

Lake Cities Community Church
Pastor Craig Schill
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Series: On Your Mark!

“Rejected. Abandoned. Betrayed”
Mark 14:43-72

Stand with me please to pray. And as you do, just grab the hand of the person next to you. Everyone holding someone’s hand as we go to the Lord in prayer. “Father, grant now that as we study the rejection and betrayal of Jesus Christ, that we would stand faithful to you. As we hold hands with one another; with family members, friends, and complete strangers; we affirm that we are one in Christ. Forgive our sins against you and one another. Grant now your blessing upon your word. Grant your blessing upon this church. Draw us ever closer to one another and to you. In Jesus name, Amen.”

I talked with a young man a few weeks ago who is not yet a Christian, but in whose life the Spirit is working. He wanted to talk and we had a great conversation about life and about God. He gave me permission to share the following story.

In a previous attempt to reach out to God he walked into a church building one Sunday morning and slid into a pew in the back of the sanctuary. The preacher did something similar to what I just did - he asked the congregation to stand and to hold hands for prayer or perhaps it was for a song. Now this young man was not dressed like everyone else. He was admittedly a bit ragged. He had little sleep. He picked this church at random – he had never visited there before – he was just reaching out to God in the best way he knew how. And so when the pastor asked the congregation to hold hands – the person to his right and the person to his left looked at him, saw him and changed pews to join hands with

other people. He was left all alone. You can imagine his hands – unheld by God’s people. He left the church and has not been to a church since then.

Now we are a pretty good hand holding church and I could not imagine that story happening here, by God’s grace. You have over and over demonstrated a warmth and loving acceptance of others that I give thanks to God for. But can you feel the rejection that young man faced? Can you just imagine the damage that did to his spiritual life? Rejection is a horrible form of suffering that does great damage.

As we study over the next several weeks the suffering of Jesus - perhaps in all of his great suffering - nothing was more bitter than his rejection, abandonment and betrayal. Everyone around him – looked at him and slipped into another pew. Jesus, like this young man, was left utterly alone and rejected.

Turn with me to Mark 14, verses 43-72. This morning we are going to look at the complete rejection of Jesus Christ. What I would like to do is move us through the text and draw out for us first four characteristics of his rejection (that all start with the letter P).

Personal Rejection

Notice with me first that the rejection of Jesus is personal. Jesus announces that the hour is at hand – and he is betrayed by a close friend – his disciple Judas: “**After coming, Judas immediately went to Him, saying, “Rabbi!” and kissed him”** (45). In that culture, as is still done in some places people would greet one another with a kiss on the cheek, or the hand. It is a sign of friendship and intimacy. Judas’ infamous kiss is so iconic as a symbol of personal betrayal that it has been used as the name of a heavy metal rock band, the subject of dozen of books and is an idiomatic expression, when we say “kiss of death.”

Judas reminds me so much of the caught spies that come up from time to time. The spy is in a trusted position – a patriot in the military or CIA with top-secret clearance, but because of disillusionment, coupled with the greed of wanted to get rich, they act out in treachery. Jesus is betrayed by a friend.

But Judas is not the only one who betrays Jesus. Peter, “the rock” in verses 66-72 denies Jesus three times with increasing volume until the third time, (you are familiar with the story) which climaxes in verse 71: “He began to curse and swear, “I do not know the man you are talking about!” (71).

Peter and Judas are given prominence in the narrative because their sins are so spectacular. Remember what Peter had said, “Though all these fools will desert you, I will not.” Judas, a close confidant, the treasurer; who sells his allegiance for some pieces of silver. They are poster-boys for betrayal; uber traitors!

But it gets worse, verse 50, “And they all left him and fled.” The Greek emphasizes the word “all” by placing it at the end of the sentence. The Greek literally reads: “And abandoning him, they fled – **everyone!**” The complete nature of the abandonment is illustrated in verses 50-51, “a young man was following Him, wearing nothing but a linen sheet over his naked body; and they seized him. But he pulled free of the linen sheet and escaped naked.” This may be a cameo appearance of the author of the gospel, John Mark. But he represents someone fleeing at all costs.

