITH OPEN ARMS - THEY REALLY LIKED JESUS & HIS PROPHETIC ACTION AGAINST THE ORGANIZED RELIGION OF HIS DAY.

JOHN 1:11 FORETOLD THAT JESUS CAME TO HIS OWN & HIS OWN PEOPLE (JUDEANS) DID NOT ACCEPT HIM. SO JESUS WOULD MOVE HIS MINISTRY, TEACHINGS & MIRACLES TO OTHERS WHO WOULD RECEIVE HIM - JESUS WAS ALL THE RAGE WITH THE SAMARITANS & GALILEANS - THEY CAME OUT TO HIM IN DROVES.

THE MEANING OF THE PROVERB, "A PROPHET HAS NO HONOR IN HIS OWN COUNTRY" IS THAT A PROPHET IS NOT RESPECTED, NOT ACCEPTED BY HIS OWN PEOPLE. OUR UNDERSTANDING WOULD BE THAT "**FAMILIARITY BREEDS CONTEMPT.**" ONE THING THAT CAN ROB THE CHURCH, US CHRISTIANS, OF OUR POWER TODAY IS OUR

COMFORTABLE, SOMETIMES CONTEMPTUOUS **FAMILIARITY** WITH JESUS. WE HAVE BEEN IN THIS CHURCH OR ONE LIKE IT ALL OUR LIVES - (HUMPH!) - HEARD ALL THE STORIES - KNOW WHAT HE IS SUPPOSE TO LOOK LIKE - THOUGH I HATE TO TELL YOU HE WAS DARK SKINNED & NOT CAUCASIAN LIKE WE USUALLY THINK OF HIM. WE CAN BE IN DANGER OF BEING THE ESTABLISHED RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION THAT SO OPPOSED THIS UPSTART, UNPREDICTABLE, UNCONTROLLABLE, UNCONVENTIONAL JESUS! IN A SENSE WE ARE NOW HIS OWN COUNTRY.

WHEN IS THE LAST TIME YOU ALLOWED JESUS TO GET SO UP CLOSE & PERSONAL WITH YOU SO AS TO **CHANGE** YOUR WAY OF THINKING, YOUR VIEW POINT, YOUR ACTIONS? WE MUST ALLOW JESUS TO BE RAW & FRESH ENOUGH SO AS TO MAKE A VERY REAL DIFFERENCE TO US IN OUR LIVES. IF WE MEANDER THROUGH LIFE WITHOUT FEELING LIKE JESUS CHALLENGES US & CHANGES US - I MUST EXCLAIM - **WARNING - WARNING - WARNING** - JESUS HAS LEFT OUR PRESENCE & MOVED ON TO SAMARIA & GALILEE. BLAH, BLAH, BLAH, YOU HAVE HEARD ALL THIS BEFORE - WILL U ALLOW JESUS TO REALLY DRAW NEAR TO YOU & GET IN YOUR FACE & INTO YOUR HEART! GOD, I HOPE I WILL - I SO DESPERATELY DESIRE THAT FOR MYSELF & FOR EACH OF YOU! HOW DARE US SUPPOSE JESUS COULD DRAW NEAR TO US **WITHOUT** US BEING CHANGED! WELCOME & DELIGHT IN THE CHANGE JESUS BRINGS US!

THE GALILEANS JOYFULLY WELCOMED JESUS BECAUSE HE GAVE THEM NEW LIFE, A FRESH PRESENCE & POWER OF GOD IN THEIR MIDST. THE TEMPLE WAS STIFLING & BORING! JESUS WAS NOT OLD HAT, OLD TIME RELIGION & THEY WERE ENTHUSIASTIC-ALLY EXCITED ABOUT HIM - HIS LIFE, MINISTRY, MIRACLES & TEACHINGS. IT IS NATURAL TO CHAMPION THE ONE WHO CHALLENGES & CHANGES TIRED, WORN OUT ESTABLISHED WAYS OF DOING THINGS ...UNTIL...IT BEGINS TO COST **US** SOMETHING OR CHALLENGE OUR OWN STATUS QUO THOUGHTS & BEHAVIORS. AS WE POWER UP THIS CHURCH OF OURS, OR BE INVIGORATED IN OUR OWN LIVES, IT WILL BE DONE BY ALLOWING JESUS TO REALLY BE ALIVE & PRESENT IN OUR MIDST. OUR FEARS, LIKE THOSE OF THE JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS, BECOME AGITATED BECAUSE WE DO NOT WANT TO, DO NOT INTEND TO, CHANGE ANYTHING ABOUT YOU, ME, OR US - GO ON TO GALILEE,

JESUS, & CHANGE THOSE SINNERS UP THAR!

