

The Correspondent



SUNDAY

Bible Study 9:30 AM
Worship 10:30 AM & 1:30 PM

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study (Adult) 1:30 PM
Bible Study (All Ages) 7:00 PM
www.collinsville-troycoc.org
(618) 667-6708

For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth... in every place. (1 Thessalonians 1:8)

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Never Judge a Book by Its Cover

-Renn Ferguson

Jeffery Dahmer is one of the most notorious American serial killers in history. I recently saw a letter that Jeffery Dahmer wrote to one of my former Memphis School of Preaching teachers, Garland Elkins. In this letter he wrote “Yes, I was baptized into Christ on May 10th, around 2 P.M...” In his letter he discusses how Garland Elkins tract “The Lord’s Church is Different.” He states that he enjoyed reading it and that it meant a lot to him that Mr. Elkins took the time to write him a letter and send a tract. Also in another portion of his letter he wrote, “a month before I was baptized, I read, Mr. Warren’s book. ‘The Bible Only Makes Christians Only And the Only Christians.’ I had never before realized the importance of baptism. All I had ever heard before was that you ‘say a little prayer’ and then you’re saved. The gospel tracts in the prison chapel never say anything about baptism. The tracts that you wrote is great: it’s the only one that I’ve ever read that covers the whole plan of salvation and not just one incomplete part of it.”

We never know who might obey the gospel. I have no real reason to doubt that Jeffery Dahmer was converted and became a member of the Church. Though he does not seem like the kind of man that would have been receptive to the Gospel, someone still reached out to him. They had no idea if he would be receptive or not but they still tried. Too many times we are judgmental about who will and who won’t receive the gospel. However, that is not for us to judge. I think about the great New Testament example of Paul. In acts 8:1 we read, “And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.” If you are unfamiliar with the context this is dealing with Stephen, the first recorded Christian martyr. In the next chapter we see Paul heading to Damascus because he had received permission to go and imprison all the Christians there. However, he was taught the truth and became a crucial part of the church during the first century. We see that in Acts 9:13-14 Ananias was not thrilled with being tasked to teach Paul the gospel. He probably thought that Paul would not receive it and would then imprison and perhaps torment him. He was judging Saul as we often do those around us. As many would have judged Jeffrey Dahmer. We need to remember that we never know how someone will react to the Gospel and therefore ought to teach everyone that we have the opportunity to teach.

A man who was once feared and hated by the world very well could be with us in heaven. The love of God is infinite and the blood of Christ can wash away any sin (Revelation 1:5, Isaiah 1:18). We need to remember those facts and offer the gospel to anyone we can regardless of who they are and what they have done. Doing this may prevent someone from spending an eternity in hell.