

How to Get Rejected by Jesus

PHBF 01.24.10

TEXT: Luke 14

SCR. READING: Luke 14:1-11

****Words for kids: Jesus, Reject(-ion), Pride, Surrender**

SERIES: From the Manger To the Cross For the World

Rejection:

- *The Scarlet Letter, Frankenstein, Pride and Prejudice, The Call of the Wild, The Ugly Duckling...*
- The Rejection Hotline
- What we'll do to avoid rejection or to cope from it

But if there's anyone who never makes people fear rejection, it's Jesus...

CONTEXT:

- Growing hostility toward Jesus, culminates in 13:35, where Jesus proclaims "Your house is forsaken."
- Chapter 14 then zooms in on what makes Jesus reject someone – notice the rejection motif in vv 11, 24, 26-7, 33, 35.
- Chapter 15 gives the other side – being accepted in heaven.

Note about this sermon: This outline is obviously satire. I've phrased each of the 5 points the WRONG way, not the right way. What Jesus actually wants us to do is the OPPOSITE of these things. The whole sermon isn't satire, but the title and the points are, simply to ridicule human foolishness.

Put policies above people. (vv 1-6)

Why were Jesus' opponents rejected? Even after several Sabbath healings and other direct warnings, these Pharisees are not changed at all. In fact, Jesus' ministry has simply driven them into a sullen sort of silence. Their hearts are so hard, they are beyond the possibility of faith.

But when we put policies or rules above people, we miss the whole point of God's commands. His commands are not about controlling people or confining them. God's commands are practical expressions of His love, justice, and mercy.

EX: The Sabbath was a gift from God to mankind, intended to punctuate our work with a period of leisure for the purpose of personal,

spiritual fruitfulness. "God blessed the 7th day..." (Gen 2:3). "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mk 2:27).

Does our religious practice, our church culture, our way of pursuing God and His kingdom FREE people or does it BIND them? ...care for people in their misery or care about our religious system MORE?

Anytime mercy is pushed aside by my personal agenda, expectations, or standards, I've put policies above people. **And that value structure is so abhorrent to Jesus, He rejects those who persist in it.**

Exalt yourself. (vv 7-11)

In the secular realm, humility actually is commended by some as a means of advancement:

"In contrast to the very *I*-centric style of the comparison leaders, we were struck by how the good-to-great leaders *didn't* talk about themselves. During interviews with the good-to-great leaders, they'd talk about the company and the contributions of other executives as long as we'd like but would deflect discussion about their own contributions. ... It wasn't just false modesty. Those who worked with or wrote about the good-to-great leaders continually used words like *quiet, humble, modest, reserved, shy, gracious, mild-mannered, self-effacing, understated, did not believe his own clippings*; and so forth." ~ Jim Collins, *Good to Great*, p 27

Evidences of humility (in Luke):

- Trust, prayer (dependence upon God)
- joy and thankfulness (amazement at God's goodness in spite of my unworthiness)
- generosity (awareness that everything I have is an unmerited gift)

How much more so for the Christian: The message of the gospel shows us God's infinite greatness and our own weakness and unworthiness. To assert our own worth is unfathomable next to the cross. **So much so, that Jesus rejects those who insist on asserting their own rights and drawing attention to their own value.**

Stay within your comfort zone. (vv 12-14)

[Read vv 12-14.]

Radical generosity makes us squirm. It costs us money. Time. Perhaps some dignity. Certainly some comfort. Which would be more comfortable right now?

- Serving a meal to your care group OR to 20 homeless
- Fuming over federally funded abortion OR volunteering to counsel and care for a woman facing a crisis pregnancy
- Watching a news report about Haiti OR sending money to Haiti
- Sending money to Haiti joining the relief effort personally

Which sounds more comfortable?

Which sounds more like a feast for the poor, crippled, lame, and blind?

NOTE: Dinner's Ready

v 14 Jesus promises a special blessing upon those who choose to minister to people “who cannot repay you.” **But if you don't want the blessing, if you want Jesus to be unimpressed, stay within your comfort zone.**

Ignore His invitation. (vv 15-24)

[Read vv 15-24.]

These excuses are all transparently false – e.g., no one buys a field without inspecting it first. The point is, these men just didn't want to come to the banquet.

v 23 “compel them to come in” conveys God's fervent desire to share His bounty with His people. It portrays the persuasive insistence necessary to overcome the sinner's sense of unworthiness and shyness; it is not describing a strong-armed evangelistic technique.

If you're listening closely and thoughtfully, you might think that we have to do all these good things to be accepted by Jesus. Actually, that's not how it works **at all**.

