

Few things in life are certain.... But criticism and rejection are certain. Though people-pleasers try hard, no one totally avoids criticism or rejection... Even people pleasers if they do not receive the reward they expect from pleasing people...they criticize and reject the same people they work so hard to please..

- Being right doesn't help... how many of us get criticized for doing the right thing....
- Noah did not stop building the Ark to explain himself to every doubter and hater. Keep building and let the rain do the talking!
- Noah was not surprised by the critics and rejectors, and neither was Jesus and **if you follow Jesus ...you will be criticized... The antidote?? Keep on Keeping On!!!**

In fact Everything Jesus did upset someone. Today we will witness doubt, disbelief, criticism, and rejection... and not by strangers...but by those who knew Jesus personally...those he lived with, played with as a child, grew up with, worked with, did carpentry work for, worshipped alongside... the hardest kind of rejection...from those who knew him best...and they were fellow Jews, longing for the Messiah to come

Ministry always starts where you live...it is not limited to that but that is where it starts... **our spiritual conversion must be witnessed by those closest to us...** And sometimes the changes that take place in us can be frowned upon by others... especially family...spouses or children **...their reception is on them...our actions are on us...** **But don't be discouraged by criticism and rejection. Keep on Keeping on**

- After Jesus was baptized, went into spiritual warfare with the devil in the desert He spent a good length of time in Galilee
- Then headed to his hometown village Nazareth, the familiar place where he worshipped regularly since he was a child to announcing his call and ministry... ..he was alone having not yet chosen his apostles...

*NLT Luke 4:16* When he came to the village of Nazareth, his boyhood home, he went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures. <sup>17</sup> The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where this was written:

<sup>18</sup> “The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. *(Preach Grace... to the spiritually bankrupt, worldly poor, relationally poor, and were all bankrupt...Relief)* He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, *(Release for those held in bondage...Freedom)* that the blind will see, *(hope for those who cannot see any for the future, purpose and relevance for those in darkness)* that the oppressed will be set free, , *(To Restore the broken, demoralized, exploited)* <sup>19</sup> and that the time of the LORD’s favor has come.” *(Proclaim God Loves you)* <sup>20</sup> He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue looked at him intently. <sup>21</sup> Then he began to speak to them. “The Scripture you’ve just heard has been fulfilled this very day!”

- **It is interesting that Jesus put the scroll down without finishing the last sentence of that portion of Isaiah 61:2**
- **The silences of Jesus are sometimes as significant as His sayings...**  
*NIV ISA 61:2* to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn
- **Jesus said the spirit of the Lord is on me claiming that he is the Messiah....**
- **To proclaim God loves you....he is favoring you...offering you this...it is his will and desire to do it....**
- **You know you don’t really get Christianity until you get the Cause of Christ... He came to save...not judge During His lifetime Jesus never wavered from His cause...**
- **In the familiar crowd was Mary and his brothers and sisters, the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker... some farmer friends, fellow members of the Nazareth craftsmen union...neighbors, and families and friends...local rabbis, and town folk...**

- **They were amazed at his gracious words...**they could not wrap their heads around what he was saying about himself...though he sounded like seminary educated rabbinical student...a thinker with great old testament insight and a gifted speaker...but to say I am the favored one of God?
- **Then they said Hey wait a minute ..we know this guy...** There culture was very different than ours...
- The great American success story...humble beginnings to greatness in whatever field is looked upon with great respect and admiration...
- and people born with a silver spoons In their mouths...usually are regarded with a little disdain...i.e. Paris Hilton..
- it was opposite in Jesus' culture...the poor stayed poor, the wealthy wealthy...you were either a have or have not...and that was pretty much your lot in life..
- father a farmer...you were a farmer...carpenter...carpenter...Shepard, baker...etc.
- in the working world you generally fell into one of two categories...a worker using his hands blue collar...or one who had economic position affording them the leisure to study, engage in politics, the elite...those who used their minds...the educated....
- **Jesus fit into the work of** a carpenter's son...a craftsmen...he worked with his hands not his head...we know him...and his family

*NLT Luke 4: 22* Everyone spoke well of him and was amazed by the gracious words that came from his lips. "How can this be?" they asked. "Isn't this Joseph's son?"

