

REVEALED IN REJECTION

God's Word:

Matthew 11:20-24; 13:54-58

Key Verse:

*" 'A prophet is not without honor except in his home town and in his own household.'"
-Matthew 13:57b*



Breaking It Down:

Jesus has just finished teaching and preaching to the masses. As we all know and all can see from chapter 12, His favorite method of teaching was through parables.

He then comes to His hometown and begins to teach in the synagogues. Given

this method of teaching--which is relatively new for the time-- the people were blown away by His messages. Jesus' messages of the Gospel were so first-rate that the people could not believe *HE* was teaching. As if that wasn't startling enough, in His message Jesus explained to those in the synagogue that all Old Testament prophecies referred to Him, and He was greater than all the prophets.

As He finished His messages and prepared to leave, they began to recognize Him—at least from a human standpoint--and asked themselves as we see in verse 55: *"Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His*

brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?" I'm sure many of these people recognized Jesus from when He was a boy growing up, or maybe some just recognized Him because Jesus had crafted or repaired a piece of furniture for them when He was a young man.

The more they recognized Jesus, the more they remembered Him from His younger years when He was just a carpenter, and the less they believed Him to be the



Messiah. Jesus, in turn, recognized that because of their familiarity with Him, they were less likely to understand who He truly was, and even saw themselves as better than Him. Because they did not believe He was the Messiah, He did not do many miracles before them.



Living It

There was a man in the 1980s that made history for something very horrific. His name was Jeffrey Dahmer. Some of you may know who he was and many of you may not. This man became infamous for one reason: He ate people, 17 to be exact. Now I'm not talking cartoon, Bugs Bunny type boiling him in water with carrots and then eating him cannibalism. He would go to the clubs at night, bring home an individual, murder the person, cut him up, freeze the parts, then cook the person and gradually eat the body. In July of 1991, the law finally caught up with him and he got 957 years in prison.

If asked to, how many of you reading this lesson would be up to doing the following: *"Please go, preach to and witness to Jeffrey Dahmer."* How many of you would? Here's another one: If Jeffrey Dahmer started preaching to you, would you actually listen? See while in jail, Dahmer read evangelical material sent to him by his dad. Eventually, he declared himself a born-again Christian.



Do you buy it? Would you consider him a brother? Would you feel comfortable if he attended your church? Or preached at your church? Would you invite him to eat at your house? Or, should he simply have been seen as a monster and relegated to being feared by the masses for his past actions?

Jesus was known in His hometown as Joseph's son, Mary's son, a carpenter, and maybe just as that guy who once fixed my furniture. Like Dahmer, Jesus couldn't shake the earthly label people had placed on Him. Unfortunately, those who failed to recognize Jesus beyond what they could see with their eyes missed out on their chance to enjoy the blessings of knowing the Messiah.

For those of us who have not always walked the Christian walk, we have come to understand that the hardest people to convince that we are a new person in Christ are the people closest to us. Friends, neighbors and even family (mostly distant) are skeptical of our new identity. They are the ones who have seen who we used to be, and how we used

to act and talk and carry ourselves. Some are even the people who used to walk with us along the wrong path.

It's a hard thing to be a Christian, especially when there are those who know our weaknesses or have seen our failures. Yet, like Paul, regardless of what we have done, we still carry the obligation to preach and testify of how Jesus has changed us, even if people don't believe us. Not all who heard Jesus were converted. Not all who hear us will believe.

Psalm 1:1 says, "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers." There is a huge blessing in those who have not strayed from the Lord. Yet, Psalm 32:1 says, "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered." Your sins and mine are forgiven, regardless of what they were. What others want to *believe* about you means nothing compared to what God *knows* about you.



Questions:

1. Where was Jesus teaching? And why is this important?
2. Why did the people not believe Jesus words?
3. Do you believe that Jeffrey Dahmer is saved? Why or why not?
4. Is there such a thing as an unforgivable sin?



Do it:

Do you ever feel that is you gave your life completely to God no one would believe you, or you've been so bad that you might give God a bad name? Think about it this week...can you really give God a bad name?

