

“The Causes and Consequences of Rejecting Christ”

October 6, 2013

Text: John 5:41-47

When Adam/Eve fell into sin, they forfeited some vital blessings, and suffered from some grievous losses.

- * They lost their lives, as the death-principle was injected into their very nature.
- * They lost the Garden of Eden, being cast out & blocked from reentering that beautiful place where their lives had flourished, because it was totally secure & full of joy/life.
- * They lost their innocence and discovered that the knowledge of good/evil was not what Satan had led them to believe it would be.
- * They lost their daily fellowship w/ God, their Creator/Sustainer, now becoming His enemies instead—which put them in an untenable position, since He held their lives in His hand.
- * They lost trust in one another, and covered themselves w/ fig leaves, to protect themselves from each other’s gaze.

A terrible sense of loss/losing must have been imprinted on Adam/Eve’s hearts.

And from them, it was then imparted to all their descendants.

As a result, man constantly tries to insulate himself from further loss, and (thru a variety of means) from the low self-esteem that inevitably comes from constantly losing.

Some of those means include=>

Success, applause, congratulations, adulation, popularity,

beauty, strength/health, wealth, power, education, rank/status, respect, position, credentials, degrees, awards, & countless other devices, by which man tries to make himself and the world think, he's not as insignificant a loser as others are.

From a biblical perspective, all those devices could be viewed as pride-enhancers, because pride is man's solution-of-choice for dealing w/ his sense of loss/insignificance.

This is the very opposite of God's approach to self-concept in Phil 2, which is a direct attack on pride=>

*“Do nothing from selfishness or empty **conceit**, but with **humility** of mind regard one **another** as more **important than yourselves**” (2:3).*

I.e., stop fighting against humility & embrace it.

If pride is not subdued and replaced w/ humility in man's heart, it puts him at odds w/ God Himself.

I Pet 5 tells believers=> *“All of you, clothe yourselves with **humility** toward one another, for **God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.** / Therefore **humble** yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that **He** may **exalt** you at the **proper** time” (5:5-6).*

In today's text, Jesus will discuss 2 attitudes that cause proud people to reject Him as the Son of God, & thus forfeit the eternal life He offers to all men=>

* A proud lack of love for God, is one of them.

* A proud longing for personal glory, is the other.

The longing for glory is especially dangerous to our souls.

When people honor someone, that person can begin to think he deserves the honor, & that he is unusually significant.

He'll never really believe in X for the salvation of his soul until he accepts his own insignificance by comparison with God.

Pride, when applied to spiritual matters, causes a person to believe God has some special door for him, into heaven.

He thinks his door is different/separate from the one through which the common crowd of ordinary sinners must enter God's Kingdom.

Theirs is a blood-stained door made from a cross;

He is a golden door.

X said (Lk 5:31-32)=> *"It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are **sick**. / I have not come to call the righteous but **sinners** to repentance"*

Until a person considers himself a spiritually sick sinner, he won't feel any need for Jesus to save/heal him.

Jesus came to save self-acknowledged sinners/losers.

So unless a person views himself in that light spiritually, giving up any claim to special merit, honor, and consideration, he cannot become a recipient of God's grace, because he's not yet convinced he actually needs it.

As Charles Spurgeon put it=>

"The mere fact of our having received honor from other people will render it more difficult for us to believe a doctrine

which gives no honor to men, but stains the pride of all glory & casts human excellency into the dust.”

As we have seen in John 5, X gave the proud religious leaders of Jerusalem some powerful/persuasive evidence for “coming” to Him—believing in Him as the Son of God.

This evidence has included=>

- * the testimony of God the Father, manifested in the words Jesus spoke & the miracles He performed
- * the testimony of John the Baptist, about Jesus
- * the testimony of OT Scripture.

Despite all this compelling evidence, the leaders did not believe in Jesus.

In last Sunday’s text, Jesus told them simply=> “*You are **unwilling** to come to Me so that you may have life.*”

They had misused Scripture, & they had misused their will, to reject Jesus as the Son of God.

In today’s text X will make 2 more points about the Jewish leaders’ rejection of Him=>

* The Causes of Their Rejection=>

- * misplaced love,
- * misplaced longings

* The Consequences of Their Rejection=>

- * the ultimate consequence=> condemnation
- * the intermediate consequence=> unbelief.

