

# Jesus rejected by his own people

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[ 0 : 01 ] Well, good morning, everybody. We're going to read from John chapter 7 and verses 1 to 31, which is the point in which we've got in our series on John's Gospel.

! The reading is coming up on the screen for you to follow along. After this, Jesus went around in Galilee, purposely staying away from Judea because the Jews there were waiting to take his life. But when the Jewish feast of the tabernacles was near, Jesus' brothers said to him, 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, for even his own brothers did not believe in him.

Therefore Jesus told them, The right time for me has not come, yet for you any time is right. The world cannot hate you because it hates me, because I testify that what it does is evil.

[ 1 : 12 ] You go to the feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, because for me the right time has not yet come. Having said this, he stayed in Galilee.

However, after his brothers had left for the feast, he went also not publicly, but in secret. Now at the feast the Jews were watching for him and asking, Where is that man?

Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, He is a good man.

Others replied, No, he deceives the people. But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the Jews.

Not until halfway through the feast did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. The Jews were asked, amazed, and asked, How did this man get such learning without having studied? Jesus answered, My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God, or whether I speak on my own.

[ 2 : 22 ] He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself. But he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth. There is nothing false about him.

Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me? You are demon-possessed, the crowd answered. Who is trying to kill you?

Jesus said to them, I did one miracle, and you are all astonished. Yet because Moses give you circumcision, though it actually did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs, you circumcise a child on the Sabbath.

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? Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment.

At that point, some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, isn't this the man they are trying to kill? Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not seeing a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Christ?

[ 3 : 31 ] But we know where this man is from. When the Christ comes, no one will know where he is from. Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from.

I am not here on my own, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, but I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me.

At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come. Still many in the crowd put their faith in him. They said, when the Christ comes, will he do more miraculous signs than this man?

Open question. We shall see. The Lord will bless to us the reading of his holy word. The title of our sermon today is Jesus Rejected by His Own People.

And the theme, of course, is that of rejection. I wonder if you have ever been rejected. It's not a pleasant experience to be rejected. People have been rejected by their parents, or they have been rejected by employers, or rejected by their football team, or rejected by a loved one in some way or other.

[ 4 : 50 ] And sometimes the rejection has very little impact on us, but sometimes it has a major impact on us, and can cause problems for many years to come.

I read of G. Campbell Morgan. He was a preacher at Westminster Chapel before Dr. Lloyd-Jones, a very famous preacher in the 19th century and into the 20th century. When he was applying for the ministry, he was along with over 200 others who stepped up for application in that particular year. It was into the Methodist or Wesleyan ministry at the time, and this was 1888. He passed the doctrinal examinations, and then he faced the trial sermon, and he then had to preach a sermon in a church that was built to hold 1,000 people.

There were three ministers present and 75 others, all of whom were critically evaluated. So you imagine it was meant for 1,000. There was about 78 in there, and it was pretty empty, and that alone would be pretty dispiriting.

But then they were all there to pick his sermon apart. Well, he panicked. He dried up. It didn't go well. Two weeks later, he got the letter to say that he was among the 105 of that particular session that were rejected for the ministry.

[ 6 : 20 ] He then wired home. In those days, they wired on the telegraph. He wired home to his father, the one word rejected, and he sat down and wrote in his diary, very dark, everything seems.

Still, he knows best. And then he got a reply from the telegraph from his father that said this, Rejected on earth, accepted in heaven.

Dad. Rejected on earth, accepted in heaven. Dad. Now, this could have been said of Jesus.

Rejected on earth, accepted in heaven.

For Jesus, when he was baptized, heard a voice from heaven that said, This is my beloved son. Listen to him. And what we find in John's gospel are disciples who listen to the voice of Jesus and accept him as the Messiah, the Son of God.

But we also have in John's gospel a larger, much more vocal crowd of people who reject his words and reject his message and see him as an imposter and a fraud.

