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## Jesus - The Rejected Christ

### 1. Intro [SLIDE]

- A number years ago Liana and I came up her to school to for school open day
  - Open day > visiting school > look at class work > went out for lunch and play
  - Boys picking teams for school yard soccer match
  - One of boys (in Kindy) went over to join in
  - 1 by 1 captains picked players for their team ... > finally 1 left
  - Neither captain chose him ... just left him there standing against the wall ... totally rejected
- Rejection is hard thing isn't it?
- Other examples
  - Bachelor
    - Dates > girls gets their hopes up > then he rejects them
    - And there's either tears or anger because of it
  - When you were at school and you got dumped by a girlfriend / boyfriend
  - When you are married and your spouse rejects you in preference for
    - Work
    - Sport
    - Another person
  - At work ...
    - Passed over for a promotion > miss out on the job
    - Sacked or made redundant
- Rejection is hard
  - You may have faced rejection in a friendship
    - Because of your faith
    - Misunderstanding
    - Mistake you made

- Rejection is hard ... and it weighs heavy on our hearts ... and it can be devastating
- It will cause us to react in different ways
  - Some will retreat into our shell and get depressed
  - Some of us get aggressive > want revenge > make them hurt for the hurt they've caused me
  - For others it will cause us to become cynical and critical
- How do you deal with rejection well?
  - We're going to face it in some form and at some point in our lives
  - So how do you face it and not let it destroy you?
- John 7 shows us
  - Not only gives the example of how it is done
  - It gives us the power to do it

## Pray

### 2. Context

- Ch 6 > Passover festival was near
  - Jesus fed 5000 > interaction between Jesus and the crowds who wanted Jesus to fit their agenda and be ...
    - Political Jesus > make him king
    - NRMA Jesus > heal me when I'm sick
    - Vending machine Jesus > feed me with more bread
    - Circus act Jesus > show me some more miracles
- Jesus rebuked them
  - He's come to be the new and better Moses who gives them bread from heaven
  - When you feed on me and my death ... you will never hunger or thirst because I satisfy the deep desires of the soul

### 3. World's rejection of the Christ [SLIDE]

#### *How Christ is rejected*

- Now Ch 7 > John tells us in v2 ... that is Feast of the Tabernacles was near
  - Really helpful John does this ...
    - Not only does it give us context to what follows
    - But it also shows us the gospel is historical
    - Jesus life doesn't happen in some timeless vacuum ... it actually happened in real time and real history
  
- Feast of Tabernacles<sup>1</sup>
  - Like the Passover, it was one of three major festivals in Jewish calendar that every Israelite was required to journey to Jerusalem to attend and celebrate
  - Festival of Tabernacles happened about 6mths after the Passover > Sept / Oct > Autumn
  - Celebrated the completion of the harvest and thanked God for his provision and goodness to the people
  
- So the festival time is approaching
  - Jesus and his followers have been hanging around up in Galilee
  - And the expectation is that Jesus will journey to Jerusalem like everyone else to be part of the festival
  
- Jesus brothers<sup>2</sup> say to him v3-4
  - *"You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do. No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world."*
  - You can hear the sarcasm in their voice

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<sup>1</sup> The name – **Tabernacles** - came from the leafy shelters in which people lived in throughout the seven days of the feast

<sup>2</sup> James, Joseph, Simon and Judas – Matt 13:55

- "Go on Jesus ... if you're really the Messiah ... go and show them your stuff"
- Clearly they don't believe in Jesus > don't consider themselves one of Jesus disciples
- John confirms this in v5
  
- Jesus isn't go up to Jerusalem and show himself to the world, because the world hates him
  - v7 - *"The right time for me has not yet come; for you any time is right. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil."*
  
- Jesus doesn't want to go to the Festival in Jerusalem and perform lots of miracles and be a show pony
  - Because he knows the masses hate him
  - In fact they're trying to kill him
    - John's already told us that already in v1 that Jesus was staying away from Judea because he knew the Jews were trying to take his life
    - v19 – later when Jesus does get to Jerusalem > "Why are you trying to kill me?"
    - v25 – crowd say "is this the man they are trying to kill?"
    - v30 – again they tried to seize him
  
- Jesus is not a popular figure
  - The crowds reject him
  - The religious leaders reject him
  - Even his brothers ... those who you think would be closest to Jesus, reject him
  