Notice in each story, the people whom Jesus approves:

- The helplessly sick man, the son/ox in the well (vv 1-6)

- The humble (v 11)
- The poor, crippled, lame, blind (vv 13, 21)

The pattern is clear: Jesus is not looking for the righteous, the perfect, the holy, the self-reformed. Just the opposite: He's looking for the needy, the helpless, the broken, the humble. Those who try to prove their merit are rejected, while those who humbly come to Him for mercy are accepted and approved. **He has prepared the feast and invited you; admittance is free, as long as you admit you're hungry!**

Cf. 15:7, 10

Caring for people, humbling yourself, serving people outside your comfort zone – Yes, all of these areas are important in the Christian life, but they are not the MEANS to acceptance by God. They are fruits of already being accepted by God through Jesus. A true believer, follower of Jesus will be this way.

Surrender some. (vv 25-35)

[Read vv 25-35.]

Jesus does not encourage people to come to Him on an unthinking, impulsive whim. Jesus death cost Him everything; likewise, following Him costs us everything, too. A half-hearted discipleship is worthless. v 25 Jesus addressed the crowds, not just His committed followers. The point is these are conditions for salvation, not for a second-level kind of discipleship.

Three conditions:

- 1) Love Jesus incomparably more than anyone/-thing else; (v 26)
- 2) Bear your cross and follow Jesus; (v 27)
- 3) Renounce everything. (v 33)

v 26 “hating” family is exaggerated language, vividly depicting the degree of difference between our love for Jesus and our love for the next dearest people in the world to us. Compared to how we love Jesus, our love for family looks like hatred. Why do I take this as hyperbole?

- 1) cf. Mt 10:37 “love less”;
- 2) Jesus would not advocate breaking one of the 10 commandments – teaching us to dishonor our parents;

- 3) Jesus Himself affirmed that the greatest commands are to love God and love others (10:27) and taught us to love our enemies (6:27).

The point is that Jesus' disciples owe primary allegiance to Him. In some places, these costs are quite literal. If one remains attached to family, he/she will never come to Jesus. Vice versa: following Jesus means immediate alienation from one's family.

v 27 To follow Jesus means to embrace daily suffering, chosen self-denial, deliberate death.

vv 28-32 Two illustrations: building a tower, waging a war

"The Christian landscape is strewn with the wreckage of derelict, half-built towers – the ruins of those who began to build and were unable to finish. For thousands of people still ignore Christ's warning and undertake to follow him without first pausing to reflect on the cost of doing so. The result is the great scandal of Christendom today, so-called 'nominal Christianity.' In countries to which Christian civilization has spread, large numbers of people have covered themselves with a decent, but thin, veneer of Christianity. They have allowed themselves to become somewhat involved; enough to be respectable but not enough to be uncomfortable. Their religion is a great, soft cushion. It protects them from the hard unpleasantness of life, while changing its place and shape to suit their convenience. No wonder the cynics speak of hypocrites in the church and dismiss religion as escapism.

"The message of Jesus was very different. He never lowered his standards or modified his conditions to make his call more readily acceptable. He asked his first disciples, and he has asked every disciple since, to give him their thoughtful and total commitment. Nothing less than this will do." ~ John Stott, *Basic Christianity*, p 108

v 33 Renouncing possessions. Jesus' disciples must surrender their attachment to material things.

vv 34-35 Contaminated salt – flavorless – has a negative value. It is a liability because it can't be discarded just anywhere. It is an environmental hazard.

Adoniram Judson, in a letter to his first wife Ann's father, requesting her hand in marriage (July 1810):

"I have now to ask, whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next spring, to see her no more in this world; whether you can consent to her departure, and her subjection to the hardships and sufferings of missionary life; whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean, to the fatal influence of the southern climate of India; to every kind of want and distress; to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death. Can you consent to all this, for the sake of him who left is heavenly home, and died for her and for you; for the sake of perishing, immortal souls; for the sake of Zion, and the glory of God? Can you consent to all this, in hope of soon meeting your daughter in the world of glory, with the crown of righteous, brightened with the acclamations of praise which shall redound to her Savior from heathens saved, through her means, from eternal woe and despair?"

For believers: 1) feel conviction, 2) confess and repent, 3) plan to change

[Closing Song: "The Father's Love" v 1]

How has the sinner been forgiven
How has the rebel been made clean
Or blinded eyes been made to see
How have the orphans been adopted
Who hated Your love and ran from grace
Despised and rejected all Your ways

*How wonderful the Father's love
The Father's love for us
That He would send His only Son
To come and rescue us
He has saved us, called us blameless
Guides us now and will sustain us
Oh how wonderful the Father's love*

Benediction:

Hebrews 13:20-21 Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, ²¹ equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

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