[ 7 : 34 ] And this is what's going on in chapter 7. There is a crowd of people, all of whom have different opinions about who Jesus is. Just as if you went out and interviewed people around the streets of Whitby, you would find the vast majority of people might have an opinion on Jesus, but it wouldn't generally be a favorable one.

We are very much in the minority and always have been, no matter how so-called Christian society may have been. But listening to Jesus, receiving his message, is a key theme of John's gospel.

And if you want to understand the context of chapter 7, verses 11 to 13, help us here when it says, Now at the feast of the Jews, at the feast, the Jews, that is the Jewish leaders, were watching for him and asking, Where is that man?

among the crowds, and notice the distinction. I was asked this question last week from somebody in the congregation. Why does the Bible seem to be so negative about the Jews?

Is it a form of anti-Semitism? It isn't a form of anti-Semitism. There's no hatred of the Jews. The Jews are loved above all in the Bible. The most special of all of the peoples of the earth.

[ 8 : 49 ] But when John uses the term Jews, he uses it in various forms. He's speaking of the crowd, the general populace, but he's also speaking specifically of the religious leaders and the political authorities, those in power and control.

And this is what's been referred to here. There is a group of people who are in control and who are in power who are looking for an opportunity to arrest Jesus and have him executed.

Now at the Feast of the Jews, verse 11, the Jews were watching for him and asking, Where is that man? Among the crowds, there was a widespread whispering about him. Some said, He is a good man.

Others replied, No, he deceives the people. But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the Jews. So you see the confusion that a reader might have at first until you understand that distinction.

So it wasn't popular and it wasn't safe to be an overt supporter of Jesus. But it was impossible to ignore him. There was no middle ground.

[10:01] There was no indifference. You're either with him or you're against him. You're either for him or you're against him. And that's very much John's approach to the gospel.

You either receive him or you reject him. You believe in him or you do not believe in him. You have life in his name or you have eternal damnation.

Everything is black and white. You know, John says it as it is. He calls what we would say, he calls a spade a spade. And it's not such a bad thing, is it?

Everybody's so frightened to tell the truth nowadays. We all have to couch it in so much verbiage that we couldn't offend anybody. And yet people get offended much more nowadays than they seem to do when I was a child when things were a bit more black and white.

So John once again presents us with evidence of something that's important to him. Stated, and Sandy read this without any prompting from me, from John chapter 1 and verse 11.

[11:02] He came to that which was his own. That is, to his own place. But his own, his own people, did not receive him.

Okay? He came to Israel, his own place. The place expecting to welcome and receive the Messiah, God's anointed one. But the people of that place who should have recognized him did not accept him.

And John is playing that out again and again. Here's another example of him coming to his own place, to Jerusalem, to the center of worship, where he should have been received as the Son of God and worshipped, but he was rejected.

John is showing this as an evidence of the overall rejection of Jesus by the people of Israel. So it's not a surprise to John that there is hostility toward him here.

Those who receive him, he says, they receive him because they are children born not of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but born of God. And he says to us in chapter 3, he says through Nicodemus, you must be born again.

[12:14] And as we said last time when we looked at John's gospel with respect to the resurrection of Jesus, this revelation has to come into your heart.

It has to be more than head knowledge. It is not simply a reception of information. It is information that leads to transformation of the life.

Those who believe in Jesus will follow Jesus. Those who believe in Jesus will obey him and that's going to be important in the narrative and the dialogue that Jesus shares in this passage.

In John chapter 7, Jesus is at the Feast of Tabernacles. Now again, we get this division in chapters and we don't always see what the connection is. But chapter 6, you might remember, was the Feast of Passover.

So we know, if we know something of the Jewish year, that six months has passed between chapter 6 and chapter 7. For the Feast of Passover takes place in what would be the equivalent of our March, April, and the Feast of Tabernacles takes place in what we call September, October.

[13:25] And the Jewish year is extended so Abib, March, April, is the first month of the year in the Jewish calendar. So we are talking six months later and they're at one of the three most important feasts in Jewish worship.

