

April 21, 2024

Texts: Psalm 118:14-24; Acts 4:5-12

Title: "When You Reach the Rejection Hotline"

Is there anything harder on the ego than being rejected? I know that one of the harder things for some is asking someone out on a date if you're at that point in life. An important step in the process is asking for the phone number of the one you wish to ask out on a date.

Now what if the person is totally uninterested but doesn't want to crush your fragile ego in a public place? One option is to give the asker the phone number of the local "rejection hotline"--then smile and walk away. The would-be suitor thinks he's hit the jackpot, but no, for when he calls the number he hears this recording: "Hello, this is not the person you were trying to call. You've reached the rejection hotline. Unfortunately, the person who gave you this rejection hotline number didn't want you to have their real number." And then it tells you the person wasn't interested.

Wouldn't that be devastating? Rejection. It's awful and yet it happens to us all sooner or later. You apply for a job believing it's just right. But you get turned down; rejection. You work hard on a project at work but the boss doesn't like it; rejection. It happens to everybody. It happens to best-selling writers. Ken Taylor's paraphrased version of the Bible which he called *The Living Bible* was rejected by 63 publishers. He finally published it himself and it became a huge seller. *The Diary of Anne Frank* was rejected 15 times and called "very dull" by one publisher. *Chicken Soup for the Soul* by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen was rejected 140 times and they've

made millions off of the series. Steven Spielberg applied to the film schools of both UCLA and USC and was rejected. But he's done all right for himself hasn't he? So take heart because rejection happens to everyone. If you're unable to deal it, you're in trouble. So many of us hold back because we fear rejection and we don't say what we're really thinking. We've learned not to share our real selves with people because we don't think they'll like us if they really knew us. But when we live that way, we never become the person God created us to be. We never rise about that fear.

**Jesus was rejected.** In the Act's passage we read that "The stone that [the] builders *rejected* has become the head cornerstone" (v 11). Peter quotes from Psalm 118 in declaring the Jesus is the cornerstone. He fulfills this prophecy.

Prior to our Acts reading, Peter and John had been arrested and called before the council. They had healed a man. A crowd gathered and Peter began preaching to them about the resurrected Jesus and his power to heal. This disturbed the Sadducees because of their claim that Jesus rose from of the dead for they didn't believe in it. The next day before the council they ask Peter, "By what power or what name did you do this?" Peter took the opportunity of answering the question with a lecture. He told them the man was healed by the power of the risen Christ, the same Jesus, whom "you" crucified, he said, in fulfillment of scriptures. God had raised him from the dead. And that "The stone you builders rejected...has become the cornerstone."

**And friends, the stone the builders rejected, is the cornerstone of our faith.**

The cornerstone or capstone isn't simply a decorative stone. It's not just a tradition

designed to look good but with no power for today. It's the stone that structurally hold it all together!

I've read of speculation that Psalm 118:22 refers to a specific event that reportedly took place during the building of Solomon's temple. It's said that this massive temple was built in relative silence. There was no pounding of hammers because the plans were so exact that each stone was perfectly shaped at the quarry. They were pre-made and brought in.

But there was one huge stone that didn't seem to fit anywhere, and the builders placed it to the side. Eventually it got in the way and they ended up pushing it over the bank and it rolled into down the hill into the valley below. After the foundation had been laid, the time came to hoist the cornerstone into place but they couldn't find it. The masons said that it'd already been delivered. Finally they figured out that it was the stone that had been rejected that was the most important of all! When it was retrieved, it slid perfectly into place, serving as the stone that held all the others in position.

Mark it down so you never forget it. **Christ is meant to be the foundation on which we build our lives.** If you believe this you're a very fortunate person. In the Bible there's this theme of the most unlikely people succeeding and become great servants of God. I think of Joseph, and King David as examples. The oldest son was supposed to get the blessing but often it was the youngest one. Paul was a persecutor of Christians but God chose him to build up the early church. And what about Jesus

who was born in a manger which to my way of thinking is a symbol “unlikely to succeed.” Born in poverty, without resources. He was rejected for a message that didn’t show proper deference to the religious leadership. This theme is meant to give us hope because Lord knows if you’ve been rejected as a child or somewhere else along the way or you don’t have a lot of confidence in yourself or you don’t come from a privileged background , it’s easy to feel you won’t amount to much.

But friends, it doesn’t have to be that way for the stone the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone, that’s Christ, We are his disciples, perhaps “unlikely” disciples looking back on it all. But he has a purpose for us, even if you’ve been *rejected for rejection will only have power over your life if you give it power.*

Allow Christ to be your guide and your positive reinforcement and live his message and there won’t be any limits on what you can do for God and that goes for our church and what we hope to accomplish as well. Amen.