

THE REJECTED KING

Rejected By Would-Be Disciples

Matthew 8:19-22

INTRODUCTION: Let me begin this morning by asking you a question. **Have you ever read a passage in the Scripture that made you think, “That just doesn’t seem right.”** Now, I’m not talking about responding with, “I don’t get it” or “I don’t understand.” What I mean is that you read it and think you understand perfectly well, but you have an uneasiness inside. You are thinking, “I know this is the Bible, so it has to be correct, but it just does not seem right.”

Have you ever been in that uncomfortable place?

Well, I have, more than once.

You may be thinking, “But Bro. Mike, you were probably in that place back when you didn’t believe the whole Bible was true.”

But you would be wrong. Because when I did not believe the whole bible was true, these kinds of things did not bother me much. I just thought it was a mistake. An error made by the men who wrote it.

Now for you who are new and do not know me yet, let me assure you I left that barren land of unbelief in the Bible many years ago. I am convinced and convicted that this Bible is the perfect Word of God, truth without mixture of error in every area of which it speaks.

But what I was talking about still happens sometimes. I read something and think I understand, but it still doesn’t seem right. And that makes me very uncomfortable because I know it is right. Every sentence, every word!

So, am I the only one who has messed up feelings like this?

So, what do I do when this happens?

1. First, I remember a Scripture that has been very useful to me, and I heartily recommend that you memorize it if you do not know it.

There is a way *that seems* right to a man, But its end *is* the way of death. Proverbs 14:12

This Scripture reminds me that not everything that seems right is right.

2. And that causes me to remember Psalm 19.

The law of the LORD *is* **perfect**

The testimony of the LORD *is* **sure**

The statutes of the LORD *are* **right**

The judgments of the LORD *are* **true and righteous** altogether.

Back to my problem: I've read a passage of Scripture and it does not seem right. That means that it **seems** wrong to me.

But I know, there is a way *that seems* right to a man, but its end *is* the way of death.

I know the Word of God is perfect, sure, right, true, and righteous!

Therefore, **I can safely conclude that if I do not think some Scripture is right, then I am the one who is wrong.** Either I misunderstand or the values by which I am judging it are incorrect. **So, I seek to examine that Scripture more completely and consider it more carefully,** knowing that I have to change my understanding or my values.

When this happens, it is not the time to just bypass a passage and skip to something else. The fact that I have experienced this conflict in reading it

- Means I need to understand and believe what it is saying.
- It means I have not already fully comprehended these words and incorporated its message into my life.

If I had, I would not be thinking, "This does not seem right to me."

Do you understand this?

Is this making sense?

Now, my guess is, that some of you may have experienced this in reading Matthew 3 to 8 this week. You probably experienced it a lot when you read the Sermon on the Mount in Mt. 5 – 7

- **Blessed are those who mourn...**
- **Blessed are those who are persecuted...**

Or how about

- **Whoever slaps you on the right cheek, turn the other to him also.**

How many of us are saying right now, "Oh I've got that one nailed. I do that all the time."

Or are we saying, "Something just doesn't seem right about that?"

Listen, there is a lot in the Sermon on the Mount that challenges us that way, but this morning I am going one chapter beyond the Sermon on the Mount to some things Jesus said to people who said they wanted to be disciples. They said they wanted to follow Jesus. But Jesus made a reply back to each one of them that comes across as strange.

I suspect that **many who read what Jesus said to each of these would-be disciples made many in this room think, “That just doesn’t seem right.”**

Let’s both read and listen to the exchange. We start in Mt. 8:19.

Matthew 8:19–22

19 Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.” 20 And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head.”

21 Then another of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” 22 But Jesus said to him, “Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”

Luke tells the same account, but he adds one more exchange. So, let’s read it also.

Luke 9:61–62

61 And another also said, “Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go *and* bid them farewell who are at my house.” 62 But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Do you see what I mean?

One says, “I’ll follow you anywhere!” But it sounds like Jesus discourages him.

One says, “I’ll go as soon as I bury my dad who just died!” But Jesus tells him not to wait.

And another says, “I’ll follow you. I’m just going to pass by the home place and say bye and I’m outa here!” But Jesus turned him down.

Don’t raise your hands, but is anybody thinking, “This doesn’t seem right!”?

But we know it is right. God’s Word is perfect and sure and right and true! So somehow our thinking is messed up. So let’s look at these one by one and see if we can get our thinkers going straight.

