

LESSON 11

Facing Rejection

Luke 10:1-12

When we share the gospel, rejection is inevitable. In Luke 10, Jesus sends out 72 disciples with a mission to preach and heal. But He also prepares them for rejection, telling them to expect it, respond calmly, and remember who the real message is about. This lesson helps us see rejection not as failure but as part of our calling. We'll learn to let go of fear, keep speaking truth, and rest in the knowledge that we are ambassadors for the King, even when people won't listen.

Class Objective: To help Christians understand that rejection is a regular part of sharing Jesus and to equip them with the proper perspective and response when it happens. This lesson will emphasize that our task is faithfulness, not popularity, and that rejection is often directed at Christ, not us personally.

Introduction

If you've ever tried to talk about Jesus and were shut down, ignored, or mocked, you're not alone. Rejection is tough. It hurts. Whether it comes from a stranger, a co-worker, or someone in your family, it can leave you feeling discouraged or even embarrassed. But rejection doesn't mean you failed.

In Luke 10, Jesus sends out 72 of His followers with a mission: to proclaim the kingdom of God and bring peace to others. But He doesn't sugarcoat it. He tells them some will listen—and some won't. He even gives them instructions on what to do when they're rejected: shake the dust off and move on. Why? Because the message still matters, and the mission must continue.

This is a strong reminder for us. We're not called to be popular or to win every argument. We're called to be faithful. When people reject the message, they're ultimately rejecting the One who sent us. That truth gives us courage to keep moving forward. Today's lesson is about learning how to handle rejection—not with fear or anger, but with grace, boldness, and trust in the One who called us.

Jesus Sends Us with Purpose and Realism (v. 1-4)

Before Jesus speaks about rejection, He clarifies His mission. He appoints seventy-two others and sends them out two by two "into every town and place where he himself was about to go." They serve as His advance team—preparing the way, delivering His message, and demonstrating His compassion.

But right away, Jesus sets the tone with honesty:

"The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few... I'm sending you out like lambs among wolves" (v. 2-3).

That's not a flattering picture. It's not meant to scare us, but to sober us. Sharing the gospel isn't easy. It's not always safe or welcomed. Jesus knows that, and He wants His followers to know it too. He doesn't promise applause, He promises opposition. He tells them to go anyway.

This first point matters because it reminds us that:

- We are sent by Jesus with a mission.
- The field is ripe, but there's resistance.
- Fear should not stop us ... faithfulness should move us.

Rejection doesn't mean we're doing something wrong. It often means we're doing something right.

Some Will Welcome the Message, and Some Will Not (v. 5-11)

Jesus gives instructions for both outcomes: welcome and rejection. If a home receives you, bring peace, eat what's given, and share the message:

"The kingdom of God has come near to you" (v. 9).

But if a town doesn't welcome you? Don't argue. Don't fight. Jesus says:

"Go out into its streets and say, 'We are wiping off even the dust of your town that clings to our feet as a witness against you...'" (v. 11).

That's strong language, but it's important. It reminds us that the responsibility isn't on the messenger, it's on the hearer. Our job is to speak truth. Their job is to respond. If they reject it, that's between them and God.

Jesus shows us both how to be bold and how to stay calm. We don't have to chase people down or win every debate. We're not trying to force a response. We're here to speak the truth in love and leave the results to God.

This passage frees us from the burden of results. It teaches:

- We share with hope, but not with pressure.
- Rejection is not failure; it's part of the process.
- Our peace comes from obedience, not approval.

Rejection Isn't About You – It's About Jesus (v. 16)

Later in the chapter, Jesus sums it up clearly:

"Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me" (Luke 10:16).

This changes everything. When someone pushes back, tunes you out, or even becomes hostile... it's not really about you. They're rejecting the One who sent you. That truth should both comfort us and humble us.

- **Comfort:** You're not alone. Jesus sees it. He takes it personally.
- **Humility:** You're just the messenger. The power and message are His.

This doesn't mean we should be careless or insensitive. But it does mean we don't have to take rejection as a personal wound. Our goal is to represent Jesus well, speak the truth, and keep our hearts clean, no bitterness, no pride.

