

A NOTE TO PARENTS

When Jesus visited Nazareth, the people were all set to be impressed—to sit back and watch Jesus do his stuff. They expected a fine show that would prove how special he was, and, by extension, how special they were. But Jesus would not play. God is not a stunt man, he said; God does not put on a show to stir people up into admiring him. God does not carry an applause meter; God is interested in responding to your *needs*. But that was not an invitation that interested them; their only need seems to have been to establish their *status* in the eyes of God and a waiting world.

So the townspeople were left in a double bind. Their message to Jesus had become, “We knew it! You can’t be terribly important, because we’ve known you all our lives, and nobody we know ever turns out to be important ... because *we’re* not important.” But when Jesus took them up on that, and suggested that God might indeed have a larger role in mind for outsiders and pariahs than for mainstream Israelites like themselves, they were filled with rage.

It’s a familiar game; we all play it. We don’t want to take the risk of being the people who actually do the important, challenging, exhausting, dangerous things; but we don’t like it, either, when someone else does them, and gets the recognition. We would rather be bored by the familiar than challenged by the new and wonderful ... and we don’t want anybody else to be challenged either. Especially, we don’t want someone else to be not only challenged but changed—excited—lit up—and to come running back to us, saying, “Look what you missed!” If I’m no good at playing the violin, and think it’s just *stupid*, then woe to my little sister if she turns out to love it, and have a gift for it. I’ll probably make fun of her every chance I get.

This is the terrible paralysis that the Church calls “pride.” It says to God and to the world, “Prove you love me. Prove I’m important. Prove it’s all worth my trouble in bothering to learn about it.” God cannot force us to respond to him in openness and love. He can only wait, and offer himself again and again.

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The people of Nazareth got mad at Jesus, because he would not do any amazing wonders in their town.

LUKE 4:24



JESUS WAS VISITING NAZARETH, HIS OLD HOME.

Jesus went to the synagogue. He read God's promises from the Bible. He said, "Today, all this is coming true."



The people were very excited. They couldn't wait to see what new wonders Jesus would do.



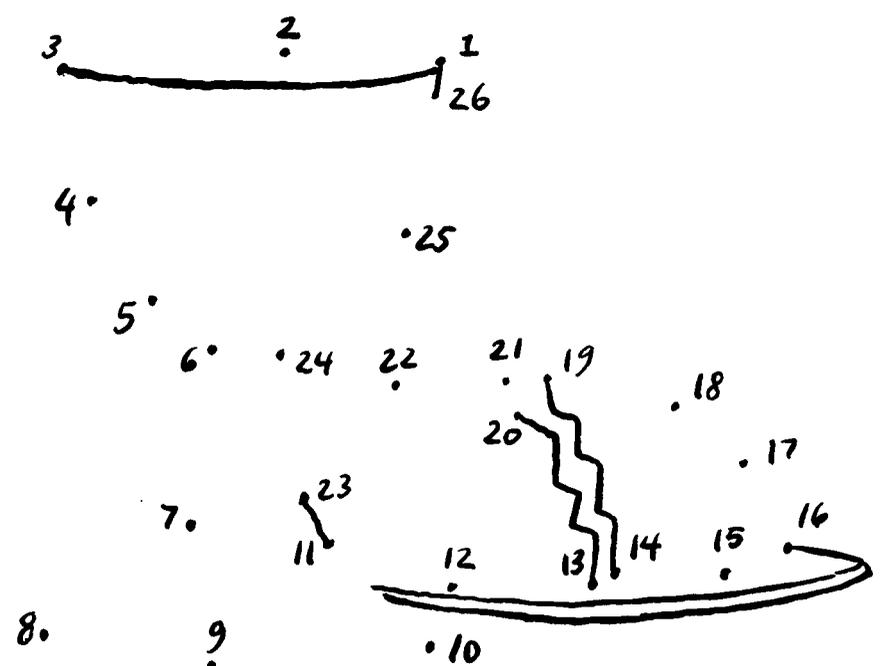
Jesus said, "Wait a minute! God doesn't do wonders just to impress people."



"God does wonders for the people who really believe."



When Jesus said he was the Messiah, the people thought there would be lots of fun and excitement, and they would be in the news. But Jesus said God's Kingdom is not like that. God does not put on a show to get people excited or make them feel important. God does wonders to share his love with people who need it. Even people we don't like, or who are different from us.



Connect the dots to see a wonder Jesus shares with us.