- He's ruffled the feathers of the Jews and the religious establishment... and now they want to silence him and get rid of him
  - It seems the world is against him

- And in fact it is > Jesus says in v7 The world 'hates me'
- This is not Jesus having a sulking hissy fit
  - Not a "Woe is me, everyone's against me" tantrum
  - This is the reality of the worlds reaction to an uncomfortable Messiah who didn't fit their agenda
  - They reject him

### ***Why Christ is rejected***

- And the reason the world rejects Jesus is because he exposes their evil
  - He's the light that shines in the darkness of this world
  - And what happens when you shine light into the darkness?
  - You expose what goes on in the darkness
  
- And Jesus came into the world ... the divine Son of God ... teaching the truth from his Father in heaven ... and it exposes the reality
  - He shines a light on people's lives > their morality, their self-righteousness, the prideful hearts
  - He reveals their motives
  - He uncovers their sin
  - He exposes the darkness of their hearts
  
- Now Jesus does end up going to Jerusalem, because he wants to go there and teach ... not to perform miracles like a show pony that will impress his brothers
- And when Jesus gets there he goes straight to the temple and starts teaching
- And while he teaching ... he shines light into the darkness
  - <sup>19</sup> *Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?"*
  - <sup>20</sup> *"You are demon-possessed," the crowd answered "Who is trying to kill you?"*

- <sup>21</sup> *Jesus said to them, "I did one miracle, and you are all astonished.*
- The miracle Jesus is talking about is the healing of the lame man on a Sabbath > John 5
  - And because he healed a man on the Sabbath the Jews were trying to kill him (5:18)
- The Sabbath was meant to be a day of rest > a day when God's people worshipped and honoured God > not meant to be a day of work
- And when Jesus healed this man of a life time of disability and restored him ... they accused him working and therefore breaking the Sabbath
- And now Jesus exposes the darkness of their hearts
- He says
  - <sup>22</sup> *because Moses gave you circumcision you circumcise a child on the Sabbath.* <sup>23</sup> *Now if a child can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing the whole man on the Sabbath?*
- The Jews took the Old Testament command (Lev 12:3) that circumcision must be done on the 8<sup>th</sup> day ... even if it was a Sabbath
- They were willing to break the Sabbath to circumcise on the 8<sup>th</sup> day ... yet when Jesus healed a man ... they were incensed
  - They were hypocrites!
- Even worse ... so dark are their hearts ... they were more willing
  - Break the law and kill Jesus ... than to see a man healed of a life time of disability, poverty and shame
- He exposes what the world does is evil
- In v25-31 they begin to argue with Jesus about his origin
- Jesus says

- You think you know where I'm from .... but actually you don't
- I'm from the Father and he is the one who sent me
- And even though you think you know God ... I'm telling you, you don't
  
- The Jews were outraged
- This was a massive insult to the Jews and their religious self-righteousness
- Here they are ...
  - in Jerusalem > City of God
  - in the Temple > the House of God
  - celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles > Festival to God
  - they were the people of God
- And Jesus says ... you don't actually know God
  - You prove it by the fact that you hate me and want to kill me and reject the words I say which are the words of the Father
- And they prove he's right by trying to seize him in order to kill him
  
- Jesus exposes the hearts and minds of the world ... he shines the light of truth in the darkness ... and so the world rejects him
  
- **Application**
- The world today continues to reject Jesus ... because as the gospel is proclaimed ... the gospel continues to shine the light into the darkness and expose people's hearts and minds
- Jesus exposes
  - greed
  - sexual immorality
  - unforgiving hearts
  - petty mindedness
  - selfishness
- He says in the sermon on the mount in Matt 5 ...

