

Rejection Hurts

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Preacher: Peter Ervine

[0 : 00] Dear John, it's not you, it's me. I regret to inform you. No thanks. Your services are no longer required. Your application has not been successful. You're fired.

Let's just be friends. I don't know how you feel when you hear these words, but I'm sure we will all have faced rejection at some point in our lives, whether it's in relationships, sports, work, or education. Tonight we are looking at a passage that involves rejection and hurt. Rejection hurts. Let me pray. Lord God, Heavenly Father, High King of Heaven, I ask that through the teaching of your word and the work of the Holy Spirit, we would have the joy of seeing lives transformed, of people coming to faith and being baptized, of seeing passion for you being reignited and our wayward lives brought in line with you. Speak to us, we pray. Amen.

Now, I wonder when you were listening to the passage being read earlier, whether you picked up on a few things. I wonder if you picked up on history repeating itself. I wonder if you picked up on who was being rejected and who the rejection hurts.

So let's look at our passage just now. We'll be looking at some other verses from the Bible, but they'll be on our screen. Our main focus will be on the passage. So if you can have that open in front of you, I think that would be a good idea. And let's first look at the rejection and the request.

[2 : 22] And here we will see the first bit of history repeating itself. In the first three verses of chapter 8, we see that history has repeated itself in Samuel's sons. Samuel's sons have turned out like Eli's sons. Samuel made his son's rulers like himself, but they did not follow in their father's footsteps in how he governed. But instead, they went after dishonest gain, taking bribes and letting money decide how justice would be done. This leads to the people rejecting their rule, which seems fair enough.

Why would they want to be governed by Samuel's corrupt sons? But instead of looking to God, seeking his will, and trusting that God would provide another judge like Samuel to rule and guide them, they look to the nations around them and think, well, why can't we have what they have? They all have kings. We should have a king.

I'm sure Samuel feels hurt. He feels rejected. Hadn't he led the people well? Why should they be turning on him now? Wasn't it Samuel who in the last chapter we saw had got the Israelites to rid themselves of their foreign gods and had cried out to the Lord on Israel's behalf?

And the Lord had answered him and subdued the Philistines so that they stopped invading their land. Hasn't Samuel improved the Israelites' lives immensely? And here they are telling him that he's old, turning against him and his leadership and asking to have someone completely different to him and who'll do things in a completely different way to him. A king. What is Samuel to make of this?

What should he do? How many leaders would have seen this as a rebellion that needed to be crushed?

[4 : 53] How many times have we seen that happen throughout history and even around the world today? When one person is the ultimate authority and then their leadership is challenged, even peacefully, things can turn nasty very quickly. Just look at Syria as a heartbreaking example of this.

But Samuel is not the ultimate authority in Israel. No. And he knows this. And he does exactly the right thing. He does what we should do when we face rejection. He turns to God, to Yahweh, the ultimate authority in Israel.

And when we face rejection, for whatever reason it may be, we should turn to God, the ultimate authority. And if you are a Christian or are thinking about it, then you should know that as a Christian, you should expect to face rejection for your faith.

Jesus himself was rejected. And we see in John 15 that he told his disciples this.

So we can expect to be rejected.

[6 : 42] And when that comes, we should first and foremost take it to God in prayer. And in verse 6 of our passage, we see Samuel praying to God and telling of the elders' request.

Now concerning the request, it should be said that the concept of kingship in Israel is not in and of itself necessarily a bad thing.

And I don't think that we should be said that. And I don't think that we should be using this passage to try and argue one way or the other about our own constitutional monarchy. Back in Genesis, God said to Abraham that he would bless Sarah, his wife.

I will bless her.

Of priests and a holy nation. In Deuteronomy, God even predicts the elders' request. Deuteronomy 17:14 says, Some people have suggested that if Israel hadn't asked for a king at this point, then God would have later gone ahead and appointed David as king when the time was right.

[8 : 54] So we've seen the rejection of Samuel and the request for a king. Let's now look at the repeated rejection and the response.

You see, the problem with the elders' request is that it comes from a repeated rejection of God as king. God tells Samuel, Listen to all that the people are saying to you.