* **The Causes of the Religious Leaders’ Rejection**

Jesus begins our text by drawing a sharp contrast between Himself and the leaders who were rejecting Him=>

[John 5:41] (Jesus)=> *“I do not receive glory from men; / but I know you [I have observed you, & come to some conclusions about the condition of your hearts], that you do not have the love of God [love for God] in yourselves.”*

The implication here is that Jesus does not seek glory from men, because He loves God, & He desires only the Father’s approval.

The 2 are mutually exclusive=> If a person desires glory from man, his heart will be so self-centered, that it will be impossible for him to truly love God.

The religious leaders to whom X was talking, did not love God, &, as we’ll see, they did seek man’s glory.

Here Jesus puts His finger on the 1st cause for which they had rejected Him=> lack of love for God.

This is the 1st half of that 1st cause for their rejection=> misplaced love.

If they had really loved God the Father, they would have accepted the Father’s testimony that Jesus was His Son.

But they didn’t accept that testimony, they didn’t believe in God’s Son, & all that, because they didn’t love God.

Back in Jn 3:19, Jesus had said that what they did love, was the darkness of sin, rather than the light of righteousness/truth. Here Jesus implies that what they loved was to receive the glory & honor from men, rather than that of God.

These were worldly-minded, not spiritually-minded people.

I.e., their hearts/lives were the exact opposite of X's,
who sought God's glory—not glory received
from man.

In Deut 6:5, God had commanded the Jews=> *“You shall **love** the
LORD your **God** with all your heart and with all your soul
and with all your might.”*

They had not obeyed the Lord, but in willful disobedience
had replaced love for God w/ proud self-love, and at
times, love for false gods—idols.

**If we assume that people will always believe in Jesus if we can
just present evidence so compelling that they'll have to
believe, we are laboring under a false hope.**

It's true that our gospel presentation needs to be clear/biblical, &
based on an accurate understanding of the gospel message.
But we saw last time that a person's rejection of the gospel, may
be due to misuse of his own will—just deciding not to
believe it, & digging in his heels.

Not because we have somehow failed in presenting the
gospel.

And here in today's text, we see that such rejection is ultimately
due to a person's unwillingness to love the Lord.

Q: Why would anyone refuse to love God?

After all, He is love Himself, perfectly holy, infinitely
kind/good/merciful.

Moreover, He has given us a wonderful world, & sent us a wonderful Savior—His own beloved Son.

A: Simply because He *is* so perfectly holy/good/loving.

That perfection shines a glaring light on our own imperfections, by comparison.

As long as we are free to measure ourselves by other people, we come away looking pretty good.

But if we have to measure ourselves against His glory, there's nothing left to do but throw ourselves before Him, & seek His mercy.

Ask yourself, Do I think so highly of myself, & feel so free to overlook my own sinful foibles, that being compared w/ God is actually offensive to me, & intolerable to my pride? As long as you/I hold that attitude, we cannot be saved, and we won't be until we humble ourselves before X.

If that's you, I would sincerely urge you to confess your pride, your sin, and your failure to Jesus, & leave yourself in His merciful hands.

As long as you believe in yourself, you can't, & you won't, believe in X, to save you from your sin.

In our text, the religious leaders' lack of love for God, became obvious in their not receiving the One He had sent—His Son.

[Verse 43] (Jesus)=> *"I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me."*

Jesus' coming in His Father's name meant He came as His Father's representative—a Representative who is=> “the exact representation of His [Father's] nature” (Heb 1:3).

X was such an exact revelation of God, that He could tell Philip that seeing Him was seeing the Father (Jn 14:9).

Jesus said that His words were the Father's words, and His deeds were the Father's deeds.

X was the Father's emissary to earth, whose every deed was done in subordination to the Father, & w/ the Father's authority.

It is fair to conclude that, in rejecting Jesus, the Son of God, the Jewish leaders were actually rejecting God the Father. So X could say w/ accuracy that their rejection of Himself was motivated by a lack of love for the Father.

This, in spite of the fact that Jews wore little boxes on their foreheads (phylacteries) containing those words I read earlier from Deut 6=> *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your might.”*

The fact of the matter was, that not only did the religious leaders not receive Jesus—they made plans to kill Him.

Because the Son was an exact representation of the Father, if they could have gotten their hands on God the Father, they'd undoubtedly have killed Him too.

Jesus went on to say that the Jews' lack of love for God, was further revealed in their readiness to welcome false X's.

This is the other half of their misplaced love.

Their sin wasn't simply withholding love from God.

It was a misplaced love, given instead to false gods
and false messiahs.

