

Why People Do Not Receive Jesus

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: John 1:11-12

When Jesus came and preached to the Jews, many “did not receive Him.” This is about receiving Jesus as the Son of God and obeying Him as Lord (John 3:16, 36). Many today are like “His own” who “did not receive Him” – why? This is not an exhaustive list, but we will notice some reasons recorded for us in the gospel of John.

They Love Darkness (John 3:19-21)

- Jesus spoke with Nicodemus – explained why some would come to the light and some would not; those whose deeds are evil love darkness; they do not want their deeds to be exposed by the light
- Jesus is described in John’s gospel as the Light of the world (John 1:4; 8:12) – light symbolizes revelation, knowledge, and direction (Psalm 119:160); light is also connected with judgment due to how people react to the light
- Our response to light depends on whether we desire to practice the truth or engage in sin – sin and light are incompatible with one another (1 John 1:5-7); but too many love sin more than the hope offered by Christ, despite the final outcome (Romans 6:23)

They Have Religious Preconceptions (John 5:16-18)

- Jesus had just healed a man on the Sabbath (John 5:8-9) – the Jews persecuted Him for it (John 5:16); they became even more upset when Jesus declared His equality with the Father (John 5:17-18)
- Their objections to Christ were based upon their religious preconceptions – there was nothing wrong with Jesus healing on the Sabbath (cf. Luke 6:6-10); Jesus was also equal with the Father (John 1:1; 10:30)
- People today allow their religious preconceptions to prevent them from receiving Jesus – they believe that all will be saved, yet salvation is only in Christ (Acts 4:12); they believe that one is saved by faith alone (James 2:24) and they reject baptism (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21)

They Find Him Too Demanding (John 6:60, 66)

- Jesus just fed 5,000 people (John 6:10) – they believed He was “the Prophet” (John 6:14; Deuteronomy 18:15, 18) and were willing to fight the Romans to make Jesus king (John 6:15); then they left Him
- Why did they leave Jesus so soon after their initial response? – His “difficult statement” (John 6:60, 66); Jesus said they needed to be completely devoted to following His word (John 6:48-51, 63); this comes with a great reward (John 6:68), but many are unwilling to meet the demands (John 6:66)

- Discipleship is demanding (Luke 9:23) – we must be willing to devote our entire lives to Him; we need to count the cost (Luke 14:25-33); some do this and reject Him

They Are Unwilling to Do His Will (John 7:17)

- On this occasion, people were gathering in Jerusalem for the Feast of Booths (cf. Deuteronomy 16:16) – Jesus had an exchange with “the Jews,” a term used throughout John’s gospel to refer to the leaders
- “The Jews” often looked for any excuse they could think of to ignore Jesus’ teaching – here, they cited His supposed lack of education (John 7:15); yet this was just an excuse; Jesus was certainly not ignorant (John 7:32, 45-46; Matthew 7:28-29); they just did not want to obey Him
- To accept Jesus’ teaching, there must be a willingness to do so – otherwise people will find some excuse to not listen (cf. Luke 14:16-20); we must remember that receiving Jesus is about doing His will (Hebrews 5:9; Matthew 7:21)

They Are Comfortable with the Status Quo (John 11:47-48)

- Jesus performed a very obvious and powerful miracle in raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11:43-44) – this proved that Jesus was “the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25)
- After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, many believed in Him (John 11:45) – this did not sit well with His enemies, the chief priests and Pharisees (John 11:47-48); they didn’t deny the miracle, but they were more concerned with the status quo and their position
- Godly people do not seek change for the sake of change (Proverbs 24:21) – but we do need to change when it means conforming our lives to God’s will; we must not be content with the status quo of sin and immaturity (Luke 13:3, 5; Matthew 5:48; Hebrews 6:1)

They Love the Approval of Men (John 12:42-43)

- The time for Jesus’ death was approaching (John 12:23, 27, 32-33) – many were believing in Him (John 12:11-13, 19); but the rulers were committed to having Him killed
- There were some of the rulers who believed, but would not confess – merely believing that Jesus is who He is will not save (James 2:24, 19); they would not confess because they feared the Pharisees and loved the approval of men
- If we love the approval of men, we cannot faithfully serve the Lord (Galatians 1:10) – the way of Christ is contrary to the way of the majority (Matthew 7:13-14); we could gain the approval of men by being of the world (John 15:18-19), but we need to be different (Romans 12:2); overcome the world through faith (1 John 5:3-5)

Conclusion

- Let us not be like those who refused to receive Jesus

- Let us give up the works of darkness to practice what is right
- Let us be willing to give up our preconceptions
- Let us take up our cross and follow Christ
- Let us be willing to do His will
- Let us be willing to change to conform to His word
- Let us seek to please Him above all
- Let us receive Jesus (faithfully obey Him) so that we can be the children of God