*Mark 6: 3* Then they scoffed, "He's just a carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon. And his sisters live right here among us." They were deeply offended and refused to believe in him.

- Familiarity often makes the ears dull...familiarity breeds contempt... How dare he try to move up...we know him...the

carpenter...even his own family... **And he is going to teach us...He was Taught in our synagogue like every other boy**

- He ain't anything special...look at him thinking he's educated...mister big shot... How dare he try to move up...we know him...the carpenter...even his own family...
- They criticize and reject him...no matter what he says or even the miracles they have seen or heard about...
- **And he is going to teach us...He was Taught in our synagogue like every other boy... who does he think he is?**
- **He had lived among them for 30 years**
- He ain't anything special...look at him thinking he's educated...mister big shot...
- **Many of us have stifled our life by heeding some misguided critic who implied we were not good enough. But not Jesus...in fact he says to the next level...He refers to himself as a Prophet**

*LK 4: 23 Then he said, "You will undoubtedly quote me this proverb: 'Physician, heal yourself'—meaning, 'Do miracles here in your hometown like those you did in Capernaum.' 24 But I tell you the truth, no prophet is accepted in his own hometown.*

- Jesus refers to himself as a prophet... A prophet...one who speaks forth the oracles of God... and like all the prophets face criticism and rejection in some form by those who know them best...they would have none of what he offered...
- **And instead would insult him later on with the saying "Physician heal thy self"... the idea...hey don't try to fix us....look at your life...work on it first... if you think you're a doctor first heal or use your medicine on your self...**
- **Jesus responds...criticize all you want ...I will continue on my mission...I will not be distracted by rejection or criticism....and I will still treat you well...and I will go to those who will receive my message...**
- **Ever notice you and I will face sometimes that same type of criticism and rejection in our walk often by those closest to us...**

- That is why I think some people who grow up in Christian homes...struggle for a season...because they have heard it all before...familiarity breeds contempt...
- What are you going to tell me new? I have heard all the stories...I'm bored
- They had heard about his miracle...why not now? Why could he heal only a few?...Their lack of faith blocked God's blessing..he was not there for a show...
- Their unbelief prevented them from bringing their sick to him...how sad.. In happens in our time too...
- You will tell a friend bring your problems to Jesus he will help you...they reject it because of unbelief ...continuing to suffer.
- Then he keeps on keeping on...he will be not just any prophet but one like Elijah and Elisha...he is going to help Gentiles too!

<sup>25</sup> “Certainly there were many needy widows in Israel in Elijah’s time, when the heavens were closed for three and a half years, and a severe famine devastated the land. <sup>26</sup> Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them. He was sent instead to a foreigner—a widow of Zarephath in the land of Sidon. <sup>27</sup> And many in Israel had leprosy in the time of the prophet Elisha, but the only one healed was Naaman, a Syrian.

- When they heard this comparison of them to the unbelieving Israelites of Elijah and Elisha’s time...for he was offering inclusion to all people...Grace to anyone who would receive him and his message
- Absolute Grace...no one, no race, no condition, no home nor family was more deserving than any other...it was absolute grace...
- His grace was for the needy the desperate, the broken, those who cannot make it on their own...grace was for all of us!!!!
- His Grace is absolute and inflexible and he would not be distracted from dispensing it by rejection or criticism...
- They were done....he must die...

*LK 4:28 When they heard this, the people in the synagogue were furious. <sup>29</sup> Jumping up, they mobbed him and forced him to the edge of the hill on which the town was built. They intended to push him over the cliff, <sup>30</sup> but he passed right through the crowd and went on his way.*

- **1<sup>st</sup> of 20 occasions Jesus' life is threatened.. Ultimately He died at the hands of those he loved...But he had to go first to the lost sheep of Israel**

- **He shrugged it off...and kept on keeping on...**

**It is interesting that Jesus walked though them not against them...he still acted toward them in love...for if grace is anything it is patient...**

**But this is not the end of the Nazareth episode...**

**Jesus continued to love those who rejected him...and we have this testimony...of their belief later on**

**Paul about James, Jesus half brother...**

*NLT 1CO 15:3 I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. <sup>4</sup> He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. <sup>5</sup> He was seen by Peter<sup>[c]</sup> and then by the Twelve. <sup>6</sup> After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers<sup>[d]</sup> at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. <sup>7</sup> Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles.*