[Verse 43b] (Jesus)=> *“if another comes in his own name
[representing only himself & his own will, promoting
his own self-interests], you **will receive him.**”*

Here we see the corrupt state of these Jewish religious leaders'
hearts=> they would reject their own Messiah, but gladly
receive a fraud.

They would welcome a messiah who was more like them,
having no equality/relationship-w/ the Father.

History shows that, in fact, they did receive, to one degree or
another, a whole string of false messiahs.

One scholar lists over 60 of them, who appeared during the
1st 100 years after Jesus' death.

**So why did the Jews reject Jesus, refusing to believe that He
was God, the Son of God, & thus their true Messiah?**

The first reason was misplaced love.

They withheld their love from the true Messiah, the exact
representation of God's own nature, & lavished their
love instead on a series of false-messiahs/charlatans.

We can hardly move on, in our text, w/o asking ourselves, “Do I
love God?”

If I haven't wholeheartedly embraced Jesus as my Lord &
Savior, the answer must be that I don't.

That's because the Son is the exact-representation,
and the perfect-revelation, of the Father.

If I don't love Jesus, I don't rally love God.

If may have thought I did, but I don't.

So I need to honestly address that issue, in my own heart.

The 2nd cause for the Jewish leaders' rejecting Jesus was a misplaced longing for glory/honor from other people, but complete indifference to the glory God alone bestows.

This made these leaders the antithesis of Jesus, about whom we read in verse 40, that He did not receive glory from men.

[Verse 44] (Jesus)=> *"How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?"*

A: You can't believe in Jesus if you seek glory/honor from people, but not from God, because you really don't care about God's will.

There is an assumption implied in Jesus' words here=>

You can seek glory from God, or you can seek glory from man, but you can't/won't receive glory from both God/man.

Forming a saving relationship w/ Jesus X, involves bowing one's heart before Him disregarding others' approval/acceptance or their rejection.

It is coming to Jesus with the attitude of the tax collector who stood at a distance in the Temple in Luke 18.

He was beating on his chest, unwilling even to lift up his eyes, as he prayed, “*God, be merciful to me, the sinner!*” (Lk 18:13).

This tax collector had prob. heard the prayer of the proud Pharisee standing next to him=> “*God, I thank You that I am **not like** other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or **even like this tax collector***” (Lk 18:11).

The tax-collector knew his own prayer would be viewed by the Pharisee as confirmation, he was right about him. But he didn't care what the Pharisee thought of him. He sought only God's acceptance/honor—not man's.

Rarely does a proud man who seeks/finds honor among his fellowmen, humble himself before X unto salvation.

That's why Paul could write of the Xns at Corinth=>

*“Consider your calling, brethren, that there were **not many wise** according to the flesh, not many **mighty**, not many **noble**; / but God has chosen the **foolish things of the world to shame the wise**, and God has chosen the **weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong**, / and the **base things of the world & the despised** God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, / so that no man may boast before God” (I C 1:26-29).*

1st, the proud man figures out a way to get honor/glory from other people.

The religious leaders to whom Jesus was talking were masters at this, inventing high-sounding titles for themselves;

Titles like “great learned scribe,” “holy rabbi,”
“celestial doctor,” or “father.”

2nd, such a person then comes to expect this kind of honor from
others.

After people have been addressing him like this for awhile,
he begins to believe the title truly fits/describes him.
That he’s a higher level of human being than other
people.

But though he’s aware deep w/i himself that he’s not really
holy/great, he has to accept his own hypocrisy;
And he does.

In Matt 23, Jesus described the true sinfulness of some of
those Pharisees w/ the fancy titles, including their sin
of devouring widows’ houses, leaving them
impoverished (23:14).

3rd, the proud person soon comes to fear the loss of this kind of
honor.

He isn’t willing to risk it, by taking a stand for Jesus.

The educated man fears being thought a fanatic by
colleagues.

The businessman fears the loss of new business
clients/contacts that are financially lucrative to him.

The workman fears the harassment he will receive in the
lunchroom.

You can easily see why a person like this would be more inclined to seek man's glory, than glory from God.

When he's really honest w/ himself, the religious hypocrite who puts up a good front, but preys on the weak, becomes aware that he really deserves no glory from God at all.

So he just avoids being too honest with himself.

When X came to earth & lived out the perfect moral glory of God's own nature, His excellence/purity exposed the gross hypocrisy of the Pharisees & scribes.

