

Luke 13:31-35

March 20, 2019

“The One Who Was Rejected”

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Wednesday after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent

Vicar Otterman

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God, Our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

**[Introduction]**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

When Jesus was in his hometown, announcing the beginning of his ministry, the people of Nazareth grew so angry with him that they drove him out of town and wanted to throw him over a cliff.

Jesus was not welcome.

Jesus encountered two demon-possessed men who were living in tombs, and when he cast the demons out of them and into a nearby herd of pigs, the herdsmen fled and came back with all the inhabitants of the nearby city, and they begged him to leave their region.

Jesus was not welcome.

Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem when some Pharisees approached him with a veiled threat. They warned him saying, “Go and leave from here, because Herod wants to kill you.”

Jesus was not welcome.

And when Pilate said he would release Jesus because he was found innocent, the people cried out, “Away with this man, and release to us Barabbas....Crucify, crucify him!”

Jesus was not welcome.

**[Still Not Welcome]**

Today is no different. Jesus is still not welcome in many parts of the world.

There's the atheist on T.V. who says that the world would be a more peaceful and tolerant place if Christianity would just disappear.

There's the scientist who warns the world that believing in something like a man being raised from the dead is a sign of ignorance.

There's the college student who doesn't want anything to do with Jesus, because Christianity is against having fun.

There's the man who says that believing in Jesus is like a crutch for people with weak wills.

Jesus is still not welcome.

Even people who claim to believe in Jesus often reject him and replace him with an imposter. They switch him out for tolerant Jesus, non-judgmental Jesus, best friend Jesus.

The real Jesus, the Jesus who drove out money lenders from the temple, who tells one of his closest disciples, "Get behind me, Satan!", and who cursed a fig tree and caused it to wither. This Jesus who will one day come again as the judge to separate the righteous from the unrighteous is not welcome in our culture today.

### ***[Jesus Was Not Deterred]***

But Jesus was not deterred when the Pharisees and the other religious leaders tested him, and grumbled against him. He didn't stop teaching and healing people just because some were afraid of him.

And when the Pharisees came and told him to turn away from Jerusalem lest he be killed by King Herod, Jesus commands them to "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course. Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.'"

Jesus knew where he was going and what he would have to endure in order to bring redemption to the world. Intimidation and fear tactics would not keep him from the path his Father had set for him.

Jesus set his eyes on Jerusalem, the city that “kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!” He continued his journey knowing full-well what awaited him, because he was obedient to his Father in heaven.

***[A House Forsaken]***

What about us? Jesus went to the cross on our behalf. He endured suffering greater than anything we can comprehend when the wrath of God was poured out on him and he cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

After he has given everything for us, do we turn and follow him or do we reject him like the rest of the world. Do we shy away from serving him with our all, just as he did for us, because we’re embarrassed of his name? Are we afraid the world will look at us and see us as intolerant, judgmental, irrational, or obsolete when it finds out that we believe in Jesus?

Are we tempted to try to tame our Lord by replacing him with a cheap look alike? Are we so afraid of what the world will think that we become willing to tell Jesus not to come back until he learns to be more tolerant of sin, the very thing he went willingly to the cross to defeat?

Jesus went to Jerusalem to save his people, and they rejected him. Because of that, their house was forsaken by God, the temple was destroyed by a Roman army and those who continued to reject Jesus remained in the condemnation of their sin.

***[Denying Jesus]***

Have you ever turned away from Jesus, hid him, or even tried to tame him?

I have.

I’ve worried about what people would think if they found out I was a Christian. I’ve stayed silent, even when I knew that I should speak up. I’ve chosen to look the other way when someone needs help, because I was afraid of how uncomfortable it would be. And I’ve gone along with things I know I shouldn’t have, because I didn’t want to be rejected.

And I’m not the only one.

Jesus was rejected in his home town, by the very people he came to save, and even by his own disciples. When Jesus was arrested and taken to the house of the high priest, Simon Peter, when asked if he was one of Jesus' disciples, denied that he knew him three times.

***[Jesus Welcomes You]***

The truth is that, one way or another, each one of us has been guilty of rejecting Jesus. But Jesus knew we would reject him. That's why he was so intent on going to Jerusalem, "the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!"

Jesus offered himself up as a sacrifice because we could not save ourselves. It was God's love for us sinners that sent Jesus to die on the cross.

After Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, he sent the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and Peter, the one who had denied him, preached to the people of Judah and Jerusalem telling them that they had crucified their Lord and King. When they understood what they had done, they were cut to the heart, and they asked "what shall we do?"

Peter told them that all they had to do was repent and be baptized so that they could receive the Holy Spirit. 3000 people heard this and were saved. Some of them may have even been the ones who were shouting crucify him, crucify him, and yet Jesus chose to forgive them and to grant them salvation and eternal life.

So when faced with your own sin, when you've denied Jesus in thought, in word, or in deed, and you ask the question, "what should I do?" remember your baptism and repent. Find peace in the assurance you have in Christ because you have been accepted by the one who was rejected. Amen.

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"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

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