**Jude...**

*NLT JUDE 1:1 This letter is from **Jude**, a slave of Jesus Christ and a brother of James. I am writing to all who have been called by God the Father, who loves you and keeps you safe in the care of Jesus Christ....*

*NIV JUDE 1:22 Be merciful to those who doubt;*

**So the message is for us...who follow Jesus**

*NLT LK 6: 27 "But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you. <sup>28</sup> Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you.*

*NIV verse 35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will*

*be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. <sup>36</sup>  
Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*

- **You who love Jesus...know God ...Live like children of the most high...and Love your enemies...treat them well, do good toward them and show them mercy...in that way you demonstrate yourselves to be child, family member of the most high. Keep on being who you are!**
- **And Mercy will cause change...in those we are paired up with and those to whom we are to minister..**
- **Man may reject you...but Jesus never will... and he knows all about you...**

end

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- **Like Jesus contemporaries ...I probably would have balked at the extravagant and outrageous claims coming from an ordinary looking blue collar Jewish man...**
- **They were captivated by his words but they were not committing to him...**

*LK 4:31 Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath began to teach the people. <sup>32</sup> They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority.*

*LK 4:33 In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an evil spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, <sup>34</sup> "Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are--the Holy One of God!"*

*LK 4:35 "Be quiet!" Jesus said sternly. "Come out of him!" Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him.*

*LK 4:36 All the people were amazed and said to each other, "What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!" <sup>37</sup> And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area.*

- Throughout the Gospel of Luke a continual theme will be Jesus power and authority
- The interesting thing about the synagogue ...was that there was not a regular teacher...but the synagogue ruler as he was called, would choose someone who had skills at teaching and commentating on the scripture...
- so he obviously chose Jesus this Sabbath...
- all the scribes or teachers would repeat what others had written or said regarding the scripture, never expressing their own thoughts...dry and boring...
- Jesus spoke like he wrote it...
- **He was speaking for God not about God....with insight beyond what they were accustomed to hearing...**
- **When he spoke about the kingdom of God ...he described it...like a first person account...like he was there before...not about it like the teachers did.**
- We do not know what the content was...but the power of the Holy Spirit in his teaching was abundantly clear...
- Coupled with his first hand knowledge and witness blew them away...never had they heard teaching like this...

**Power over the Demons...obviously thought it was an opportune time...**



Whatever doubts man would have about the deity of Jesus...the demons never have...

- The demons would have obviously heard about the confrontation with Satan which took place in the desert...
- I would imagine it became like a stadium event to show up wherever Jesus went...
- To challenge...intimidate...distract...confuse ...interrupt...gain attention...whatever...
- But with a word...Jesus would dismiss them...
- Jesus has no desire to acknowledge the demon nor engage in conversation...but with power and authority he released the victim from the demonic control he was under...just like he said he would when he read Isa 62:1
- His interest was not the demon but his victim the man...and when the demon left throwing down the man in an attempt to hurt him...no harm came to him
- Demons were not to be the ones to testify about Jesus...they were to be destroyed.
- The people leave the meeting amazed...

**He said he would be like Elijah and Elisha...who both were vessels of grace to gentiles...because it was God's desire to display grace....**

*NLT 1KI 17:1 Now Elijah, who was from Tishbe in Gilead, told King Ahab, "As surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives—the God I serve—there will be no dew or rain during the next few years until I give the word!"<sup>2</sup> Then the LORD said to Elijah,<sup>3</sup> "Go to the east and hide by Kerith Brook, near where it enters the Jordan River.<sup>4</sup> Drink from the brook and eat what the ravens bring you, for I have commanded them to bring you food."*

- Ravens...scavengers birds...unclean according to Jewish law...grace always attracts the unclean and makes them vessels of blessing...
- When someone serves God he is subject to the laws of nature

*1KI 17:5 So Elijah did as the LORD told him and camped beside Kerith Brook, east of the Jordan.<sup>6</sup> The ravens brought him bread and meat each morning and evening, and he drank from the brook.<sup>7</sup> But after a while the*

brook dried up, for there was no rainfall anywhere in the land. <sup>8</sup> Then the LORD said to Elijah, <sup>9</sup> “Go and live in the village of Zarephath, near the city of Sidon. I have instructed a widow there to feed you.”