Believe in Him? Not a chance—they wanted to kill Him.

*** The Consequences of the Religious Leaders' Rejection**

(of Jesus)

As I mentioned earlier, there were both ultimate/intermediate consequences.

The ultimate consequence was condemnation before God.

[Verse 45] (Jesus)=> *“Do not think that I will **accuse** you before the Father; the one who **accuses** you is **Moses**, in whom you have set your hope.”*

And the accusation of Moses and his Law will inevitably lead to their condemnation.

Jesus may be saying that on the Last Day, Moses will actually be their accuser as they stand before God.

The same Moses they venerated for giving them the Law.

The same Moses who had once saved their lives by praying to God for them after they'd worshiped a golden calf.

Some Jews seem to have believed Moses was still intervening on their behalf in heaven.

Jesus says, “No, this one on whom you’ve set your hope is the very one who will accuse you.”

But notice that Jesus actually says Moses already accuses them.

Through his words in the Pentateuch, which they read every day in the synagogues, Moses was already accusing/condemning them of living for man’s glory—not for God’s.

And he is the one who was accusing them of not loving God, or receiving His Son.

Vs 46 begins w/ the word “*For*,” introducing an explanation of why Moses would accuse them, & what he’d accuse them of=> refusing to believe what he wrote about X.

This is the intermediate consequence of unbelief, which results in condemnation.

This refusal is also a consequence of their rejection of Jesus:

They didn’t believe He was God’s Son, because they’d already rejected Him, refusing out of hand to even consider the possibility that He was.

Man loves or rejects X with his heart first, then works out the intellectual details in his belief system afterward.

Not vice versa.

[Verse 46] (Jesus)=> “*For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me.*”

Does that mean Moses actually wrote about Jesus, even though he lived 1500 years before Jesus? Yes!

Moses knew about X, & he firmly believed He would come someday.

Heb 11 says he rejected/repudiated his place at Pharaoh's court, "*considering the reproach of **Christ** greater riches than the treasures of Egypt*" (Heb 11:26).

There are many veiled references to X in Moses' writings=>

E.g. * In Gen 3:15, God says to Satan=> "*I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her **seed** [that's X]; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.*"

Moses was the one who had written that.

Moses knew about X ahead of time.

* In Gen 22:18, God says to Abraham=> "*In your **seed** [another reference to X] all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.*"

* Other similar references to X are found in Gen 49:10, Num 24:17, & Deut 18:18, all of which were written by Moses.

But Moses' writings also contained what are called "prophetic types" of X, and there are a number of them, including=>

* the rock that poured forth water in the desert, when struck as a prophetic picture of X, who gives living water, as He told the woman at the well in Jn 4:10.

- * the Passover lamb, which pictured Jesus, the Lamb of God who saves us from spiritual death.
- * the pillar of cloud/fire on Mount Sinai.
- * manna, prefiguring Jesus, who said, “*I am the bread of life*” (Jn 6:35).
- * the serpent lifted up on a pole was a picture of Jesus, who said “*If I be lifted up from the earth, all men to Me*” (Jn 12:32).
- * all the OT sacrifices prophesied X’s sacrifice.
- * the Tabernacle itself, a/w/a each piece of its furniture in the Tabernacle.

Jesus’ words to the Jewish leaders come to an end so far as this chapter is concerned, when He adds in=>

[Verse 47] (Jesus)=> “*But if you do not believe his [Moses’] writings, how will you believe My words?*”

This is the converse of verse 46, where X said that if they really believed Moses, they would believe Him also.

Now He adds that, if they won’t believe what Moses had written about Jesus, in spite of their great reverence for Moses, there was no possibility that they’d ever believe Jesus Himself.

Jesus’ statement compares the ancient “*writings*” of Moses, with the spoken “*words*” of X.

The “*writings*” had age/use to commend their acceptance. But even w/ that advantage, the Jews had refused to believe what Moses’ “*writings*” had revealed about Messiah.

That being the case, there was no chance they would believe the spoken words of Jesus.

Let's summarize what Jesus has taught us in this text=>

1) Misplaced love for false-gods & false-messiahs, rather than the true God and Jesus X His Son, causes man to reject the Lord.

Again, his heart chooses to either love or hate Jesus.

Then his mind/will follow the lead of his heart, by either embracing or rejecting Christ.

2) The consequence of this rejection is refusal to believe in X, and that, in turn, leads to the ultimate consequence of accusation/condemnation before God.