WOULD-BE DISCIPLE	JESUS
Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.	Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

Here are some things we should consider:

1. The man was a scribe. Being a scribe was an honored occupation. Usually scribes were themselves the teachers. They seldom followed other teachers.
2. We should remember that Jesus knew this man's heart, which we do not. But we do not need to make negative assumptions about this scribe.
3. Let us take his words with their very best meaning, believing he has the very best of intentions.
 - a. He acknowledges Jesus as a teacher. This is positive as few scribes would do this for a man not trained in their own rabbinical schools.
 - b. I will follow You wherever You go. Now that is a bold statement.
4. Jesus does not tell the man he cannot follow Him.
5. Jesus makes an impactful statement clarifying the cost of discipleship. Jesus is saying ...

- a. Even animals have their homes. Foxes have holes in the ground to crawl into. Birds have nests to fly to.

When they are tired, they go home.

When they are threatened, they flee to their home.

When they are frightened and need security, they go home.

Jesus was saying, "I don't have a home," on this earth!

- b. And that was true. Since He left the home of Mary His mother in Nazareth and began His ministry, Jesus never had His own home. We read of Jesus staying on occasion with Peter in his home in Capernaum and with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in their home in Bethany, but there was never a place Jesus could call home.

Jesus spent many a night under the stars and probably some nights under the clouds as rain poured from them. He had more in common with a homeless man than most of us in our fine houses and apartments.

It is no mistake that Jesus calls Himself the Son of Man. It was His favorite title for Himself. But it was a title that indicated humility. It was especially appropriate that Jesus would say The Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

- c. **Jesus was showing this prominent man who likely had a good house that Jesus did not have even the basic comforts of life that most animals have.**
- d. **Jesus was helping the scribe to consider the cost of discipleship.** If he followed Jesus wherever the Lord went, he would be away from his fine home most if not all of the time.

We have not finished in examining this, but let's move to the next snippet because they were both part of the same conversation.

WOULD-BE DISCIPLE	JESUS
Lord, let me first go and bury my father.	Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead.

This certainly seems a reasonable request, and frankly, Jesus' response sounds a bit harsh and inconsiderate to be spoken to a man who is mourning the death of his father.

That's the way it seems; but the way it seems is not right.

So, we need to dig into the Scriptures to discover what we do not know.

1. What the would-be disciple says and what Jesus says are both mid-eastern colloquial expressions used both in biblical and modern times.
2. The potential disciple's father had not recently died. If he had, the burial would have been the same day, because the Jews did not embalm the body.
3. **“Bury my father” was an expression that meant to work in the family business with one's father until he died and you received the inheritance!**

Some years ago a missionary in Turkey invited a young man to go with him on a trip to Europe during which he hoped to disciple the man. He told the missionary he would love to go as soon as he buried his father. The missionary expressed sympathy, saying he did not know the young man's father had died. The Turk laughed and explained, “No, my father is alive and healthy. To bury my father means I must stay here and fulfill my family responsibilities until he dies and I receive my share of the inheritance.”

4. Jesus clearly understood what the would-be disciple was saying and responded with a well-known colloquialism of his own, “Let the dead bury their own dead.” It meant let the world take care of the things of the world.
5. Luke's account of the conversation adds that Jesus told the man that his job was to go and preach the Kingdom of God.

6. **Jesus is saying, “God has not just put you on this earth to make money and take care of the family business. If you follow Me, you should be like Me, and you should be about My Father’s business!”**

7. Once again, Jesus is making clear the cost of discipleship.

Let us look at the final conversation, and then see if the three together lead us to conclusions.

WOULD-BE DISCIPLE	JESUS
Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go <i>and</i> bid them farewell who are at my house.	No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Again, the prospective disciple’s request seems reasonable enough. How long could it take to let him run by the house and give everybody a hug? An hour? Two?

In light of that, Jesus’ reply seems too strong.

That’s the way it seems. But the way it seems is not always right!

We must study harder and examine further.

1. The setting for the question is not in the city but a good distance from it. Also, we have no reason to think that this man is from the closest city around. We do not know where he was from. Jesus did.
2. The issue here is where the man’s loyalty was. Was it to his family or to Jesus?
3. I am confident you all remember that we already looked at this very issue when we were in the Gospel of Luke in January.

