# Rejection

Last week’s theme was “just have faith. Our theme today is rejection due to lack of faith. We heard in our first reading that God cautioned prophet Ezekiel that as a prophet, he would not have an easy job and that he would be rejected by the people. However, God said to him that the people He is sending him to, whether they listen or resist him, they will know that a prophet was among them.

Ezekiel was the first prophet God sent to His people when they were in exile. They were in exile because they rejected God’s ways. Instead of God’s ways, they wanted to do their own thing by following man made gods such as Baal. You see when God’s people rebel against God, they are oppressed by their neighbors. However, God would send prophets like Ezekiel to speak His words to them so they could repent and return to God.

Similarly, Jesus was rejected by His own family, friends, and neighbors. To them, Jesus was a kid who grew up in the neighborhood with them. He was just one of them, a day laborer turned preacher. To them, He did not belong to the priestly class of the Levites nor did He have extensive formal training in Jerusalem like other religious leaders.

At times we might look down on a couple of people who are better off than we are I am not talking materially but spiritually. Or we might put some people on a pedestal who ended up disappointing us.

This brings to mind the infamous story of a man you might remember who in 2008 was part of the big scandal that brought down the economy not only in our country but worldwide. Bernard Madoff swindled thousands of people out of billions. In the end, he was sentenced to prison for 150 yrs. At the time his wife said, ***“The man who committed this horrible fraud is not the man whom I have known all these years.”*** Sometimes we think we know someone but in the end, we might find out we really didn’t know them.

In Jesus’ case, the people who rejected Him heard about His good works but did not believe in Him or in His works because they were familiar with Him. They rejected the life He wanted to bring to them. He wanted to bring them the life of the Eternal One that is in each of us flowing in and through us. This life was given to us from above when we were reborn through baptism and it is being nurtured through our trust in Jesus.

As we enter into a relationship with Jesus, we receive the Love that is in Him which is His relationship with His Father. We are led by this Love towards the wedding feast of the Lamb. As we grow in our relationship with Jesus, we begin to recognize the eternal life within us and we are less attracted to idols of money or power. We begin to see people as Jesus sees them. We begin to love them as Jesus loves them; and we begin to see ourselves as Jesus sees and loves us.

As we grow deeper in love with Jesus and our neighbors, we become transformed and we can do things that humanly speaking we cannot do by ourselves. We begin to love our enemies, forgive and forgive indefinitely, we open our hearts to the poor and the weak and we become compassionate as the Father is compassionate.

It is fear that led His people to reject Jesus. When we love someone instead of rejecting them, it means we are liberated from oppression, and it is only then that we open the door of our hearts to that person and let the prisoner free. It means to heal ourselves and that person who is created in the image and likeness of God. Jesus came to save us from all those fears that leads to rejection. Fear that closes us up. Fear that means forget everything and run.

Jesus came to liberate us from fear and open us up to love that gives us the very life of God which flows in us and through us to others. This life flows in us because Jesus suffered on the cross and was lifted up on the cross. He was lifted up in the glory of the Father.

Mark told us that Jesus could not do much to help any of His own people because they had no faith in Him. He was not able to perform mighty deed there apart from curing a few sick people. Our Lord’s message is loud and clear; rejecting Jesus show lack of faith in God, which actually prevents God from helping us as He would have desired.

As we come to receive Him in the Eucharist, let us ask Jesus for His love so we can be like Him.

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