One of my professors at seminary Dr. Bob Lightner said, “Neglect and rejection of Christ could be expected from His foes but the Savior also suffered sorely at the hands of his friends. They brought suffering to Him through withdrawal, denial and betrayal.” (Lightner, Bib Sac, 1970). In Shakespeare’s play Julius Caesar’s, the phrase “*Et tu, Brute* or

“You also Brutus” was immortalized as Caesar realizes that the person who has killed him is not his enemy but his friend. Betrayed by a friend.

Jesus rejection will become very public with the crowds shouting, “Crucify him,” but it all starts with personal rejection by his closest friends.

Political Rejection

It was a personal rejection by his friends, but, second, it was also a political rejection. Jesus was rejected by the Jewish and the Roman governments.

After his arrest, John’s gospel tells us he goes to meet with, Annas, father-in-law to Caiaphas the high-priest. Annas was the high priest for over 20 years and is like the godfather. He is the power broker. Jesus is mistreated at his hands and sent to Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin Council. This is a secret meeting held in Caiaphas’ home, and not in the temple. Here Jesus stands a sort of trial.

Verse 55 the trial begins, “**and the whole council kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus to put him to death.**” They had actually planted false witnesses to testify against him. But, “**their testimony was not consistent.**” It was a debacle – a kangaroo court. Jesus does not, verse 61 dignify the escapade with a response. He offered what one commentator called “majestic silence.”

But Then Caiaphas asks Jesus if He considers himself the Messiah. In Matthew’s account Caiaphas put’s Jesus under oath – he says, “**I charge you under oath by the Living God – are you the Messiah?**” (Matt 26:63). This is different than the ridiculous false charges. It returns to our old question, “Who is Jesus?” His identity, at the end of the day, is really what this is all about. And Jesus looks up and I wish I knew how he said the next phrase.

Did he say it with great volume and pronouncement? Or was it a holy whisper? He said, “I am; and you shall see the Son of Man Sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” (62) **“Behold He comes Riding on the Clouds, shining like the sun, at the trumpet call!”** The claim could not have been more clear – he was claiming divinity to be equal with God in fulfillment of Daniel 7:13 and Psalm 110:1. This is not lost on the High Priest who tears his robe. The charge is blasphemy and verse 64, **“they all condemned him to be deserving of death.”**

Professor Lightner said, “His own nation which He had come to exalt, and over which He was to reign as king, and for whom He was to bring in everlasting peace and righteousness had officially rejected Him.”

If you follow politics you might remember the multiple scandals of former Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich. A newspaper reported “...He was thrown out of office without a single lawmaker coming to his defense. The Illinois Senate voted 59-0 to convict him of abuse.” Jesus was, of course, guilty of nothing, but to the average person on the street, he was just another leader, engrossed in a scandal, completely shamed and rejected with not a single person coming to his defense.

Physical Rejection

Another very interesting aspect of Jesus’ rejection is that it was to be an increasingly physical rejection. Verse 65: **“Some began to spit at Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him with their fists, and to say to Him, “Prophecy!” And the officers received Him with slaps in the face.”** The physical punishment of Jesus (which begins here) is hard for us to understand - because in our culture we have gone to great lengths to remove physical pain

from punishment. In the old days we had the public stocks and paddling in school, convicted criminals were publically flogged, burned or beaded in the town courtyard as families brought their picnic lunches to watch. But that is not the case today. Even in capital punishment cases, such as what Jesus is facing – our culture says, “If a person must be put to death, it must be with as little pain as possible.”

And that is fine – but that is not how it was in Jesus’ day. The Ancient Near East was a little bit more like our “Wild West” where the convicted criminal was likely to face a physical beating. Spitting, for example, was a common way to express rejection in the Old Testament.

We learn here that Jesus’ rejection was not just an intellectual act, a pronouncement, or a notice in the newspaper – but it involved increasing physical punishment – leading to his death.

Prophetic Rejection

One more aspect of his rejection is that it was prophesied. Look at verse 49. To the arresting party, and to Judas Jesus announces, “**but this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures.**” Jesus is referring to passages like Zechariah 13:7 – the shepherd will be struck down the sheep scattered and Isaiah 53:12 that the Messiah would be associated with criminals. Jesus’ rejection was predicted.