<sup>10</sup> So he went to Zarephath. As he arrived at the gates of the village, he saw a widow gathering sticks, and he asked her, “Would you please bring me a little water in a cup?” <sup>11</sup> As she was going to get it, he called to her, “Bring me a bite of bread, too.”

<sup>12</sup> But she said, “I swear by the LORD your God that I don’t have a single piece of bread in the house. And I have only a handful of flour left in the jar and a little cooking oil in the bottom of the jug. I was just gathering a few sticks to cook this last meal, and then my son and I will die.”

**Unbeknownst to her God would choose her as a recipient of his grace...and it would be demonstrated as inflexible...it was absolute...**

- **God often uses the difficult times to set the stage for deliverance that can only come through him..he can then deliver and receive glory...advertising his glory...**

*1KI 17: 13* But Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid! Go ahead and do just what you’ve said, but make a little bread for me first. Then use what’s left to prepare a meal for yourself and your son. <sup>14</sup> For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: There will always be flour and olive oil left in your containers until the time when the LORD sends rain and the crops grow again!”

<sup>15</sup> So she did as Elijah said, and she and Elijah and her family continued to eat for many days. <sup>16</sup> There was always enough flour and olive oil left in the containers, just as the LORD had promised through Elijah.

**In the providence of God ...bad times sometimes lead to worse times for even a greater display of his grace...**

*1KI 17: 17* Some time later the woman’s son became sick. He grew worse and worse, and finally he died. <sup>18</sup> Then she said to Elijah, “O man of God, what

*have you done to me? Have you come here to point out my sins and kill my son?"*

- **Behavior counts for many things...and it would appear she should have been thankful and grateful for what was an act of grace toward her...and at least believed in God...**
- **But you know when it comes to the inflexible grace of God...good behavior is not how to get it...**

*1KI 17: 19 But Elijah replied, "Give me your son." And he took the child's body from her arms, carried him up the stairs to the room where he was staying, and laid the body on his bed. 20 Then Elijah cried out to the LORD, "O LORD my God, why have you brought tragedy to this widow who has opened her home to me, causing her son to die?"*

*21 And he stretched himself out over the child three times and cried out to the LORD, "O LORD my God, please let this child's life return to him." 22 The LORD heard Elijah's prayer, and the life of the child returned, and he revived! 23 Then Elijah brought him down from the upper room and gave him to his mother. "Look!" he said. "Your son is alive!" 24 Then the woman told Elijah, "Now I know for sure that you are a man of God, and that the LORD truly speaks through you."*

*She received back her son by God's grace...he came to life...*

- *Jesus said to his hometown...you will know the truth of my mission when I die and resurrect...overcoming death...*
- *At the hands of those I love...*

On the eve before his crucifixion praying to His Father, knowing what the cause of saving the world would mean...His death...He prayed

**JN 12:23** *Jesus replied, "Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory.*

**JN 12:27** *"Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, 'Father, save me from this hour'? But this is the very reason I came! 28 Father, bring glory to*

*your name.” Then a voice spoke from heaven, saying, “I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do so again.”*

*“ This is the reason I came” ...or this mission is why I have come to this hour he prayed...show your glory Lord...*

- **Which means Father **advertise your love of the world** through me...through my sacrifice...**
- **The Father responds from heaven audibly...I have...by sending you**
- **And I will again How? By raising you...**
- **You have eternal life and so will they....**

**end**

**He was criticized by friends, family and religious leaders. **But he was not surprised by it, and neither should we...if you follow Jesus ...you will be criticized... The antidote?? Keep on Keeping On!!!****

- **Neither does loving everyone, exclude you from being criticized...**
- **Nor being perfect.... Heck The world crucified the only One with that quality.**

- Today we will **EXAMINE...**
- Twenty centuries later, with the advantage of hindsight, he is still criticized, slandered and rejected.
- But he was not surprised by it, and neither should we...if you follow Jesus ...you will be criticized... The antidote?? **Keep on Keeping On!!!**

Gallilee ....the official start of his ministry took place in his hometown ...the place where he grew up...he was alone having not yet chosen his apostles...he came to them announcing his call and ministry...