Here's the point: If they ignore you, they're ignoring Him. If they listen to you, they're responding to Him. That's why we don't give up. And that's why we keep moving forward, because the message isn't ours. It belongs to the King.

There is a Warning for Those Who Reject the Kingdom (v. 12, 13-15)

Jesus doesn't brush off rejection as harmless. He says something sobering:

"I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town" (v. 12).

And later in vv. 13-15, He speaks judgment over cities like Chorazin and Bethsaida—places that had seen His power but still refused to repent.

This is not about vengeance, it's about truth. Rejection of the gospel has eternal consequences. When people reject the message, they are rejecting the only hope that can save them. That's not something to take lightly.

This point emphasizes the urgency of our mission. It reminds us:

- The gospel matters because eternity is absolute.
- Rejection isn't neutral... It's a choice with consequences.
- Sharing Jesus isn't just kind... It's necessary.

When someone walks away, we can mourn, but we must also remember: God sees, knows, and will judge rightly. Our role isn't to change hearts but to continue speaking truth with love, allowing people a chance to respond before it's too late.

Practical Teaching and Application

Sharing Jesus means facing rejection. It's not just possible, it's expected. But Jesus doesn't want us to be caught off guard or weighed down by it. He gives us a mindset and a method to handle it.

Here's how to live this out:

1. Expect Rejection, Don't Fear It

Don't be surprised when people ignore you, mock your faith, or tune you out. Jesus told us it would happen. Instead of taking it personally, take it to God. Remember, you're in good company; Jesus was rejected, too.

Think of one conversation this week where you might face resistance. Ask God to give you courage, not comfort.

2. Stay Faithful, Not Defensive

You don't have to win every argument. You don't have to force people to believe. You must be honest, kind, and faithful. Speak truth and let your actions back it up.

When someone disagrees, focus on listening well and speaking with humility. Let your calmness reflect your trust in God.

3. Keep the Message Clear and Centered on Jesus

People might reject church, religion, or your opinions, but ensure they're truly hearing the gospel: the kingdom of God has come near, and Jesus is the King. Don't get sidetracked by personal debates.

Practice explaining the gospel in one sentence. Be prepared to share it simply and clearly when the opportunity arises.

4. Shake the Dust Without Bitterness

Jesus said to move on, not in anger, but in peace. We don't hold grudges when someone rejects the message. We pray for them and trust God with their heart.

Who have you stopped praying for because they said "no"? Start again. Keep loving. Keep hoping.

5. Let Rejection Fuel Compassion

Rejection doesn't toughen us; it makes us gentle. We speak with urgency not out of anger but because we care. Behind every closed door is a soul God continues to love.

Ask God to help you see people not as obstacles but as lost sheep. Let compassion lead your conversations.

Conclusion

Rejection is part of the job. Jesus understood this. He prepared His followers for it and experienced it Himself. If we are to follow Him, we must expect the same.

But rejection isn't the end; it's just part of the process. Our job isn't to control the outcome. It's to share the message, live with integrity, and trust God to handle the rest. When people say no, we don't give up.

We don't lash out. We don't walk away defeated. We shake the dust off, stay faithful, and keep moving forward.

You are not alone. The King who sent you sees you. And He's still at work... even when people say no.

So, take heart. Stay bold. Speak truth with love. And remember: the kingdom of God has come near. That message is worth sharing—no matter who listens.

For Discussion

1. Why do you think Jesus warned His disciples ahead of time about rejection?
What does that tell us about His expectations for our mission?
2. How does knowing that rejection is aimed at Jesus—not us—change the way we respond to it?
3. What are some common ways people reject the gospel today?
Are those rejections always obvious?
4. How can we avoid becoming bitter, discouraged, or defensive when someone turns us away?
5. Jesus told His disciples to “shake the dust off” and move on.
What does that look like in our relationships today?
6. What does Jesus' warning about judgment in verses 12–15 tell us about the seriousness of rejecting the gospel?
How should that shape our urgency?

7. Have you ever had someone reject your efforts to talk about Jesus?

What did you learn from the experience—and how did it affect your desire to keep sharing?