Passover and Unleavened Bread and then Tabernacles. At the end of Tabernacles is what we call Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

So it's a very sacred but a very joyful time of worship. It is the time of the harvest festival. So they give thanks for the gathering of crops. But it ends with a remembrance that in order for their sins to be forgiven, an animal must be slain, the Passover lamb must be slain.

Sorry, not the Passover lamb. An animal must be slain and atonement must be made so that God's people might be reconciled to Him.

Tabernacles celebrates God's protection of Israel during the wilderness wandering. So it reminds them of the time when they lived in booths or temporary accommodation.

[14:39] And so when they went to worship there, they built this temporary accommodation. It reminds them two of God's provision for the harvest and then it reminds them of God's promise that a new exodus is coming when God will restore the kingdom of Israel as the prominent nation of the world.

So they're looking forward always to end times and to their final redemption. It's appropriate that Jesus comes at this point and says something significant at this point.

For He is their Redeemer though they do not recognize Him. And He will, according to Paul, return to Israel and then all Israel will be saved.

So there is hope and a future for the nation of Israel still yet to be fulfilled prophetically in the Scriptures. Still awaiting the second coming of Messiah Jesus.

Remembrance, rejoicing, and expectation. All of this was part of the Feast of Tabernacles. So Jesus attends as a worshiper though originally He did not intend to worship.

[15:49] He did not go up there as we'll see in a moment. But He went up secretly so as not to kind of cause a major distraction and to not get Himself into trouble which was almost impossible for Jesus unfortunately.

And He goes up secretly. And then He arrives there in the temple courts. And the first thing we notice in verses 1 to 9 is that He's rejected by His own family.

Now this takes place before He goes. Jesus has brothers and sisters. I know that the Roman Catholic Church teaches the perpetual virginity of Mary but unfortunately the Scripture says that He had brothers and sisters.

We know He had more than one sister because it's referred to in the plural. So He had at least two sisters. So what we assume then and I think rightly is that after Jesus was born to a virgin Joseph and Mary had a normal marital relationship in which sex took place and children were conceived. The children, the boys we know at least four of them the boys were James and Jude or Judas both of whom wrote New Testament letters and James was the leader of the church in Jerusalem and then there was Simon and there was Joseph.

[17:12] So four brothers all mentioned in the Gospels and his sisters who are not named. They were his half siblings and remarkably they did not believe in Him.

Not at first. Now sometimes we are told apocryphal stories that Jesus when He was a boy used to create birds out of mud and stuff like that and then they would make them alive and they would fly off.

Evidently that did not happen in their sight for they would have believed in Him. Far better for us to understand that He was a normal boy. He grew up in normal ways.

Undoubtedly a very pious boy. Exceptional in His learning and in His devotion but He wasn't performing miracles before He set out on His ministry.

There's no reason to believe He did that. When He was baptized He received the Holy Spirit and He said to us that the reason He performed miracles was through the power of the Holy Spirit.

[18:12] The incarnation required sorry this is technical the voluntary suspension of His divine attributes. He became as dependent upon the Holy Spirit to perform miracles as any human being.

And that only took place after His baptism in His ministry for three years here on earth. So we can excuse the fact that His brothers did not believe in Him and perhaps He was a Joseph type lad. You know Joseph in the Old Testament he was a very pious lad too. Bit of a boaster but nonetheless he was a pious sort and His brothers hated Him. Because you know you might not you might be surprised at this great revelation but you who've grown up in families you're not forced to like each other just because you're the same blood.

I have five brothers and a sister but four brothers and a sister sorry I'm the fifth. Thankfully we all loved each other really very much and never really fell out. But I know that's not always the case. These brothers did not believe in Him. But they knew He had a following and He had a reputation and they were a bit frustrated. If you really are who you claim to be you should go to Jerusalem because if you're going to gather a crowd you'll be where the crowds are and all of the crowds are in Jerusalem.