- You think you're okay because you don't murder ... I tell you anyone who is angry with his brother is subject to judgment
  - You think you're okay because you don't commit adultery ... I tell you anyone who looks at a woman lustfully or views porn has already committed adultery with her in his heart
  - You think it's okay to pay back someone who hurts you ... I tell you turn the other cheek, love your enemy and pray for them
  - You think it's okay to love God and money ... I tell you can only love one or the other
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- And because the world loves
    - Money
    - Sexual freedom
    - Self fulfilment
  - Jesus is rejected > the gospel is rejected
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- But friends ... notice that this passage is not just dealing with secular people
    - The people Jesus is mostly coming into conflict with are religious people
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- We see Jesus brothers ... like so many who are related to real Christians, they are 'so near, yet so far'.
    - The brothers aren't hostile to Jesus ... but nor are they committed to him
    - They believe in Jesus miracles and urge him to go to Jerusalem do more
    - But they don't see beyond his power to what the miracles are pointing to – that he is the divine Son of God sent by the Father
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- The others who reject Jesus are the Jews in Jerusalem
    - These were churchy people



- They're in Jerusalem to be part of one of the most significant religious festivals of the Jewish calendar
- They knew the scriptures
- They followed the Law
- Yet they failed to see who Jesus truly was and they too reject him
  - Because he exposes their hearts and minds and shines the light on their evil darkness
- It's very easy to come to church or to be reading the Bible and come across something Jesus says ... something and reject it because it makes you uncomfortable and uneasy
- When you start to do that ... you're in effect creating your own version of Jesus
  - Political Jesus, NRMA Jesus, Vending machine Jesus, Show pony Jesus
  - And if you look hard enough you're probably see your Jesus is remarkably like you
- But the real Jesus will challenge and confront you ... because he shines light into this world and into our hearts and exposes the darkness
  - And so we ought to expect to be challenged and confronted by the real Jesus
- Those of you who are married ... you know this
  - Your spouse will challenge you on stuff you get wrong and need to sort out all the time right?
  - And they're not Jesus!
  - So how much more ought we expect Jesus to shine the light on us!
- Tim Keller gives a great illustration of this in his book 'Reason for God'
  - *"If you don't trust the Bible enough to let it challenge and correct your thinking, how could you ever have a personal relationship with God? In any truly personal relationship, the other person has to be able to contradict you."*

**[SLIDE]**

- *"For example, if a wife is not allowed to contradict her husband, they won't have an intimate relationship. Remember the movie The Stepford Wives? The husbands of Stepford, Connecticut, decide to have their wives turned into robots who never cross the wills of their husbands. A Stepford wife was wonderfully compliant and beautiful, but no one would describe such a marriage as intimate or personal.*
- *"Now, what happens if you eliminate anything from the Bible that offends your sensibility and crosses your will? If you pick and choose what you want to believe and reject the rest, how will you ever have a God who can contradict you? You won't! You'll have a Stepford God! A God, essentially, of your own making, and not a God with whom you can have a relationship and genuine interaction.*
- *"Only if your God can say things that outrage you and make you struggle (as in a real friendship or marriage!) will you know that you have gotten hold of a real God and not a figment of your imagination.*
- *"So an authoritative Bible is not the enemy of a personal relationship with God. It is the precondition for it."<sup>3</sup>*

**[SLIDE]**

- You see when Christ comes and shines his light ... he doesn't just shine it into the world ... he shines into our hearts
  - Because our hearts are where the real issue lies
  - It's easy for us to look outside of us and say
    - the problem is out there
    - the problem is the world
    - the problem is those other people
  - Actually the problem is each and every one of us who have hearts that are sinful and rebellious and prideful and hard
  - And Jesus exposes that darkness in the hearts of all of us
  - Not just the world ... not just everyone else

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<sup>3</sup> Tim Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Scepticism*, pages 113-114

- But in you and in me
- When Jesus shines the light into the darkness of my heart ... it exposes me
- It shows
  - I'm harsh > I'm judgmental > I'm critical > I'm unforgiving > I'm proud > I'm competitive > I'm greedy > I'm envious
- And it's tempting when
  - we hear the gospel and
  - we come across those passages of scripture ...
  - we hear the words of Jesus
  - that expose those things and confront us and challenge us ...
    - tempting to want to reject it and reject Jesus
- But if you want to have a real relationship with the one who came to satisfy your hunger and thirst and give you life to the full ...
  - Then you've got to be prepared to let Jesus shine the light on your life and expose your sin, and rebellion and the parts of your heart that are hard and selfish and wicked
- Because it's only once Jesus has shone the light into your heart and you begin to see the problem you have within ...
  - Only then ... will you then be open to knowing the one who can overcome all that and give you the life you so desperately crave

