

RCMI L-Path Teaching
September 18, 2022

TITLE: FROM REJECTION UNTO PERFECTION

TEXT: Psalm 118:22; others as specified

BIG IDEA: Jesus alone can transform your rejection into perfection.

Introduction

- All of us have experienced rejection. You can't escape it. We all know rejection hurts. It makes us think that we are not good enough. Rejection is something that is very, very painful.
- So what are we supposed to do with rejection? How are we to handle it? Is there a healthy way to deal with it? Is there a way to protect ourselves from it? Thankfully, the Bible has a lot to say about rejection.
- The book of Psalms is essentially the Jewish people's hymnal. They knew many of these psalms by heart and even sang specific ones on certain occasions, much like Psalm 118.
- The Jewish people in Jesus' day would sing this psalm as they went to the Temple to offer their sacrifice. It was a song about God's loyal love for his people Israel. *"Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;"* the people would immediately reply, *"his love endures forever."*
- Let's go to verse 22, our main verse for this study.
- **"The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." -Psalm 118:22**
- So in the psalm, the builders rejected this stone, but God used it as the cornerstone for his building.
- In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is in Jerusalem during the last week leading to the crucifixion. He is in conversation with the religious leaders who are trying to trap him and cause him to make a mistake so they can discredit him. Jesus calls them out for jealousy and rejection of him by using the parable of the Tenants (Matthew 21:33-41).
- Then after telling the story, he says this
- Matthew 21:42-46 NIV *"Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes? "Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed." When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them. They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet."*
- This is such a slap in the face to religious leaders. Of course, they had read it! But the more they rejected Jesus; it played right into God's plan.

I. Jesus Himself Experienced Rejection.

- What makes Jesus unique is that he understands and can empathize with weakness, pain, and rejection. This rejection that Jesus experienced was brutal because these were his people...especially the religious leaders!
- This is important to remember because some of us have stayed away from God; we've distanced yourself or even been angry with him because of the rejection we are experiencing. But Jesus understands exactly what we are going through.
- **"The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone."**
- The NT writers pick up on this and write about it! Let's look at 1 Peter 2: 4-7.
- *1 Peter 2:4-7, NIV "As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."⁷ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone."*

II. Jesus' Followers Will Likewise Experience Rejection.

- We can't overlook this truth. If they reject Jesus, they will reject you; it's how it is until Jesus returns.
- Many people will look at you differently once they find out you're a Christian. Some people will judge you or discriminate against you because you love Jesus.
- Even though people may reject you, you are precious to God. You are valuable. You are worth it. The stone, the builders, rejected became the cornerstone.
- You are precious to God. If you've been rejected because you've been labeled a failure, a mistake, stupid or worthless...you're special to God; he will never put you to shame.
- People may reject you, and you may even reject yourself, but to God, you are a precious stone. Perfect for what he is building and crafting. What is he building? **"you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house."**
- This spiritual house is the church...not a building, but a people. People who have been rejected, yet through Jesus, have found belonging.

III. Jesus' Church Is Where The Rejected Is Accepted & Perfected

- As we have learned through this pandemic, the church isn't a building; it's people, it's you. More specifically, it's people who have been rejected and have found life in Jesus, and as Peter says, **'has become a priesthood.'**
- What is the role of a priest? The priest is this connecting point between God and people. If Christians are priests, what is one way we can carry out our priesthood? To let rejected people know that they belong to God. To create a place for those who have been rejected by their peers, family, spouse, job, or just life...to find a place to belong.
- In a world of rejects, in a community of loners, in a culture of losers...struggling with identity, loneliness, doubt, and depression, do you know what they need more than anything? They need to know that they can belong. Through Jesus, we can all find a place to belong.

- The power to meet every challenge and overcome every weakness.
- The rejections you experienced in life might leave you with ugly stains that kept you from being the person God created you to be. Let Jesus heal and change you, for He alone can transform your rejection into perfection!

How do we deal with rejection?

1. Come to Jesus.

- 1Peter 2:4 “***As you come to him, the living Stone.***” If your life right feels like one rejection after another, it will be tough to trust.

2. Change Your Perspective

a. View your rejection as a projection.

- Rejection is another person’s inward turmoil. When we see rejection this way, we will see ourselves differently.
- You must realize that the reason behind the rejection was not about you but a mere projection of their behavior.

b. View your rejection as Protection.

- Protection from something or someone who is not meant to be in our lives anymore.

3. Comfort A Rejected Person Through Acceptance.

- Your most excellent ministry in the kingdom of God may be to help outsiders feel like insiders. Who do you know in your life who is dealing with rejection?

CHALLENGE:

- The rejections you experienced in life might leave you with ugly stains that kept you from being the person God created you to be. Let Jesus heal and change you, for He alone can transform your rejection into perfection!

DISCUSSION:

- Have you experienced rejection before? Share.
- How do we deal with rejection? Share your thoughts.
- Do you agree that a change of perspective can help you deal with the rejection?
- Do you believe that if you make an effort to comfort the rejected, you, too will be comforted? [Those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed]