

**Sovereign Grace Church**  
**“Barriers to Belief” outline**  
February 23, 2020

**Matthew 13: 53-58**

*This morning we come to the end of Matthew 13 which has been chiefly on the parables Jesus used to describe His Kingdom & explain the opposition to it. He closes the chapter with another description of the opposition to Jesus' teaching, in particular the opposition of those who had been with Him as He grew up.*

*Those who are most familiar with us have had experiences of us that have solidified into set dispositions, either favorable or not. In Jesus' case these are people who had observed Him grow into manhood. It seems He was easy enough to get along with so long as He remained in what they had perceived as His calling to be a carpenter's son. But when He began teaching on issues far beyond the range of a carpenter's expected knowledge, and to do things far beyond building elaborate cabinets, He ran afoul of the expectations of His fellows. Thus, most of them did not respond in belief and even began to see Him as either an embarrassment or possibly even a threat. This morning we will look at this, along with a few other examples of what might be called barriers to belief.*

**1. What is “belief” and “faith”?**

*Faith/Belief df= confidence grounded in reality; an acceptance that a statement is true or that a substance exists ,manifested by a willingness to act on it Heb. 11:1; Ac 16:31*

**2. What is the Object of Christian belief?**

**3. What are certain barriers to having belief or faith?**

- **Over-familiarity vv. 54-57**  
**Jn 6: 42; 7:15**

- **Jealousy/Envy**  
**Matt 5:48; Jms 3: 14-16; Prov. 14:30**

- **Pride of Intellect**  
**Prov 11:2; Rom. 12:16; I Sam 16:7**

4. **The challenge of our assumptions v. 58**  
**I Cor. 2: 9-10**

### **Questions for Reflection and Discussion**

1. **How does faith or belief relate to knowledge? What does one mean by a “leap of faith”? Is a “leap of faith” ever justified? Can you give an example? How much of a “leap” did Peter make when he stepped out of the boat?**
2. **Can you think of times you have allowed your own pride or envy get in your way of learning something? Do you find learning things that contradict some of your presently held beliefs a comfortable experience or an uneasy one? Why do you think this is the case?**
3. **Do you believe that it is a good thing to be “open-minded”? Why or why not? How might being “open-minded” be understood negatively? Positively? Why is it important to understand what a person means by what they say? What is the difference between being a “dogmatist” and a “sceptic”? Do either one of them really “know”? What might be a better approach than either?**
4. **Have you ever thought that your views weren't being appreciated because of your hearers false assumptions about you? How did you respond? How did Jesus respond when those who thought they knew Him, but didn't, rejected His teaching & claims? Do you think you would have acted differently if you had lived there and then? What can we learn from this?**