[19:29] Go up there perform a miracle everybody's going to follow you and then maybe maybe they didn't say this out loud maybe we might believe in you. But He says I'm not going. You you you kind of think take every opportunity the time is always right for you take every opportunity you can get but it's not my time.

Come back to that in a moment. So Jesus is rejected by His family. Jesus warned us about this. When He was ministering in Capernaum and doing miraculous signs people were kind of saying all kinds of things about Him but some people were saying He's doing that through the power of the devil.

And He was working so hard He got so that His family came up Mary and the children came up and they decided that they were going to take Him home because they thought He'd gone mad.

And Jesus was in the house and He heard they were outside and He was told your mother your brothers they're waiting for you and Jesus said who are my mother and my brothers? He looked at those seated in a circle around Him and said here are my mother and my brothers and my sisters. You see families are not forced to be on your side.

[ 21 : 00 ] They're not forced to be your most loyal supporters. And Jesus found that this was the case. Mary was undoubtedly faithful to Him but sometimes misunderstood Him.

His disciples as we see at this point did not believe in Him but thankfully later did. Sometime between the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus they become part of His followers.

By the time of Acts chapter 1 and verse 14 they are in the upper room praying waiting on the Holy Spirit thank God. But until then they did not believe. Nor special privileges just because they're siblings of Jesus no special privileges.

Just because you're brought up in a Christian home doesn't make you a Christian. Just because your parents are godly won't make you godly. It has to be your decision it has to be yours.

Just think of that. These brothers of Jesus they still have to make a decision to follow Him or they too would have been lost. Amazing isn't it? And Jesus warns us if we are going to follow Him if we are going to be close to Him if we are going to be loyal to Him we have to do that even when people speak against us.

[ 22 : 16 ] Physical closeness to Jesus does not guarantee we will have faith in Jesus. Many will say to me on that day Lord, Lord did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive our demons and perform many miracles then I will tell them plainly I never knew you depart from me.

They were physically close to Him they were even doing things in His name but He didn't know them. And that's the most vital thing we have to deal with in our own souls.

Do we know Jesus personally? Not know about Him not claim that we have close proximity with Him in some way because we worship but do we know Him as our Savior and Lord?

Do we trust in Him and surrender our lives to Him? In a way that at this point His brothers were not. And Jesus talks about time.

Time's always right for you it's not my time. Now John uses different Greek words time in the context of this early part of John is the word *kairos* and that just means linear time the kind of time we have the everyday time that we have.

[ 23 : 27 ] But then He sometimes uses a word technically He uses the word *hora* which gives us the English word hour and He literally is saying my hour has not yet come and that is used technically by John to refer to a specific time in Jesus' ministry the time upon which all of history really hinges the death and the resurrection of Jesus.

That hour in which death is defeated in which Satan is conquered and in which eternal life is guaranteed to those who believe in Jesus. That is the hour for which He came when the time has fully come Paul said God gave His Son made of a woman made under the law to redeem those who are under the law.

That is His hour. Jesus says there is a specific time or hour for which I have come and until that hour is here will not be forced or compelled or driven by men.

I am entirely in the will of God and it is His time in that matters to me not your time in. And that's a way to live life you know to remember that God has His time and then we have ours sometimes we're impatient aren't we?

We want things in our time in our way according to our will but the best way to live is to remember that my times are in your hands my God I wish them there.

[ 25 : 11 ] Psalm 31 verse 15 my times are in your hands deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me because my life and everything about me is in the hands of God and He is ultimately in control of everything.