THE GALILEANS (OUTSIDERS) REALLY LIKED JESUS!

DO YOU REALLY LIKE JESUS?

WE MUST LIKE JESUS ENOUGH TO TAKE HIM HOME WITH US & LET HIM INTO OUR HEARTS. JESUS WANTS TO HAVE HIS WAY WITH US - TO RULE & TO COMMAND OUR LIVES. UNFORTUNATELY OUR FAMILIARITY WITH JESUS CAN BREED CONTEMPT - KNOW ABOUT HIM, TALK ABOUT HIM, KEEP HIM AROUND LIKE AN OLD PAIR OF HOUSE SHOES - TO THEN GO OUT TO LIVE OUR LIVES ANYWAY WE WANT TO WITHOUT HIS INFLUENCE - MY FRIENDS, JESUS WILL NOT STAND FOR THAT! JESUS WILL BE ON HIS WAY TO MOVE ON TO THOSE WHO WILL LISTEN TO & FOLLOW HIM.

IT IS PAST TIME FOR THE CHURCH, US CHRISTIANS, TO GET BACK TO THE BASICS OF BEING JESUS ORIENTED PEOPLE. MAHATMA GANDHI SAID IN THE EARLY 1900'S, "***I LIKE YOUR CHRIST, I DO NOT LIKE YOU CHRISTIANS. YOU CHRISTIANS ARE SO UNLIKE CHRIST.***" (GANDHI WAS KNOWN TO FREQUENTLY QUOTE THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS & EVEN HAD A PICTURE OF JESUS ON THE WALL OVER HIS DESK.) WHAT I EXPERIENCE ABOUT CHRISTIANITY IN THE U.S.A., IN ATCHISON, IS THIS: WE HAVE JUST AS MANY CHRISTIANS AS YEARS PAST BUT MANY ARE STAYING AWAY FROM & OUT OF THE CHURCHES. THEY BELIEVE IN JESUS, THEY ARE REJECTING THE CHURCH. HELLO! HELLO! CAN YOU HEAR THAT ACCUSATION LOUD & CLEAR? IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WE ARE HAVING A RESOUNDING CALL TO RETURN TO JESUS & WE DO NOT HAVE TO BE FUNDAMENTALIST & SICK RELIGIOUS IN DOING SO. IT IS ALMOST LIKE JESUS HAS LEFT HIS "OWN COUNTRY" (THE CH) TO GO TO GALILEE (THE UNCHURCHED) WHERE HIS AUDIENCE WILL MORE READILY WELCOME & RECEIVE HIM. WE MUST BE VERY FOCUSED ON WHAT WE DO AS CHURCH - RETURN TO THE BASICS OF BEING JESUS-CENTERED. WE MUST BE INTENTIONAL IN ASKING & BEING ALERT TO THE CHALLENGE OF, "CAN WE FEEL, SENSE JESUS IN THAT WHICH WE ARE DOING, THINKING, FEELING." IF SO, THEN FULL THROTTLE AHEAD, IF NOT, STOP DOING IT RIGHT NOW!

AS I RECALL THE INNOCENCE & YOUTHFUL BEGINNINGS OF MY FAITH WALK IT IS JESUS WHO BRIGHTENS MY RECOLLECTIONS. UNCHURCHED PEOPLE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN KNOWING MORE ABOUT THE CHURCH. THEY WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT OUR JESUS. THERE IS SOMETHING VERY FASCINATING ABOUT JESUS

EVEN TO THOSE WHO ARE HOSTILE TO CHURCH. IN THAT WE FIND HOPE & THE SOLUTION TO WHAT AILS US & WEAKENS US AS CHURCH. WE MUST KEEP JESUS, THE PERSON OF JESUS, THE SON OF GOD, OUR SAVIOR, KEEP JESUS FRONT & CENTER. SURE WE HAVE GOT TO DO THE DRUDGERY OF CHURCH BUT EVEN THEN THAT DRUDGERY IS TURNED INTO DELIGHT AS WE SEASON IT WITH THE LIFE GIVING PRESENCE & POWER OF JESUS.

AS OTHER PEOPLE THINK ABOUT FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH ON THE CORNER OF 7<sup>TH</sup> & SANTA FE I WOULD HOPE THEIR THOUGHT MIGHT BE THAT WE ARE A PEOPLE WHO LIKE JESUS & OUT OF OUR LOVE FOR JESUS WE HAVE FOUND OUR OWN LIVES TO BE CHANGED.