

A Perplexing Reality

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And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. As you enter the house, greet it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town (Matt. 10:11-14).

After training the apostles for a time, Jesus sent them throughout Israel to proclaim the kingdom of Heaven was at hand (Matt. 10:1-7). While this was good news, Jesus acknowledged a hard fact: not everyone would obey the Gospel. The apostles would not be joyfully embraced by everyone they encountered. Some would violently react to their message.

Since this time, people continue to reject the good news of Jesus. But why? The Gospel is about renewal and salvation. Why would anyone reject such a good and promising message? This is a perplexing reality that Jesus both warned and experienced Himself.

Rejecting the Gospel is perplexing due to its evidence. When Jesus sent the apostles to preach about the kingdom arriving, He gave them miraculous abilities to verify their message (Matt. 10:8). Today, the kingdom of Heaven is established and Jesus is reigning as king. This truth can be verified by Jesus's resurrection from the dead. Jesus is unquestionably our Lord and God (John 20:28). Yet, many refuse to obey King Jesus. Why?

Reasons Why Some Reject Jesus

1. Some are uninformed regarding Jesus. There was a time in our country when most people regularly read the Bible and attended a weekly religious service. The Bible was the book used to teach children to read. Businesses would be closed on Sundays. Schools never had activities on Wednesday nights because everyone attended a mid-week Bible study. These days have been long gone for a long time.

Today, few people regularly read the Bible. Even fewer people regularly attend a weekly religious service. The changing religious landscape of our country is concerning. Over a third of Millennials identify themselves as "religious unaffiliated." They are raising their children without the knowledge of God.

This point is not made to cause readers to shake their heads and wring their hands. Most religious unaffiliated people are so not due to hostility, but due to ambivalence. They are genuinely uninformed regarding the Gospel. They have not read the Bible. They have not attended a religious service. They need someone to take an interest in them and teach them the Gospel. Exposure to the love of God expressed in the cross of Jesus can make a difference with such people.

2. Some think this life is all there is. While some people are uninformed, others have made up their minds about the Gospel. The Gospel is about salvation from the wrath of God and living in hope of eternal life (Eph. 2:1-3; Titus 1:1-3). The Gospel is about preparing us for a day in which Jesus will judge the world (Acts 17:30-31).

Sadly, there are many people today who think this life is all there is. In our increasingly secular society, people think life is about working hard and enjoying time with friends and family. For others, life is one big party. Enjoy it while it lasts. There is nothing beyond the grave.

This worldview would be acceptable if Jesus had not risen from the dead. Paul made this very point to the Corinthians: "...If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (1 Cor. 15:32). Of course, the problem with this philosophy is that Jesus was raised from the dead. Therefore, life is about bringing glory to God through obedience to the resurrected Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 6:12-20).

3. Some think they will obey later in life. Some people have an interest in spirituality. They believe in God. They believe the Bible came from God. They believe Jesus is the Son of God. They believe there is an existence beyond our temporal world. Yet, their belief does not lead to obedience. They think they will obey the Gospel later in life. For now, they are too busy with their career, family, and or other life-goals.

People of this persuasion have been deceived by the promise of tomorrow. Of course, there is no promise of tomorrow. We do not know the future (Jas. 4:13-14). All we have is today and the urgent need to obey the Gospel. Today is the day of salvation, not tomorrow (2 Cor. 6:1-2).

4. Some think they are too sinful to be saved. Some people are trapped by the guilt of their past sins. They do not consider themselves worthy of salvation. This trap offers no hope. We need to admit our sin. We need to have a sense of guilt and shame. These emotions are intended to lead us to the kingdom.

Jesus taught, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5:3-4). He came to save sinners (Luke 19:10). Paul once described himself as being the chief sinner. He was an unbeliever and persecutor; yet, by the grace of God, he obtained mercy (1 Tim. 1:12-16). Like Paul, by God's grace, we can do better (1 Cor. 15:9-10).

Conclusion

There are many reasons why some people reject Jesus. Whatever the reasons are, none are worth losing our soul. Also, we must not let others' rejection of Jesus discourage us from teaching the Gospel (Matt. 7:6). Yet, we must be observant. We must wisely use the Gospel to enlighten and persuade.

Yes, some will remain hardhearted. Some will reject Jesus. However, there is power in the Gospel. It will transform anyone who puts their trust in the God who raises the dead. Like the apostles, we must teach the Gospel.