

Life in His Name – Part 31
Rejected and Disowned - John 12:37-50
Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – October 15, 2023

Intro:

- The passage we will read today is the final words and thoughts of the three-year public ministry of Jesus. The words we are looking at today were said to the crowds right before Jesus and the disciples gathered for the last supper (the rest of the book of John focuses on the last teachings of Jesus to His disciples, the establishment of the Lord's supper, His final prayer on earth for them and for us, His death, resurrection, appearances, and ascension).
- During His ministry many believed that He was the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing in Him, they have received life, life eternal, life abundant in His name. And while many believed in Him, many others did not. Jesus was soon to be rejected and disowned and then crucified.
- John, by the inspiration and illumination of the Holy Spirit, tells us why people reject and disown Christ while Christ gives His final words of being both the face and the voice of the Father, giving His last words of His identity and his final appeal to believe in Him.
- With the light of understanding illuminating our minds and hearts, we can see to examine our own hearts and minds for places we may have rejected and disowned Jesus, and be equipped to understand why others do so as well, so we can better pray and help others to overcome these obstacles for receiving Christ as the Savior and Lord.

Why Jesus is rejected

John 12:37-38 NIV

Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. 38 This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet:

"Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

- Jesus said who He was and then gave proof of who He was by performing miracles as “signs” to prove what He said about Himself was true. He was doing only what God could do, as was described and prophesied in the Old Testament. And even doing so many signs in their presence, people would still not believe in Him.
- Why? Because Jesus was not the Messiah they wanted, even though He was the Messiah they needed. John quotes Isaiah 53 as the explanation for his point. Isaiah 53 is a 700-year-old prophecy that describes the Messiah in vivid detail, not as a great king but as a suffering redeemer. Let's read the first six verses of Isaiah 53.

Isa 53:1-6 NIV

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? 2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. 3 He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

4 Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

- People who reject Jesus are looking for a beautiful, majestic, powerful superhero who is above the suffering of mere mortals and will sweep away our enemies and oppressors because of how worthy and wonderful we are.
- But Jesus came as an ordinary, not majestic or even good-looking, man. He was despised and rejected. He was not above pain and suffering but was a man of suffering and familiar with pain. He did not come and rescue us from our oppressors because we are wonderful and righteous, but He redeemed us from our sin and unrighteousness. People don't believe in Jesus and reject Him - because to believe in Him as the Messiah, they have to acknowledge their sinfulness, God's sovereignty, and their need for a savior. People who reject Jesus choose not to acknowledge the truth about themselves and the truth about God.
- John then quotes another passage from Isaiah, and this time, it is from Isaiah 6, where Isaiah sees the Messiah as the exalted King. John connects these two passages in Isaiah to say that *because they would not believe that Jesus was their savior, they could not receive Jesus as their King. They would not believe, so they could not believe.*

John 12:39-41 NIV

For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere:

40 "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them."

41 Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him.

- And here is the vision of Jesus' glory that Isaiah records in chapter six:

Isa 6:1-10 NIV

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”⁹ He said, “Go and tell this people:

“Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.’¹⁰ Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.”

- Because people do not receive Him as the suffering Savior, they will not reign with Him as the glorified King. If you don't bow to Him as the suffering servant, you will not stand with Him as the glorified King. You cannot have the crown without the cross, and through the cross is the only way to see the King.
- We must pray for eyes that can see the truth of our sinful condition and the glory of His great provision so that we can turn and be made whole. Pray for clarity, humility, and understanding in our hearts and others. And when you communicate about who Jesus is, you must include these things.
- Now you know why Jesus was and is rejected by some. Now, let's look at why Jesus was and is disowned by others.

Why Jesus is disowned

John 12:42-43 NIV

Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved human praise more than praise from God.

- Here are some people who do believe in Jesus, even some of the leaders, but they would not openly acknowledge their faith. They would not share or state publicly that they believe in Jesus. They did not do so because of fear; fear that they would be rejected and not be received by the group. People didn't share their faith then because of fear of rejection and don't share their faith now because of fear of rejection. What about you? Have you ever not shared your faith because you were afraid of rejection or the consequences for doing so . . . ? Is there a problem with keeping your faith hidden? Or what about in extreme cases where people would face dire consequences for sharing their faith . . . like being kicked out of the family or maimed, or persecuted, or killed? By the way, this was the case and context when and where this was first written.
- So here is the problem with “hidden faith.” This is what Jesus said:

Matt 10:32-33 NIV

"Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. ³³ But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

- We must ask ourselves: who do we love more, Jesus or ourselves? Who do we fear more, God or others? Whose glory do we want more, God's or people's? The truth is if you don't acknowledge Jesus before others, Jesus will not acknowledge you before His Father. Even Peter had an issue with this, and Christ gave Peter another opportunity to redeem himself (See John 18 & 21).

- John the Apostle knew that Jesus would be rejected and disowned by some and gave us the reasons why this would be the case. Not everyone would receive Him, “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:12-13 ESV).
- John then records Jesus’ last public claims about Himself.

Jesus is the face of the Father

John 12:44-46 NIV

Then Jesus cried out, "Whoever believes in me does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. 45 The one who looks at me is seeing the one who sent me. 46 I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.

- When you see the face of Jesus, you see the face of the Father. If you believe in the Son, you also believe in the Father. If you don't have Jesus as your Savior, you don't have God as your Father. **"No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also" (1 John 2:23).** This has huge implications for all of the religions who say they follow God but reject Jesus and the Son of God.
- Jesus is the light in the darkness, the darkness of this world, the darkness of our sin, the darkness of our lostness. Jesus is the “true light that gives light to everyone” (John 1:9), so no one who believes in Jesus should stay in darkness, not in the darkness of sin and darkness of the world. By believing in Him and following Him, we become children of light (Eph. 5:8, 1 Thess. 5:5).
- Not only is Jesus the face of the Father, He is the voice of the Father.

Jesus is the voice of the Father

John 12:47-50 NIV

"If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day. 49 For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. 50 I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say."

- Jesus came to save the world, not to judge or condemn the world. However, if you choose to reject Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of the world, the words (claims, teachings) of Christ will condemn you. When you hear the words of Jesus, you hear the words of God. When you hear the voice of Jesus, you hear the voice of God. The command of God, the command of Jesus, will lead to eternal life. Will you follow, will you believe? Will you commit yourself to Him, lose your life to gain your life? Will you receive Him as your Savior and stand with Him as your King? Is He the greatest treasure of your heart and the one you live to honor most, even above yourself? I believe Jesus was telling the truth because He is the truth. Examine the word, the world, and your heart, and make your choice.