

**Sermon Topic:** REJECTION by Rev Dr Lorna Khoo

**Sermon Text:** Luke 4:23-38 (Luke 4:14- 6:11)

## Background

1. Jesus was popular and praised but for only a while.
  - a. At Nazareth- it looks like he courted rejection by rejecting the people first.  
But when we read Matthew 13:54-58 and Mark 6: it is clear that he was rejected because
    - his social status (carpenter from Nazareth cf John 1:46) – he was not born a Rabbi
    - suspected illegitimate birth - he was not special, just trying to be smart
  - b. Their extreme violent reaction was because of their anti-Gentile bias: note that He read only PART of Isaiah 61 and spoke of a God who favoured these people whom Jews despised - Jews were supposed to be top dogs and Gentiles the servants. But Jesus started by pointing to the examples of God blessing not this people but the other peoples, eg widow of Zarahphath and Naaman. Jews believed promise of God reserved for the Jews. But Jesus was pro-Gentile, no wonder they hated him.
2. Jesus faced rejection throughout his life by:
  - a. Religious leaders:
    - over spiritual disciplines: fasting, sabbath keeping (healed man during Sabbath)
    - His authority
    - His choice of friends: tax collectors.
  - b. Cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum and Decapolis: where He had ministered powerfully (cf Matthew 11:23, Luke 10:13-15) – Instead of repenting, the people carried on their lives as usual, so Jesus said they will suffer even more.
  - c. A Samaritan village
  - d. His family (cf Mark 3:21) – family members thought he was mad, they came to take him home so that he would stop creating trouble.
  - e. His followers (John 6:48-59) – when he was teaching about ‘eating his body and drinking his blood’ some of his followers left him.
  - f. His disciples - one betrayed Him, others abandoned Him, one denied Him
  - g. His people (they chose Barabbas to be freed instead)
  - h. God (because He carried the weight of our sins) – When he was on the cross, he felt like God forsaken him. God said the son He sent to the world would be despised and rejected by men.

3. Our experiences of rejection: Birth (not wanted). Home (as child or parent), School (cliques), Work and relationships, Racism, Sexism, Age-ism. There's a lot of pain involved. Jesus has been through it. He understands. cf Isa 53:3-5, John 1:10, Hebrews 4:15

4. We avoid rejection:

- a. Seek others' approval as people pleaser or self promoter - pretend to be what we are not but what we think others want us to be.
- b. reject others before they can hurt us
- c. withdraw and reject ourselves
- d. escape into addictions, work, material pleasures.

BUT:

- a. We lose our true self
- b. We lose our ability to give life (cf Prov 4:23) Our love tank leaks. – When we feel rejected and when we hold to the hurt from rejection, we lose the ability to give life to others.
- c. We give foothold to the enemy – bitterness, anger – provides an entry point for the enemy to enter and dominate our life.

5. How did Jesus deal with rejection?

- a. He educated them
  - He proactively addressed their concerns – he demonstrated the truth of God
  - He still cared for them
- b. He didn't water down the truth. Simply stated it. He didn't demand acceptance from them. He left them.
- c. He was realistic. He confronted yet forgave them – He foresaw the possibility (realistic about human weakness)
- d. He died for them

## APPLICATION

1. Face it. List instances, State feelings. What was taken away from me?
2.
  - a. Sometimes the rejection came when we were doing the right thing (see How Jesus handled rejection #5 above). Are we doing it?
  - b. Sometimes the rejection came when we were doing the wrong thing. If so: don't hide behind excuses... Face it. Repent. Say sorry. Change.

3. Ask for forgiveness from God:  
Forgive me God for hugging my rejection, defining my self image from there, not forgiving others for it.  
Release false image of self, release unforgiveness

We hold on to our rejection until it eats us up that we cannot live the full life God has given us. Say to the Lord: I now release my false self image of rejection to You. I now release those who have rejected me to you. I forgive them. Bless them, Lord.

4. CHANGE SPECS (Change perspective) The only one whose acceptance matters is GOD. Seek His approval, His favour and His Presence (secret of Jesus' ability to endure rejection: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased". Time out with Him- trust in God's providence.) Have good godly friends: we are not alone.

Reframe our perspective. The last person we meet in life is God, so we need to seek his approval and favour. That is the most important thing. Secret of Jesus' ability to endure: God's pleasure in him and he is well aware of that, his love tank was full because he knows God loves him, not matter what the situation may be. Jesus often withdrawal to lonely places to pray because he knows that God is his life source, where he can withdraw and recharge. We are upset when we face rejection, we feel that the opportunity and door has closed. But it could be God's way of telling us that when one door closes, he open another door for us. We trust in God's providence. That will help us reframe the situation. Seek to also have godly friends to support us and to encourage us as we go along.