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MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Sermon

Rejection vs Acceptance



Atonement
By Derek Prince

We're going to begin again this session by making an affirmation, our new affirmation. I'm going to ask Ruth to come up and help me. This is the one about passing out, okay? So, we'll do it once as a pattern and then we expect you all to be able to do it. Just bear in mind this is not a ritual, it's not a formality. It can change the course of your life. Okay? This can be a turning point when you can learn to say this and reaffirm it regardless of circumstances, regardless of what's happening in your life. This is true because it's the word of God. Okay?

> "Through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross we have passed out from under the curse and entered into the blessing of Abraham, whom God blessed in all things."

How many of you want that? Well, God won't force it on you. Do you think you can say it with us? All right. Slowly now, and if you make a few mistakes, we'll forgive you. We might make one ourselves, too.

> "Through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross we have passed out from under the curse and entered into the blessing of Abraham, whom God blessed in all things."

What do you say next? "Thank you, Lord."

Some of you are learning to say thank you but I must say some of you are rather slow learners.

Anyhow, we're going on now with the theme of healing for emotional wounds. I want to make it clear to you I'm only dealing with two. The one we dealt with in the previous session was shame, the one we're going to deal with in this session is rejection. I don't mean to imply that there are no other emotional wounds but I believe healing for all of them is provided through the cross. These are just two examples of what I have personally found to be the commonest emotional wounds in contemporary humanity.

We're going to deal now with rejection. What's the opposite of rejection? Acceptance. So, Jesus endured our rejection that we might have His acceptance. Let's do that once.

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> "Jesus endured our rejection that we might have His acceptance."

Let me say a little bit about rejection. This is something I've learned in other people's lives because basically—I say this not with pride but with embarrassment. Rejection is not a problem that I've struggled with. In fact, my problem was rather the opposite. I've always had the attitude if you don't like me, that's your problem. I'm not saying that's a good attitude but that happens to be the way I was. I hope it's not the way I am. So, I've learned this objectively and I've learned it with surprise. I mean, I couldn't believe what people went through through rejection. I'd like to say really I do not preach theories. I aim to preach the word of God and I preach it in the light of what I've experienced and observed. I believe it works.

Rejection could be described as the sense of being unwanted and unloved. I've described it this way. Sometimes it's like you're always on the outside looking in. Other people get in, somehow you never get in. It says about our relationship with the Lord in the first epistle of John, "We love Him because He first loved us." I think this is profoundly true. As human beings we are incapable of loving unless love has been awakened in us by someone else's love. We cannot love God until God's love awakens love in us. But I believe this is also true of human beings. A person who has never been loved doesn't know how to love. And that's true, unfortunately, of multitudes of people who suffer from rejection. They want to love but they're not able to love because it takes something to awaken love in a person.

Now, let me just hold up this little book which I have here in front of me, Rejection: Cause and Cure. This is another transcript of my radio teaching. I think it's one week's. It's pretty condensed but if you are seeking further information, it will help you. Again, we offered this transcript free to radio listeners who wrote in and I think it was the second highest response. After the one "From Curse to Blessing," I think this was the highest response.

My personal opinion is this is number one emotional wound in our contemporary culture today, is rejection. There are a number of reasons for that. One main reason is the breakdown of family relationships. As I understand it, and as I have to say, I have to piece this thing together, as I understand it, every baby is born into the world with one supreme need, which is love, to be loved. And not just be loved in the abstract but to be actively loved. A baby needs to feel you want to cuddle him or her. You take pleasure in having him or her in your arms. Love has to be actively expressed to reach a baby. Just abstract love doesn't meet the need.

Furthermore, it's my opinion, and I find that recently psychologists have been coming to this conclusion, that the most important love, if you could put it that way, is the love of the father. I find that security for an infant is in a father's arms. You sometimes see a little baby being held by the father and it looks at you as if to say, "Anything can happen all around me but I'm all right. I'm safe here in these arms that are strong, that hold me and that love me." I'm not by any means belittling a mother's love which is unique.

The problem in our contemporary society, and it's really becoming a worldwide problem, it's not just in the West. It's almost as much in the Third World as—I wouldn't really know about Muslim nations—is that family relationships have broken down and babies are not experiencing this loving acceptance. As a matter of fact, it sometimes go back before birth. I've dealt in the ministry of deliverance with people who needed to be delivered from a spirit of rejection which came on them in their mother's womb. Let's suppose that a mother finds herself pregnant and she didn't intend to have a baby and it's not in her plan. She resents it. She doesn't have to say anything but that little person—and bear in mind it is a person—inside knows that it's not welcome. And it's born rejected.