After Jesus was baptized and went into spiritual warfare with the devil in the desert...he started on his journey

- It is often the hardest place to walk out love...why? Criticism and rejection yours or theirs...
- The more you know someone...the greater their faults stand out, and their strengths diminish... dating you put your best foot forward...but it takes two to walk...
- The less you know someone the greater their strengths stand out and their faults are yet to be displayed...
- Home is often the place of greatest rejection...it ought to be the place of greatest encouragement... why?
  - Parental favoritism daddy's or mommy's favorite...strengths that are admired, strengths that are discounted...sports, art,
  - Parental comparisons...why don't you be more like...brother... sister...
  - Parental neglect...fend for yourself...felt rejection early in life
  - Sibling rivalry
  - Pecking...oldest to youngest...put in a mold... smart one, slow one, 40 years old and still the baby of the family
  - Family traditions...all kids will work in the family business...

- **Have experienced a traumatic event perceived as rejection, for example, in a divorce or separation that deeply scarred them.**
- **Have lacked appropriate role models in life who accepted them for who they really were.**
- **Have a physical condition that they believe makes them unattractive to others.**
- **Have been told all their life that they were ``second best'' or different.**
- **Lack certain personal accomplishments, which they feel set them apart**
- **Have never been exposed to healthy ways of dealing with conflict or disagreement.**

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Jesus said.....

***JN 15: 20** Remember the words I spoke to you: `No servant is greater than his master.' If they **persecuted** me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.*

- **We cannot avoid rejection... because we cannot control the way people feel about us. Some will like us automatically; others may reject us without reason. When we fail to accept ourselves, rejection has an open door to our emotions.**
- **Many times when a person rejects you, they want you to perform a certain way. By using criticism or the threat of rejection as manipulation , hoping to coerce your actions to line up with their desires.**
- **Unfortunately, we cannot shield ourselves from rejection. Rejection is only destructive when we internalize it and allow it to creep into our**

own belief system. Satan loves to fuel the fires of low self-esteem with intermittent forms of rejection—a boss you can never please, a parent who only praises straight A's on the report card, or a friend who ignores you at a party.

- **The only way to combat rejection is to gain a strong understanding of your position in Jesus Christ. The antidote to criticism and rejection is resting in Christ's love and acceptance of us flaws and all.**
- **Your worth and personhood are not determined by those around you. Anytime you base your self-worth on what other people say about you, you set yourself up for possible rejection.**
- **When we fail to understand the Lord's acceptance of us and accept ourselves, rejection has an open door to our emotions. The results are disastrous, a sense of unworthiness, a lack of self-acceptance, and an inability to build healthy boundaries in our relationships.**
- **If left unchecked, rejection will control our attitudes, actions, and even our relationship with God.**
- **No one is immune from criticism and Rejection...and if you endeavor to follow Jesus you will certainly endure criticism and rejection...**
- **Some will reject...some will accept ....but most importantly God accepts you..**

*LK 4:16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. <sup>17</sup> The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:*

*LK 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me,*

*because he has anointed me*

*to preach good news to the poor.*

*He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners*

*and recovery of sight for the blind,*

*to release the oppressed,*

*LK 4:19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

*LK 4:20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, <sup>21</sup> and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."*

*LK 4:22 All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked.*

- **In the familiar crowd was Mary and his brothers and sisters, the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker... some farmer friends, fellow members of the Nazareth craftsmen union...neighbors, and families and friends...local rabbis, and town folk...**
- **They were amazed at his gracious words...they did not get what he meant...but he spoke well**
  - **In other words he sounded like seminary educated rabbinical student...a thinker with great old testament insight and a gifted speaker...**
  - **But he was a carpenter's son...a craftsmen...he worked with his hands not his head...we know him...**
  - **When did he have time to learn this kind of stuff...hmmm interesting...**
- **And off Jesus went to other towns...**

**Then the Gospel of Mark gives us a snapshot of his work for the next year and a half...**

*MK 1: 39 So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.*

*MK 1: 45 ... the people still came to him from everywhere.*

- *His popularity grow to the point that after a particular healing of a leper...he can no longer move freely about because of the crowds...people were coming from everywhere*