God has provided the evidence of powerful testimony from unimpeachable witnesses, each of whom declares Jesus X to be God's Son and man Savior—John the Baptist, God the Father Himself testifying through Jesus' words/miracles, & Scripture.

So a person who thoughtfully considers this evidence, has every reason to believe it, to receive Jesus into his heart by faith, and to receive eternal life as a result.

But to the person who still doubts or even rejects X, I would add that there are 2 things about you I know to be true.

1st, that you will never come to X unless the H.S. deals w/ you.

All the evidence/witnesses on earth can't convince you to do so, apart from the H.S.

It will require a miracle of God's Spirit of grace, to open up your spiritual eyes, transform your nature, & give you new life.

But 2nd, if the Spirit overcomes this spiritual difficulty w/i your own heart, you will need the evidence in God's Word, that can remove any intellectual doubt/difficulty, so that you can believe in X. Over the past month, we have seen that evidence in John 5.

I'm sure that every real believer here fervently hopes/prays the Spirit will do His work w/i you, & that you will cooperate w/ that work, by opening up your heart to the truth about Jesus.

To do that, you'll have to give up the belief in yourself, your merits, your righteousness, and your understanding, on which you have always leaned, looking to Jesus alone to save your soul.

God will forgive you of all your sins, if you will trust in His only-begotten Son, Jesus X, asking Him to do so. X took on Himself the punishment for the sins of all those who believe in Him.

If you do choose to entrust yourself to Jesus, He will change your whole nature, & your trust in Him will lead to feelings of gratitude/love which will, in turn, cause you to obey Him as your Lord.

You will find that the truths of God's Word you once cared nothing about, will become very important/precious to you.

And you will discover that Jesus has become the Shepherd and Guardian of your soul, & the Guide of your life.

He'll never abandon you, but will give you eternal life, that you can never lose.

And He will always be there, ready to listen, whenever you call out to Him.

“The Causes and Consequences of Rejecting Christ”

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Text: John 5:41-47

1. From a biblical perspective pride is man’s solution of choice for dealing with his sense of [10 loss] and insignificance.

Phil 2:3; 1 Pet 5:5-6; Lk 5:31-32

2. Jesus came to save self-acknowledged sinners and losers; so unless a person views himself in that light spiritually, he [14 cannot] become a recipient of God’s grace.

Jn 5:40

In today’s text Christ will make two more points about the Jewish leaders’ rejection of Him...

- * The Causes of Their Rejection (misplaced love and misplaced longings)
- * The Consequences of Their Rejection (condemnation and unbelief)

*** The Causes of the Religious Leaders’ Rejection** **[John 5:41-42]**

3. Here Jesus puts His finger on the first cause for which they had rejected Him: lack of [10 love] for God.

Jn 3:19; Deut 6:5

4. Why would anyone refuse to love God? Because He is perfect; that perfection shines a glaring light on our [8 own] imperfections by comparison.

5. In our text the religious leaders’ lack of love for God became obvious in their not receiving the One He had sent—His [8 Son].

[Verse 43]

Heb 1:3

6. Jesus went on to say that the Jews’ lack of love for God was further revealed in their readiness to welcome [12 false] christs.

[Verse 43b]

7. The second cause for the Jewish leaders’ rejecting Jesus was a misplaced longing for glory and honor from other people, but complete indifference to the glory [8 God] alone bestows.

[Verse 44]

Lk 18:13, 11

8. Rarely does a proud man who seeks and finds honor among his fellow men humble himself before [14 Christ] unto salvation.

I Cor 1:26-29; Mt 23:14

* **The Consequences of the Religious Leaders' Rejection**

9. The ultimate consequence was condemnation before [8 God].

[Verse 45]

10. Verse 46 begins with the word "*For,*" introducing an explanation of why Moses would accuse them and what he would accuse them of: refusing to believe what he [12 wrote] about Christ.

[Verse 46]

Heb 11:26; Gen 3:15; 22:18; 49:10; Num 24:17; Deut 18:18

[Verse 47]

Summary

11. Misplaced love for false gods and false messiahs rather than the true God and Jesus Christ His Son, leads man to [14 reject] the Lord.
12. The consequence of this rejection is refusal to believe in Christ, and that in turn leads to accusation and condemnation before [8 God].
13. If you do choose to entrust yourself to Jesus, He will change your whole nature, and your trust in Him will lead to feelings of gratitude and love which will, in turn, cause you to [10 obey] Him.