



# 52 THE PURSUIT OF JESUS

Can Jesus Accept Me?  
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The Crossing Church  
Las Vegas, Nevada

## OPENING

We are spending this entire year walking through the life of Jesus. Our focus right now is on His power as we continue in Mark Moore's Quest 52 study. In Chapter 26 we mark the end of the first half of year 2022, and we are concluding the second quarter of our year's study, with the question, "Can Jesus Accept Me?"

## SCRIPTURE<sup>1</sup>

**Matthew 12:22-24** Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons."

**Matthew 12:27-28** And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

**Matthew 12:31-32** And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

## OBSERVATION

So, this week, Jesus had an interaction with the religious leaders in Jerusalem. The crowd brought Him a demon-possessed man who was also blind and mute. When Jesus healed the man of all three challenges, the people thought He must be the long-awaited Son of David or their predicted Savior, but the Pharisees decided He must be the prince of demons! They were looking for reasons not to accept Jesus and assumed the worst about His motives. Well, if He were the prince of demons, what was He doing sending them into pigs and over a cliff into the sea to die, or healing people who were possessed by them? He certainly wouldn't seem to be on their side, would He? Of course not, but Jesus' enemies were so threatened by His influence over the crowds of people that followed Him everywhere and changed their lives magnificently, that they couldn't see spiritually who He really was. The Pharisees, Sanhedrin and Priests had the same opportunity we all have to open our eyes and ears to the Gospel of Christ and be saved, but they were too proud to give up their own power to be lead by His.

**QUESTION:** Jesus was accepting of this man who was demon-possessed, blind and mute and had nothing to offer. Why do you sometimes doubt that He would be accepting of you?

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<sup>1</sup> Scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated.

## APPLICATION

God created us with a plan in mind – He designed us to be in a right relationship with Him and each other, but our sin separated us. We had total acceptance and blew it all - we missed the mark and went against God's best for us. But, here's what it says in **Romans 3:23**: "For **all** have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." It's this 'falling short' that causes us to experience a lack of acceptance with each other and with God. The Fall of Adam and Eve caused a rift between God and us that only a perfect sacrifice could overcome.

**QUESTION: In what relationships have you fallen short and lost a closeness with people?**

What was the result? We may feel anxious around others, we may feel judged or be quick to judge, we may feel like God cannot or does not love us. We may think not following God helps us to be accepted, but there's actually a pretty long list of things we must believe if we want to be accepted by the world - whatever is popular socially in the moment, whatever is trending, whatever is changing.

**QUESTION: What are you chasing after today that you think will make you more acceptable to God and other people?**

The Pharisees always had reasons not to accept Jesus as Son of God, the Savior and the healer. Just like them, we also find reasons not to accept Jesus. **1) We are such deep thinkers** and always have a scientific or philosophical question we're wrestling with that keeps us from accepting Him; **2) We've had hard things happen to us** and they keep us from understanding why Jesus wasn't there to help us; **3) We are super busy** and we want to go deeper in our faith, but there's always another thing that keeps us from taking the time. These are just some of the reasons we use to not accept Jesus as leader or we only let Him into parts of our lives. God has a great plan for us. It's a plan to be accepted, loved, and used for great things.

We also find excuses for why Jesus will not accept us: **1) Our sins are so bad**, we would burn up if we walked into a church; **2) We have too difficult a time forgiving ourselves**, we can't imagine that Jesus would; **3) We think God can't love us** until we do something; **4) We are very judgmental** toward others and ourselves. Do we want more time, more science, better outcomes? What if Jesus drives out demons by the Spirit of God Almighty? What if He truly is the Son of God? How would our lives change if we fully accepted that **Truth**?

**QUESTION: What excuses are you using?**

**QUESTION: What would it take for you to let Him in completely and serve Him as Paul did?**

**QUESTION: How would your life change?**

C. S. Lewis, Christian author who wrote the Chronicles of Narnia, said upon his conversion "I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed: Perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England." Maybe it's time for all of us to accept Jesus and place our hope and faith in Him. We can still have doubts when difficult things happen to us. It doesn't mean our lives suddenly become perfect. If they did everyone would accept Him for all the wrong reasons! But we can have faith that God is in control and is working for us. Jesus goes on to say that all of our sins can be forgiven except one: **Blaspheming the Holy Spirit**. He is speaking of an active, consistent rejection of Jesus in the face of seeing His work and miracles – a permanent rejection.

**QUESTION: When have you thought that you have committed the unforgivable sin? If you are seeking God now, you probably haven't. This is the time to humble yourself before God and begin a new life in Him.**

So, let's be encouraged by the Word of God: **Ephesians 2:4-5** "But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved." We are accepted by Jesus not because of who we are but because of who God is and His great love for us.

**QUESTION: Mark E. Moore asks in his book, Quest 52, "How does God make things happen in your life if you have free will?"**

**QUESTION: What did you read about Jesus' power in Section #2 of our study this Spring that especially caught your attention and increased your faith in Him?**

#### **PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, thank you for Jesus' sacrifice that covers us and makes us acceptable in Your sight. We are so unworthy, yet You love us and we are grateful. In Jesus' name. Amen.

#### **QUESTIONS**

**QUESTION: Jesus was accepting of this man who was demon-possessed, blind and mute and had nothing to offer. Why do you sometimes doubt that He would be accepting of you?**

**QUESTION: In what relationships have you fallen short and lost a closeness with people?**

**QUESTION: What are you chasing after today that you think will make you more acceptable to God and other people?**

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