Luke 14:26 ... “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.

We saw then that Jesus was using the word hate in a very Jewish way, as the Bible itself does on occasion to mean to choose one thing over another.

Jesus did not hate His own mother. He strongly demonstrated His love for her even as He hung on the cross and made sure that she would be cared for the rest of her life. Jesus chided those who broke the commandment to honor father and mother.

What Jesus was saying in Luke 14 and Luke 9 was that to be His disciple, we must choose Him above everyone, even family and dear friends. If those who are precious to us in this world say, “You can have your Jesus or you can have us,” our choice must be Jesus every time!

When we put the conversations together, they all make sense. I am not saying they communicate comfortable truths, but they do not leave us confused. They are easily understood if not easily obeyed.

TO BE THE DISCIPLE OF JESUS

We must choose Jesus over the comforts of this world.

We must choose Jesus over occupation, profession, and even livelihood.

We must choose loyalty to Jesus over any person.

Jesus really summed it up in

Luke 14:33 So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

THIS IS THE ESSENCE OF LORDSHIP.

As Paul and Silas said to the Philippian jailer when he asked how to be saved, Acts 16:31 says, "... Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, ..."

Trusting Jesus as Lord means trusting every part of our life to Christ, knowing that He has everything we need.

- If Jesus says, "Leave your job and go on mission for Me in Asia," then He has both work and provision all planned out.
- If Jesus says, "Sell your house and give the money to the work of the Kingdom," He has another place for you to live.
- If Jesus sends you to a faraway place away from family and friends, He will take care of both you and them and be your comfort and security.

Trusting Jesus as Lord means trusting every part of our life to Christ, knowing that He has everything we need.

I will be honest with you. I did not just learn these principles that I have shared with you today earlier this week during our chapter-a-day Bible reading. The Lord showed Karen and me these truths a long time ago.

- Karen and I have never owned a lot of stuff, but what we have belongs to Christ, and we seek to hold it all as stewards with open hands.
- For both of us, God settled our vocational callings before we were old enough to have vocations, and they have remained settled for us.
- We have always known that our family, our children and grandchildren, belong to God. He just shares them with us for our joy.

That is not to say that we have always practiced these things perfectly or even that we practice them perfectly now, but to say we have all our married life known these principles and have strived to live them out under the Lordship of Jesus.

But I remember a short season while we were still newlyweds when a great temptation arose that nearly led me astray. Karen had a girlfriend whose father had left a good job to start a new business. It was a pyramid scheme and promised great wealth to those who got in at the beginning.

He offered us a place in the business at what seemed a very reasonable sum, only it was money we had saved for the next semester of college where we were both in the early stages of preparation for ministry. Dollar signs danced before my eyes. We were living in a 2 room apartment with a folding partition separating the rooms. I theorized without much consideration of biblical principles or significant prayer that God was giving us a way to become financially independent so we could serve Him without regard to compensation from a church. So we spent the money.

We worked the new business while we worked our summer jobs, which was quite necessary if we wanted to eat, and we worked our new get rich quick scheme on the side. After we put a small ad in the want ads of the Tulsa World, I answered the phone at night saying Koscot Interplanetary Cosmetics, and tried to enlist others to join us in building a business marketing cosmetics made with mink oil. You can still read of the demise of this company on the web. Just spell Koscot with a K. It all crashed 2 years after we entered it, but we were not in it even that long.

It became abundantly clear to us that God had no desire for us to be financially independent. God wanted us to be financially dependent totally upon Him. He wanted our trust to be in our Lord Jesus Who could and would provide in His own chosen ways for our good and His glory.

And He always did. While we went through college together, He always provided. We had to work, but He always gave us jobs. I tutored math and sold ads for the college newspaper and yearbook – easiest job I ever had. Karen worked at Pizza Hut and made great tips! We sold cookware in the summer. We both drove school busses. I threw newspapers. But we never had to drop out of school or missed paying the rent. We did share a single hamburger on occasion, but God took good care of us.

And we learned more and more, better and better, **Jesus is Lord and rightfully demands our utmost trust and obedience. But He does it not to oppress us, but to bless us.**

Have you trusted Him as your Lord?

Are you learning and growing in increasingly trusting Him, letting your faith grow more and more?

Are you being His continuing, developing disciple?

You should. It's not all roses, but it's a wonderful life!