It is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day for seeking me and serving other gods.

So they are doing to you. This is more history repeating itself. And here we see that it is not really Samuel that they are rejecting.

It is God himself they are rejecting. In the Psalms, we see the place God should have.

[10 : 21] The Lord is king forever and ever. The Lord is enthroned as king forever.

And when we go back to Deuteronomy 17, we see the place that a king of Israel should have in relationship to God.

When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law taken from that of the Levitical priests.

It is to be with him and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the Lord his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his fellow Israelites and turn from the law to the right or to the left.

This human king would be subject to God as king and fully dependent on God's word as the law of the kingdom.

[11 : 50] The ultimate king of Israel would still be the Lord and the human king would be serving as his deputy in a similar fashion to Samuel's leadership.

But the elders of Israel reject this plan by asking to have a king like all the surrounding nations.

This king would be the ultimate authority, not the Lord. This is why God himself assesses their request by saying, They have rejected me as their king.

They are rejecting him just as they had done many times before. Ever since they became an independent nation when God rescued them from Egypt.

If you know the story of Exodus, then you know that it wasn't long after being rescued that the people were worshipping a golden calf.

[13 : 02] The nation continued to look to other nations and to copy their practices and worship their false gods.

Yet God was faithful. In verse 20 of our passage, we see the other reason the people have for wanting an earthly king.

They wanted a king who would be physically on the battlefield, leading them and fighting their battles.

They have a lack of trust in God and his protection. Even though throughout their history, there have been many times when they have called out to God, turned to him, and he has won the battle. And I wonder how often these kind of things are a problem for ourselves. How often do we see what others have and want that for ourselves?

[14 : 18] How often does the grass look greener on the other side? In the age of social media, it seems increasingly difficult to escape this trap with friends, acquaintances, celebrities, all projecting an airbrushed version of their lives onto our devices.

And where is our security? Is it in physical things? Our houses? Our savings?

Our families? Or maybe you feel totally insecure. Can I just say that real contentment and true security can only be found in God through Jesus.

And if you are already a Christian, it is so important that we remind ourselves of that every day. So, given that this request is a repeated rejection of God, why does God allow this situation to occur? And why does he respond by telling Samuel to listen to the people and to grant their request?

[15:45] Well, this is a classic example of God using people's sin to accomplish his own good and perfect plans.

we see this concept clearly with Joseph, who was sold as a slave by his brothers and was used by God to rescue his family and all of Egypt from famine.

Joseph tells his brothers in Genesis 50 verse 20, you intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

I can think of how this has happened in my own life and how I ended up in Edinburgh when I was in secondary school and thinking about which university to go to.

I wasn't really asking God about where I should go. I was happy just to not think too much about it and take the easy option, go to Queens in Belfast.

[16:52] Easy. But I ended up in a relationship with a girlfriend, which after it was all over, I could see was not particularly healthy.

I can now see that the way that I lived at the time showed that this relationship was more important to me than my relationship with God.

I can see that I was putting my own temporary happiness above being obedient to God. It was clearly wrong, but God used it to accomplish his will in getting me to Edinburgh.

You see, my girlfriend was absolutely set on going to St. Andrews. And it was this that caused me to look at Scottish universities and to find somewhere near St. Andrews where I could study electrical engineering.

And so, I ended up in Edinburgh and becoming part of this church and eventually finding my wife. So, although I regret that relationship, I can see how God used it for good.

[18:12] We also see the same concept with Jesus who was innocent yet became a victim of an evil plot to kill him. However, this horrendous act was part of God's good plan to rescue us.

So, we have seen the repeated rejection of God and the response of God. Let's now take some time to look at the results and the refusal.

In verses 11 to 18, we see the results of rejecting to the people what the consequences will be for Israel if the elders' request is to be granted.

Having a king like all the other nations will lead to the people being slaves. slaves serving the king and his desires.

He will use the people's sons to run in front of his chariots. Their main purpose, I think, being just to make the king look important. He will take their sons to be commanders, others to work his land, and yet more to make weapons of war.