I'm not so actively involved in the ministry of deliverance all the time now but when I was I noticed that people in a certain age group in America tended very frequently to need deliverance from rejection. So I thought to myself I'll find out when they were born. And the answer was l929, l930 and following. Now, being British I didn't know what happened in l929 but I've discovered for Americans, you just say l929 and they say the Great Depression, that's right. So my mind pieced it together. Here's a mother who is already struggling to feed maybe four kids and she discovers she's pregnant again. She doesn't have the time, she doesn't have the money and so almost unconsciously she says, "I wish I wasn't pregnant. I wish this little baby wasn't coming." And that baby is born with a spirit of rejection. That's just one example.

Does somebody have a NIV available? Thank you. That's right, it will be blessed forever now! Isaiah 54, this is so vivid in this. Here's another main cause of rejection which is the breakup of marriage. And, of course, you know, 50% of marriages today are breaking up. And the wounds are usually felt by both parties. I think some women imagine they're the only ones that suffer but that's not true. A man can feel rejection just as deeply as a woman. Anyhow,

Isaiah 54:6. This is, of course, addressed to Zion but it's a pattern.

> "The Lord will call you back as if you were a wife deserted and distressed in spirit, a wife who married young only to be rejected, says your God."

Thank you, I appreciate that. There is the word rejection which doesn't occur in the other translations, that's why I chose it. Who can number the people in our culture today in this nation, and it's repeated in other nations maybe not to the same extent, who feel rejected because a marriage broke up. Take a woman who's really given everything to her husband, determined to make a successful marriage. And then he goes off with another woman. I mean, I don't think I can put myself in the place of that person. But God can.

I have to be careful, I forget where this may end up. I'm theoretically working on a script for a movie which may or may not ever come off. Theoretically based on the story of my first wife's life. But it's changing a lot, who knows where it will end. There's a precious lady that's working with us on that movie but she had a bad father, she had two marriages that broke up, each of her husbands deserted her, left her with children. There is no way for me to understand what she's gone through. I mean, I can just intellectualize it but I can't really empathize with it. She's a precious person. In the midst of it all, or out of it all, she has found the Lord.

So, let's just say it briefly. There are other causes of rejection. I mean, you could be just rejected by your friend, rejected at school. You know, today everybody has to be slim. How many of you know that, don't put your hand up. I think that's ridiculous myself but that's not my problem. But a girl is a little plumper and rounder and thicker than her schoolmates; she feels rejected. It doesn't take much. A boy is a little shorter of a little thinner or a little less good at games. He feels rejected.

So anyhow, I think you've identified the problem. Now let's look at the solution, praise God! Again, the solution is provided by Jesus on the cross. Jesus endured total rejection. Let's look in Isaiah 53:3 for a moment. We know now that this is a portrait in advance, 700 years before it happened, of what would take place when Jesus was on the cross.

> "He is despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief [or a man of pains and acquainted with sickness]; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we did not esteem him."

He was rejected by men. John says He came to His own people and His own did not receive Him. Even His own brothers, His mother's children, rejected Him.

Let's look again at Psalm 69. You remember we looked at that in our previous session, it's a Messianic psalm. Psalm 69:8:

> "I have become a stranger to my brothers, and an alien to my mother's children."

I never noticed that till this moment that it says my mother's children, it doesn't say my father's children. I mean, that's true of many Messianic prophecies, it speaks about the mother of the Messiah but it does not speak about the father. But I never noticed this particular passage before.

That's what happened to Jesus. His own family rejected Him, His own people rejected Him. But that was not the final. The ultimate rejection of Jesus was by His Father. And we need to turn again to Matthew 27:45–51. This is a description of the closing moments of Jesus on the cross.

> "Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour [that was from 12 noon till 3 p.m.] there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' that is, My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? Some of those who stood there, when they heard that said, 'This man is calling for Elijah.'"

They didn't understand the language but they thought Eli was the name for Elijah.

> "Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink."

That's the ultimate, being given sour wine to drink.

> "The rest said, 'Let him alone, let us see if Elijah will come to save him.' Jesus, when he

> had cried out again with a loud voice, yielded up his spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom."

That was the ultimate rejection. To be rejected by men was painful but to be rejected by His Father was the ultimate. For the first time in the history of the universe the Son of God prayed and there came no answer from the Father. Why? Because He had been made sin with our sinfulness and God had to deal with Him as with sin. Reject Him, refuse to accept Him. And so He died not of crucifixion but of a broken heart.

Let's go back to Psalm 69 for a moment. I hope, incidentally, that this will introduce some of you to the reality of Messianic prophecy in the Old Testament. Remember what I said previously? The New Testament tells us nothing of what went on inside Jesus but the Old Testament does. Psalm 69:20–21, that we may know this is also a prophecy of Jesus.

