

The Gospel of John - #48 - 12/19/2021 - "Whosoever Will May Come!" John 12: 37-50

Introduction: IL- Show a gift to give to someone I care about, and the reactions of three different people: "No! I don't want it!" "Sure, but don't tell anybody, please!" "I'll take it- even though I don't deserve it: thank you so much!" Everyone can know where they stand with the Lord Jesus by recognizing three types of responses to the Savior's invitation to eternal life...

Rejecters- verses 37-41, 47, 48 "They still did not believe in Him." Verse 37 "They could not believe." Verse 39. Jesus said this about the gift He offers, in John 17: 3- "And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent!" Jesus also said this, in John 8: 43- "Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear My word!" Isaiah had an unusual directive from the Lord- Isaiah 6: 10- "Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy and blind their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts and turn and be healed!" They DID NOT believe, therefore (as a result) they COULD NOT believe. Human sin never derails God's ultimate purposes. Though they rejected Him He still went obediently to the Cross to die and rise again and offer eternal life to all who accept it by faith! Israel (the Jews) had a long history of rejecting the obvious and objective love of God for them. Moses told them, in Deuteronomy 29: 3, 4- "You have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his land- the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs and those great wonders. But to this day the Lord has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear." The Jews were "judicially blinded". The Apostle Paul referred in Acts 28 to that same rejection of Israel toward the Lord Jesus, and to prove that God's purposes were not thwarted Paul said, in verse 28- "Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles- they WILL listen!" **IL-** Dr. Harry Ironside, in his commentary on John said, "It is not that God designed some men to have eternal life and others to remain dead in sin- it comes down to a personal response to the offer of salvation from Jesus!" What the Jews of Jesus' day needed to consider is that it is a solemn thing to say "No!" to God! Those Jews made a deliberate choice, so God left them to face judgement for such blatant rejection! Throughout Israel's history, time and again, there was a national abandonment of the messages from God through the prophets and even the murder of some of those prophets. But, God used that rejection for HIS purposes- the rejection largely by the Jews led to Jesus on the Cross **and** led to the Gospel going out to the Gentile world and the Church being formed in the book of Acts. Avoid any rejection of God, His love or His work and Word. The Word we reject becomes the judge we cannot avoid! If we spurn His grace we will have to cringe before His wrath! If you are not a believer yet, be a "whoever" and trust Jesus as your Savior from sin and gladly receive His free and wonderful gift of eternal life! When you do, make sure that you are not like those in the second category...

Concealers- verses 42, 43 "They loved the glory that comes from man." Verse 43 There were many, according to our text, who believed in Him but they did not confess it so that they wouldn't be put out of the synagogue. We need to remember that the synagogue and especially the Temple in Jerusalem were places of significance for any faithful Jew to practice all aspects of their religion. To be kicked out, or excommunicated from their religious practice, was a heart-breaking thing for most any Jew. There was one we considered in John 9 who got past that expulsion from the Temple- the "formerly blind" man who was healed by Jesus. Right after he got the "boot" Jesus tracked him down and the man's words in John 9: 38 expressed his sincere heart- "Lord, I believe!" For the many who kept their status with Jesus a secret, our text makes it clear that they "loved" the glory that comes from their peers more than they loved God! That was the bottom line- greater concern for their social status with the Pharisees and scribes than concern for the glory that belongs to Jesus! To see His glory and reject it, like the first group, is one thing. To see His glory but be more concerned for one's own glory is another. I am not intending

to judge these professing believers but I am suggesting, Scripturally, that Jesus deserves better from those who claim to belong to Him. **IL-** William Barclay writes- "Either the secrecy kills the discipleship or the discipleship kills the secrecy." And while the text doesn't address the flipside of this response it is important to consider that, for many in our present world, being thought of as a Christian yet without having truly become one is even more serious, in my view. Remember John 12: 26- "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor Him!" Having God honor us is WAY better than some earthly honor that men dish out. To truly know Jesus as Savior is a great honor and doesn't deserve to be kept hidden or covered up. After healing the lame man at the pool of Bethesda in John 5, Jesus said to the crowd, in verse 44- "How can you believe when you seek glory from one another, and do not seek the glory that only comes from God?" Jesus has the full right to ask that question- of any or all of us! So, rather than be known as a rejector who awaits God's wrath, and rather than be recognized as a concealer who wants the pat of the back from others while hoping to stay a "secret" disciple, the best response is to be...

Whoever- verses 44-46, 49, 50 "Whoever believes in Me." Verses 44, 46 "Whoever sees Me." Verse 45 It is extremely helpful to know that this is the very last public discourse Jesus gives to people in general and, from this point in the Gospel of John, Jesus gathers with His true followers and meets with them in an upper room alone and away from the crowds. Our text makes it abundantly clear that these final words of Jesus to the crowds come from His heart. He "cried out" indicating a deeply passionate plea to the many "whoever" around Him and to whoever today- "believe" and "see". **IL-** Warren Wiersbe- "Believe, in one of its forms or another, is used 8 times in this brief text! The truth is that Jesus is who He says He is and some see with the eyes of faith that He is on course to go to the Cross and die to pay the penalty of sin for every 'whoever' who believes! He longs to open the eyes of any who recognize that they have been blind and need Jesus- the Light of the world- to shine on them and transform their lives forever, no longer in darkness! In Matthew 10: 32- "Everyone who acknowledges Me before men, I will also acknowledge before My Father who is in Heaven." Think on **that** a moment! Jesus will recognize and reward the "whoever" who excitedly proclaims "Jesus is now MY Lord!" And Jesus will call us by name- no longer a "whoever" but now a friend of Jesus, a child of God by faith, and He knows me by name! John 10: 3- "The sheep hear His voice and He calls His own sheep by name!" These last words to the crowds are words of tender appeal. God the Father and Jesus, the Son of God, as well as the Spirit of God need to be known as compassionate and kind and gracious. Yes, rejectors will someday face the wrath of God- His righteous judgement on man's sin- in particular that greatest of all sins- outright rejection of the Triune God. But how much better to be on the receiving end of His grace- unearned favor and honor, especially the privilege of living now openly for Him and someday WITH Him in Heaven! The Apostle Paul writes, in 2 Timothy 4: 1- "I charge you (Timothy) in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead and by his appearing and His kingdom: preach the Word!" His words are life eternal- the best teaching we can ever consider and put into practice once we go from "whoever" to that named child of God who wants others to know we are His- that we love Him and are thrilled to have the privilege to serve Him any way HE chooses!

Conclusion: IL- Second verse of "Whosoever Meaneth Me!" by J. Edwin McConnell: "All my hopes have been raised, oh His name be praised! His glory has filled my soul! I've been lifted up and from sin set free! His blood has made me whole!" **Closing Song:** "Just As I Am"