[19:47] The king will take some of the people's daughters to make perfume, some to bake, and others to cook. He will also take the best fields, vineyards, and olive groves, and give them to his attendants.

He will take a tax on their produce and give it to his officials in attendance, and take a tenth of their flocks, and he will make the people slaves. take, take, take, take.

This human king will be a taker in sharp contrast to God, the giver and provider.

Israel's desire for a human king like all the other nations will be costly. and if we look at verse 18, we see what will happen when the people see the results of their rejection of God and their request for a king.

When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, but the Lord will not answer you in that day.

[21:13] Notice the words cry out. These are the same words that appear in the book of Judges when the people are under a foreign king's oppression and they call out to God.

God would then hear them, would raise up a judge to rescue them and free them from the bondage and oppression of this foreign king.

Another set of recurring words that you find in the book of Judges, particularly towards the end of the book, are the words in those days Israel had no king.

Everyone did as they saw fit. So it's kind of ironic that they will be crying out to God because of the oppression of their own king who they have requested.

But they will have made their beds and they will have to sleep in it. They will not be able to escape these consequences consequences.

[22 : 26] And no relief will come from God this time when they call. Samuel clearly warns the people on God's behalf.

But what is their response? It is a refusal to listen. No, they say.

we want a king over us. Then we shall be like all the other nations with a king to lead us and to go out before us and to fight our battles.

They refused to listen and will have to face the results of rejecting God and the refusal to listen to God.

So hopefully we have seen the results that people had from rejecting God. What about us then?

There too are results or consequences for us rejecting God.

[23 : 42] Potentially eternal consequences. rejection hurts. Rejecting God hurts us.

If like me and you are already a Christian then you should be living with God as your king. But like me I'm sure there will be areas of your life where God is not in full control.

can I encourage you to confess your sin to God and to a trusted brother or sister in Christ so that you may be freed from that sin and its earthly results.

If you are not yet a Christian then can I ask you to pay special attention to our last little bit. We're going to have a look at a thing called Two Ways to Live.

If you're already a Christian then you can just have a little snooze. Okay I'm honestly joking but I know there is a temptation to switch off at this point.

[24 : 59] So can I just encourage you to think maybe about learning this simple style of sharing the gospel and to think and to pray about who you could share it with.

So two ways to live you can find it quite easily by searching the web there's also an app that you can download for Android or Apple devices and it's just a simple way of sharing the gospel in just six simple steps with some very simple drawings that hopefully anybody should be able to draw for themselves.

So here we've just got a circle a stick man and a crown and here we see the world and the crown representing God God is the loving ruler of the world he made the world and he made us rulers of the world under him revelations 4:11 says you are worthy our Lord and God to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things and by your will they were created and have their being but is this the way that things are now no we have all rejected the ruler God by trying to run life our way without him but we fail to rule ourselves or society or the world

Romans 3 says there is no one righteous not even one there is no one who understands no one who seeks God all have turned away so what will God do about this rebellion God won't let us rebel forever God's punishment for rebellion is death and judgment Hebrews 9 says man is destined to die once and after that to face judgment God's justice sounds hard but because of God's love God sent his son into the world the man Christ Jesus Jesus always lived under God's rule yet by dying in our place he took our punishment and brought forgiveness

Christ died for sins once for all the righteous for the unrighteous to bring you to God but that's not all God raised Jesus to life again as the ruler of the world Jesus has conquered death and now gives new life and will return to judge the world in his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead so where does that leave us it leaves us with a choice two ways to live there's our way reject the ruler God try to run life our own way but the result will be we will be condemned by

[28 : 55] God we will be facing death and judgment then there is God's way to submit to Jesus as our ruler to rely on Jesus death and resurrection and that will result in being forgiven by God and being given eternal life let's pray Lord God Heavenly Father High King of Heaven thank you for sending your Son Jesus who was rejected and killed for our sake thank you that you brought him back to life and that he is now reigning with you Lord help us to submit to his rule and to rely only on his death and resurrection for us to be saved thank you that if we are trusting in

Jesus you are willing to forgive us and have promised us eternal life in Jesus name Amen