

Jesus Is Rejected

by Paul Bramsen

The sermon explores the rejection of Jesus and the consequences of following his teachings in a world resistant to change.

Scripture: John 7:7, John 8:47, John 8:59, John 10:39, John 11:45

Topics: "Jesus Rejection", "Christian Persecution"

Description

Paul Bramsen discusses the concept of having models to emulate in life, drawing parallels between secular figures like movie stars and sports heroes, and religious figures like Jesus, whom followers considered a worthy model of manhood and truth. He highlights the bitter resistance faced by those who base their lives on the teachings of Jesus, as his ways challenge people to change their sinful ways and live righteously. The sermon delves into the jealousy and bitterness of the Jewish religious leaders towards Jesus, leading to their plot to kill him, as recorded in the Bible.

Transcript

All of us have people we try to emulate. For some, it is a father or mother, for others a teacher, sports hero or movie idol. The model becomes an object of admiration. Those who imitate the model even try to make their appearance like his or hers. Consider the devotion of Elvis Presley fans and the Presley look-a-like contests. When a movie star develops a new hairdo, all the young women copy her. If a football player advertises a certain sneaker or wears his own number on his jersey, boys will buy that brand of sneakers or wear his number on their shirts, too.

Religious people have models, too - an imam or a priest. Children are urged to follow the example of "so and so." The model becomes an object of admiration.

The Qur'an asserts that Jesus' followers considered him a worthy model of manhood, a prophet to be honored and copied. (Sura 6:85) They tried to impress upon others that he taught God's truth and knew how to live, and as such, people should follow his example.

Great men have indeed followed Jesus' example. Indian Hindus will consider Ghandi, who studied about Jesus and based his nonviolent political movement on the teachings of Jesus. Black people will consider Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a Christian minister whose passive resistance to segregation became the hope and inspiration of the millions of Blacks in the United States. Both men suffered greatly for their way of life. Both men died in their cause.

Why is it that whenever people base their lives on the teachings of Jesus, bitter resistance and hatred rises against them? Isn't it because God's ways, as taught by Jesus, are not the ways of secular people? People feel challenged to change their sinful ways and live righteous lives as Jesus did. Most people find it easier to reject him and those who follow him rather than change their lives. But in rejecting him, they reject the teachings of God and will have to face God's judgement.

Imagine what would happen if someone you know announced that he was going to follow the example of Jesus. Certainly many people would be angry and some might even threaten that person or do him physical harm.

We should not be surprised that the Jewish religious leaders had a negative reaction to Jesus. They became jealous of Jesus' power to heal lepers, to give sight to the blind and to raise the dead. They tried to find evil in his actions but could not. Finally, they plotted to kill him.

The Bible records their hatred and bitterness in the following ways:

"Jesus said, '[the world] hates me because I testify that what it does is evil.'" (John 7:7)

"He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God." (John 8:47)

The people reacted this way:

". . . They picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds." (John 8:59)

"Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp." (John 10:39)

"Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did [he raised Lazarus from the dead], put their faith in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. 'What are we accomplishing?' they asked. 'Here is this man performing many miraculous signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.' Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year, spoke up, 'You know nothing at all! You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people, than that the whole nation should perish.' . . . So from that day on they plotted to take his life." (John 11:45-53)

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