And you will recall that Jesus himself predicted it would go this way. In Mark 8:31: **And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests...** And he told them again in chapter 12, Mark 12:10

“Have you not even read this Scripture: **‘THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone;**

In the chaos of the moment, we are reminded that everything is going according to God’s plan. My Thompson Chain Reference Bible lists the following prophecies that are fulfilled from the time of Jesus’ arrest to his death: * His betrayal by a friend * sold for 30 pieces of silver * money returned for a potter’s field * Judas’ position filled by another * false witnesses accuse him * silent when accused * struck and spit on * Hated without cause * suffered vicariously * crucified with sinners * hands and feet pierced * mocked and insulted * given gall and vinegar * hears prophetic words repeated in mockery * prays for his enemies * side is pierced * soldiers cast lot for his clothes * no bones broken * buried with the rich.

On one hand it seems that everything is out of control, but really everything is well orchestrated. We attended *The Promise* Friday night – and it was a wonderful show of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection. And it was wonderful because the cast and technical workers had rehearsed and planned every little detail. And the Promise is I believe in its 24th year of operation. There was a lot of hard work and foresight that went into making that production happen. But that is nothing compared to what is going on here - God had been working hundreds of year preparing for the last few days of Jesus’ life. Every detail down to the spittle and the vinegar is planned carefully – predicted in Bible prophecy.

Application

Let me give us two suggestions for application of this message. First, if you have never trusted in Jesus - receive Jesus into your life and do not reject him: [John 1:11](#) He

came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. [John 1:12](#) But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even to those who believe in His name.*

If you have not done so – you have the opportunity today to do what no one in our text did – to receive Jesus and not reject Him. To accept him and not turn your back on Him.

The real reason Jesus is being rejected is because a few minutes earlier He said to His Father: “Not my will, but yours be done.” Jesus is suffering, and being rejected– not because he deserved it, but because you and I did. He is becoming a curse for us. Ultimately Jesus’ rejection is not just by Judas and Peter and Caiaphas but by God Himself; so that we might have life in God.

Chris Tomlin’s song Amazing love says: *I’m forgiven because you were forsaken, I’m accepted, you were condemned. I am alive and well, Your spirit is within me, Because You died and rose again.* Will you accept Him as your Lord and Savior?

The second application is that true disciples of Jesus must endure rejection, as He did. Remember what Peter said: **“For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps” (1 Peter 2:21).**

If you are facing a time (like the young man in my opening story) where you feel rejected by those around you -- I believe you can take practical encouragement from a Savior who knows what this is like.

I think about those in our congregation who are unemployed, and have just received their 100th rejection letter – and are feeling discourage, feeling like nobody wants you- be encouraged that you have a God who knows what it is like to be rejected. I think about the new believers in our church who may face ridicule and mocking from friends for following

Jesus. Maybe family members who think you are crazy. Be encouraged - it happened to Jesus, too. *It is comforting to know that Jesus knows* what it is like to suffer and face rejection. He suffered as an example to us, for when we go through suffering.

Let me close with this story. G. Campbell Morgan who died in 1945 was considered by some to be the most outstanding preacher in this country before WWII. But it did not start out that way. He was one of 150 young men who sought entrance to the Wesleyan ministry in 1888. He passed the doctrinal examinations, but then faced the trial sermon. In a cavernous auditorium that could seat more than 1,000 sat three ministers and 75 others who came to listen. When Morgan stepped into the pulpit, the vast room and the searching, critical eyes caught him up short. Two weeks later Morgan's name appeared among the 105 REJECTED for the ministry that year.

Jill Morgan, his daughter-in-law, wrote in her book, A Man of the Word, "He wired to his father the one word, 'Rejected,' and sat down to write in his diary: 'Very dark everything seems. Still, He knoweth best.' Quickly came the reply: 'Rejected on earth. Accepted in heaven. Dad.'" Rejection is rarely permanent; as Morgan went on to prove. Even in this life, circumstances change, and ultimately, there is no rejection of those accepted by Christ.