#### **4. Christ's love of the world [SLIDE]**

- While we see the world rejects Jesus ... Jesus response to the world is far different
- It's not explicit in these verses, but we are given clues through the passage
- And the clues come in the regular references to 'time'

- v6 – Jesus said to his brothers ... *"The **right time** for me has not yet come;*
- v8 – *"You go to the Feast. I am not yet going up to this Feast, because for me the **right time has not yet come.**"*
- v30 – *"At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because **his time had not yet come**"*
  
- Jesus makes constant reference to his time which has not yet come
  - While Jesus is interacting with the world day by day ... it is clear that the real message, the real reason, the real response to the world is somehow tied up with this time that he keeps referring to which is yet to come
  
- What is this time that is yet to come?
  - In the NT the word = time ... also be translated = Hour
- As you go through John's gospel ... Jesus mentions his time or his hour over and over
  - John 12:23 "The **hour** has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.
  - John 13:1 Jesus knew that the **time** had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father.
  - John 17:1 "Father, the **time** has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you
- As you read those verses in their context, it's clear that Jesus hour > the time that is yet to come ... is his time on the cross
- And his time at the cross is his response to the world who rejected him
  - John 1:29 - Jesus is described as *"the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the **world**"*
  - John 3:16 *"For God so loved the **world** that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*
  - 6:51 - *If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the **world.**"*

- Jesus response to the world that wants to reject him ... is to go to the cross and die
  - And why does he do that?
  - Because he **loves** the world
  - The world rejected Jesus ... but Jesus loved the world ... and proved it by going to the cross
- And he didn't do it for his own glory
  - He didn't do it for his own satisfaction or advantage!
  - No ... he sacrificially lay down his life ...
- Why?
  - So that all that stuff that his light exposes when it shines into the dark, sinful, hard, selfish recesses of our heart ... can be forgiven and wiped clean
  - He is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world
- His death > his blood > his **time** ...
  - For all the times I have been
    - harsh > judgmental > critical > unforgiving > proud > competitive > greedy > envious
    - He's given his life to take it away
- Jesus time ... was the time of the cross
  - It was the time where he showed he loved the world ... and where he showed he loved **you**
  - He was rejected ... so you wouldn't be rejected
- **Application**
- Friends do you see the power in that?
- When Christ shines the light in your heart and exposes it for what it is ...
  - And you see you totally deserve nothing but rejection from God

- But then you see Christ ... who showed his love for you so that you won't be rejected
- To the extent you get that and believe that ....
  - It totally transforms your life!
- Because
  - Not only do you know all your the sin and darkness of your hearts has been washed clean
  - But it transforms the way you're able to deal with the times you're rejected
- Because what's the opposite of being rejected? It's being loved right?
  - So when you know the one who loves you ... despite being rejected by you ...
  - When you know that in his love for you ... he was rejected so you wouldn't have to be rejected ...
  - Then you have a love that's completely independent of all the people that have the potential to destroy you when they reject you
- And so when you're rejected
  - At work
  - By a friend
  - By your spouse
    - Of course that hurts ... deeply
  - But you know, there's one who loves you even more deeply that will never reject you and ... that is Christ
- When I know I'm more deeply loved than I can ever imagine by the one who died for the sins of the world ...
  - Then my value, my self-esteem, and my significance as a person is not dependent on being loved or accepted by someone else

- When we get that ...
  - It actually frees us to show understanding to that person and empathise with them
  - It enables us to be content and not seek revenge or want to hurt them
  
- But not only that ... knowing Christ loved you despite being rejected by you
  - It gives you the capacity to forgive those that hurt you when you're rejected
  - Because if Christ loved me and didn't reject ... despite my dark and sinful heart
  - Then how could I not forgive the one who rejects me?
- To the degree you and I understand how much it took for Christ to forgive us ...
  - Then it will equip you to forgive as well

## 5. Conclusion

- The world rejects Jesus because he exposes the darkness in our hearts
- That'll inevitably be uncomfortable and challenging
- And it's tempting to walk away from Jesus and reject him when that happens
- But unless you allow him to do that ... you cannot have the life he offers and a relationship with him that we so desperately need
  
- But when you see that his time was to come and be rejected for you ...
  - to pay for all that darkness he exposed in your heart ...
  - Then not only does it show how much he loved you and a world that rejects him
  - It enables you to love those who reject you too

## PRAY