> "Reproach has broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They also gave me gall for my food; and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

We know that that was fulfilled on the cross. But notice what Jesus died of. A broken heart. "Reproach has broken my heart." You see, normally crucifixion would not have caused so quick a death. And as a matter of fact, this is borne out in the New Testament if you turn for a moment to Mark 15:43:

> "Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went into Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate marveled that he was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if he had been dead for some time. And when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph."

Normally speaking, Jesus shouldn't have been dead by that time. The two thieves had to be put to death by the soldiers. Jesus did not die of crucifixion, although that would have killed Him ultimately. He died of a broken heart, it's very important to see that. What broke His heart? Rejection. Rejection by whom? By His Father. The ultimate rejection.

All that was that we might have acceptance. Going back to Matthew 27 for just a moment, reading verses 50–51:

> "Jesus, when he cried out again with a loud voice, yielded up his spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom."

What does that signify? That we can have acceptance. The veil that was between God and us was torn in two. And it was from top to bottom so that nobody should ever imagine man did it. It was done by God. That torn veil is an invitation to every person who believes in Jesus, "Come in, you're welcome. My Son has endured your rejection that I may offer you my acceptance." That's the key.

Let's look in Ephesians 1:3 and following.

> "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ; just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world..."

Notice the ultimate is not our choice, it's God's choice. Don't imagine you're saved because you chose. You're saved because God chose. That makes it altogether different. You might change your mind but God doesn't. See?

> "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... [verse 4] Just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love..."

That's a tremendous thought, isn't it? If it wasn't based on God's choice, I would never have faith that it could be that we could be holy and without blame before Him in love. But it's God's choice, not ours.

See, there's a great deal of wrong emphasis in contemporary presentation of the gospel where everything depends on what we do. You have to choose, you have to do this and do that. It's true we have to choose but we

would never be able to choose if God hadn't chosen us in the first place. And you will find you're much more secure as a Christian when you're not basing all your relationship with God on what you do but on what God has done. See? It makes a lot of difference. God is more dependable than you and I.

Going on in Ephesians 1:5:

> "...having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will..."

Who thought all this up? You didn't. I didn't. God did. Going on, verse 6:

> "...to the praise of the glory of his grace, by which he has made us accepted in the beloved."

What's the opposite of rejection? Accepted. Modern translations use different words but that word means really "highly favored." The same word is used when the angel Gabriel spoke to the Virgin Mary and said, "Hail, thou that are highly favored." So it's better than being accepted. It's highly favored through Jesus Christ. Understand, God has no second class children. If you're a child of God you're not in the second rank. There's no child of God in the second rank. All God's children are welcome.

Now let me relate to you a little incident that made this so vivid to me. A good many years ago I was speaking in a big camp meeting and I was due to preach and I was a little in danger of being late. So, I was hurrying across the campground to get to where I was due to speak. I ran into a lady, or she ran into me, who was going in the opposite direction. We kind of picked ourselves up and she said, "Oh, Mr. Prince, I was praying that if God wanted me to speak to you, we'd meet!" So I said, "We've met but I can only give you two minutes, I'm going to be late for my preaching." So she began to tell me all her woes and all her problems in one minute. And at the end of that time I stopped her. I said, "Listen, I can't give you any more time. Say this prayer with me." I didn't tell her what I was going to pray, I didn't diagnose her condition; I just said pray this prayer with me. So I led her in a prayer that went something like this:

> "Oh God, I thank you that you really love me, that I really am your child, that you really are my Father, that I belong to the best family in the universe. I'm not unwanted, I'm not rejected. I'm accepted. You love me and I love you. Thank you, God."

And then I said, "Good bye, I have to go." I didn't talk any more to her. I got to my preaching assignment and really forgot about her.

I would think about a month later I got a letter from her. She described the incident and where we met so she could be sure I knew who she was. And then she said something like this, I can't give you the exact words, but she said, "Praying that prayer with you has completely changed my life." She said, "I am a different person." What happened? She passed from rejection to acceptance. Not by anything she did, not by her trying harder or improving herself or praying more. But just accepting what Jesus had done for her on the cross.

The worst thing you can do for a person who is struggling with rejection is to tell them to do more. You know why? Because they'll never believe they've done enough, no matter how much more they do.

This is the wonderful thing: God loved us. God loved you individually. He loved me, marvelous though it may seem. And in Christ we are His children, we are His family, we belong to the best family in the universe. We have nothing to be ashamed of, we're not second class, we're not unwanted. We are accepted. Can you say amen? Thank you, God.

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Transcript: MV-4279-101-ENG
Last Updated: 16 Sept 2026
Website: Derekprince.com/en/resources



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