And time is something that the Bible says we have to redeem and I love this little verse when as a child I laughed and wept time crept when as a youth I dreamed and talked time walked when I became a full grown man time ran and later as I grew as I older grew time flew soon I shall find while traveling on time is gone and so we have to be ready for we all have an allotted time every moment of every day God says is written in my book before any of them come to be my times are in your hands I do not know the time of my departure but the important thing is to remember that it is in the hands of God and what matters is I entrust my life to the God who holds my life in his hands time is a thing that we flitter away and waste but when we have faith in God we realize that time is

precious and the time that we have is a gift from God to be used for God and then when he calls us we need to be ready to go

Jesus is rejected by his family the second thing we notice is that Jesus is rejected by the religious leaders midway through the feast Jesus begins to teach and he creates a stir and then the religious leaders say well who gives you the right to speak who gives you the authority to speak where did you go to Bible college if you've not been to Bible college you can't speak because you haven't you're not learned enough you haven't learned the Greek or the Hebrew you haven't learned the scholars or the academics you know you have to be prepared to do this who has prepared you which rabbi has taught you and they knew the answer that was no one not formally and so if you didn't have the formal endorsement of a rabbi then nobody should listen to you because the job of a rabbi is to pass on the teachings of a rabbi and to remain in the tradition of that rabbi you had nothing of your own to share you were just passing on what somebody taught you it's kind of we call that road learning yeah you sound knowledgeable except all your knowledge is second hand Jesus says well you're quite right but I'm going to tell you something now that will shock you my teaching comes not from a rabbi but from my father in heaven and I speak in his name and with his authority and that is why the common people hear me gladly and that is people say of me he speaks with authority and not as one of the scribes his is not a boring dirge his speech gets to the heart his speech exposes the soul his speech brings us under conviction he speaks through the holy spirit his words live and then Jesus says so if this is true why do you want to kill me and some people said we're not intended to kill you you're mad you're demon possessed trying to defame him a little more he says well yes you are and you're trying to kill me because I healed a man on the sabbath john chapter five I healed a man on the sabbath and you said that's a work and yet you circumcise the children of abraham you circumcise on the every child of abraham even if it lands on a sabbath day because you teach that the sabbath sorry that circumcision is more important than the sabbath to give way the sabbath gives way to the requirement of circumcision because that shows you're one of the covenantal people so you carry out a work circumcising a child on the sabbath day and yet you object to me making a man whole on the sabbath day how hypocritical and stupid is that you are more concerned about obeying the law than you are about healing a man of his sickness how corrupt is that they had forgotten the principle that Jesus taught them that the sabbath was made for man not man for the sabbath they had forgotten that God requires mercy not sacrifice and compassion and love not the sacrifice of animals they had put in law before people principles above people and they had become legalistic and hard hearted toward those who and were in need and they had completely lost sight of God in their desire to keep the law imagine on whitby sea front there were signs saying no swimming here and there were lifeguards standing on the front observing a child who was drowning at sea and none of them lifted the finger to do anything because there were signs up that said no swimming here and so you begin to object to life you're about to save the child but they said well the law says they shouldn't swim stupid people stupid child deserve everything he gets what would you think of those lifeguards you would think they were heartless wretches and that's exactly true of these religious leaders the law says so you can't heal him really 30 35 years like this should we leave him like this wouldn't the heart of God reach out in compassion for such a man and so

Jesus says look it isn't enough just to have the law you must obey it you must live it it must become part of what you are because if God's word does not change who we are if it doesn't make us more compassionate and more merciful and more gracious and more kind then it's not really at work in us at all if it does not make us like the God who gave us his word then it's just information not transformation and Spurgeon says another proof and it's on the screen another proof of the conquest of a soul for Christ will be found in a real change of life if the man does not live differently from what he did before both at home and abroad his repentance needs to be repented of and his conversion is a fiction it isn't enough just for us to say we believe in

[ 32 : 31 ] Jesus Jesus has to be within us to transform us so that we begin to live out the fruits of the spirit and demonstrate that in compassion and mercy to people in need and so the religious leaders reject him they reject him because he exposes the truth of their hearts they are merciless cowardly wretches who will walk past a person in need rather than seek to bind up their wounds and help them and finally we notice here that Jesus is rejected by the confused crowds there is division among the crowds Leon Morris notes the crowd represents the uninformed majority sincere but confused distinct from both the authorities and the disciples part of the problem the crowds have is their religious leaders are against Jesus and so they think well he must have done something

wrong there's been lots and lots of terrible things carried out by people against innocent people because leaders have told them that the innocent people are in fact guilty and it doesn't just happen in the world it happens in the churches people who turn against their ministers or their leaders because somebody sends a rumor around turns out it's not true that the leadership decide to close ranks to protect their reputation and destroy the innocent it easily happens we are sheep

