

Templates of Truth with Rick Smith
Audio Script – December 16, 2009

Christmas is a time for giving. Shoppers scurry from store to store seeking that perfect gift for those special loved ones in their life. What is the best gift you could give your family this Christmas? In today's Templates of Truth, we suggest it is the gift of honor.

Mark traced the steps of Jesus throughout the region surrounding the Sea of Galilee, reporting the extraordinary teaching and miraculous acts of healing & deliverance that characterized His earthly ministry. By the time we come to chapter six, Mark says that Jesus *came into His home town* (6:1). But what should have been a "hero's welcome" was more accurately described by Jesus in this unfortunate way: *A prophet is not without honor except in his home town and among his own relatives and in his own household* (6:4). In other words, Jesus pointed out that multitudes of people everywhere recognized, acknowledged, respected and honored God's call on His life, EXCEPT those in His own family – the very ones who should have honored it the most! What caused Jesus to issue such an indictment against his own family? – *they took offense at Him* (6:3). Here was a man whose teaching was so accurate and effective that it stumped even the most educated religious leaders of the time; who brought about miracles of healing in people's lives that even the best doctors could not perform; and rather than be proud, supportive and accommodating toward Jesus, they were offended by Him. Unbelievable! In fact, Mark says: *(Jesus) marveled at their unbelief* (6:6).

What was the attitude among the family members of Jesus that exposed such unbelief? Mark quotes two statements from them that reveal the answer. When coming home on a previous occasion, His followers crowded Jesus with demands to such an extent *that they could not even eat a meal. And when His own people (kinsmen) heard of this, they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, "He has lost His senses."* (3:20-21). "Jesus has lost His mind!", they said. They didn't think He should have been concerned about all these people. They thought He was being taken advantage of by their constant needs and demands. They didn't think Jesus should be neglecting His own needs in order to take care of all their needs. How many times have we inhibited what God wanted to do in and through the life of our spouse, children or siblings because we thought the sacrifice was too great – "It will take too much time away from the family;" "It will cost us too much money." Jesus' family thought that if you had to make great personal sacrifices in your service for God, you must be insane for doing it especially if what you are doing is causing a ruckus in the social system. Our attitude today is often very much the same. As long as serving God doesn't create too much of an inconvenience on the family or cost too much money, it might be OK. Otherwise, it doesn't make much sense.

The second statement that Mark quotes from Jesus' family is: *"Is not this the carpenter?"* (6:3). In essence, they were saying that Jesus should have been satisfied with what He was – a carpenter. He should not have aspired to be a great teacher or a renown miracle worker. He came from a good family who raised him to be a skilled worker, and that should have been sufficient for him. Why did He need all this stardom in His life? What couldn't He humble Himself to be a common man like everyone else in His family? They resented His public image and probably felt He pursued it for His own glory and recognition. They simply didn't have a

clue! We are just as guilty today of wanting to define the life of our loved ones rather than letting God define it. We want to force our will and expectation on them rather than giving them the freedom to pursue God's will, plan and purpose for their life. Perhaps they resented the spiritual obedience of Jesus to the will of His Father, because it would have required a level of obedience on their part they were unwilling to give. You will never honor and respect what anyone does for God as long as you do nothing for God.

We all want our family members to be successful and happy in life. If we could wrap those two invaluable qualities in a big box with beautiful ribbons and bows and place it strategically under the Christmas tree this season, we would! We can virtually do that when we extend to each of our loved ones the freedom to discover and pursue God's unique call and ministry on their life. We can do that when we do all we can to encourage, support, accommodate and help them in that endeavor, no matter what it cost or what it requires. We do that because the greatest expression of true love is the desire for everyone we love to be right in the very center of God's will, plan and purpose for their life; and doing the very thing God gifted and called them to do. It is bestowing upon them the gift of honor – a gift they will cherish and a gift they will cherish you for throughout all of life and all eternity.

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in Christ Jesus.

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