Nietzsche said we follow crowds we are sheep like and the people in power like to keep us that way so they can control us Jesus sets us free to know the truth and to speak the truth even if the majority are against us but they're confused you can hardly blame them some are saying he's a good man others are saying he's demon possessed the religious leaders are trying to kill it they know that it's got out there and they said one of the problems we have is that we know where he's from and we know his name we know he's called Jesus we know his parents were Joseph and Mary we know he's from Nazareth nothing comes good comes from Nazareth you know and he can't be the Messiah because if the Messiah comes nobody will know where he is from oh really who told you that well our religious teachers taught us that because it's a tradition that we know about that he's just going to arrive one day all of a sudden come from out of nowhere and do miraculous things ah yes but the scripture says he will be born in

Bethlehem so the Old Testament taught them where the Messiah would come from but their teachers taught them that nobody in fact knew and they led them astray that's why James says we've got to be careful not to all be teachers for they will receive a greater judgment it is incumbent upon those of us who teach to teach people the truth of scripture not the traditions of men for the traditions of men can lead us astray and because of the traditions of men Jesus is largely rejected and those traditions still exist you know we say well none of us we live in a modern scientific world of course we don't believe in miracles anymore we don't believe anybody can really be born of a virgin and therefore Jesus can be just dismissed by people who then tell us it's still worth worshiping for his example really really are we permitted to just get rid of the truth of scripture because modern man feels they have to be credible intellectually and get enough kudos from the academic world in order to have their degrees paid for that kind of learning is not only misleading it is dangerous for it takes us away from the truth of scripture and so the crowds reject him and it's little wonder that the crowds reject Jesus today because unless they see the power of Jesus at work in the lives of those who are converted there's no reason to turn up a church and sing drudgery old songs the world does that much better than us generally speaking they can put on a better concert they can make a louder noise and they can do that allowing you to live whichever way you like live your own truth be your own person have your free life to use a saying

I've heard a lot recently but go to hell that's the danger now that's blunt I'm a Geordie I'm excused but that's the gospel so there is application for us from this text rejection is never easy for anyone to overcome but rejection is inevitable if we are to follow Jesus for he said if the world hates me hates you keep in mind that it hated me as well and if you will follow me you will be rejected for I was rejected rejection is inevitable for those who follow Jesus but if we must be rejected by the world if we must be rejected by those who we love because we follow

Jesus it is a price worth paying for this world will pass away but those who do the will of God will live forever if you would follow Jesus you must take up your cross and you must be prepared for rejection but Jesus says blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me rejoice and be glad because great is your reward in heaven for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you not only is rejection inevitable the real issue is the human heart rejection tells you more about the rejecter than the rejected the person who turn against you just because of what you believe have a problem with your belief and they have a problem ultimately with the person you believe in that is why Jesus when they reject you they're not really rejecting you they're rejecting me just accept that that's part of the cross the problem is in the heart an unwillingness to yield and receive the truth that is in Jesus and so we've got to see that the part is desperately wicked above everything

[ 39 : 34 ] Jeremiah said it's corrupt and it needs to be transformed by the spirit of God in order that we might receive the truth that is in Jesus and then the third thing to notice is that true faith requires action not merely admiration lots of people admire Jesus in this crowd but a lot of them were not prepared to receive him worship can sometimes just be admiration but real faith says I will take him as my savior I will be obedient to him as my lord and I will follow his teaching for the rest of my life Jesus invites us to make a judgment he says judge or decide with an accurate judgment think

clearly think seriously think with an open heart upon all that the scripture teaches about me and then decide will you receive me and accept me as your Messiah as your king as your lord or will you reject me the choice is yours amen