

Who doesn't want to be liked?

Babies and children can tell when they are not wanted.

Youth struggle with the ever-changing landscape of popularity and belonging, as they seek their way beyond their family.

Adults fashion resumés and conduct job interviews with an eye to being liked by prospective employers.

Government leaders seek to be liked by their constituents.

We all want to be liked – if not by everyone, at least by most people.

But –as even many therapists will tell us – the desire to be liked can be a liability.

- It can lead to pain and suffering.
- The pain of rejection.

If the Bible has anything to tell us, it is this:

- There is no glory apart from suffering;
- no trophy to be won apart from the hard discipline of training;
- no life beyond death except through acceptance of death.

Loving God Isn't easy!

Life in God's love is not the absence of suffering,

but the knowledge that what we suffer

- is to be expected,
- it is temporary, and
- God delivers us from it.

As the apostle Peter tells us in the 3rd chapter of his first Letter:

¹³If you are always trying to do good, no one can really harm you. ¹⁴But you may suffer for doing right. If that happens, you have God's blessing. "Don't be afraid of the people who make you suffer; don't be worried."^[a] ¹⁵But keep the Lord Christ holy in your hearts. Always be ready to answer everyone who asks you to explain about the hope you have. ¹⁶But answer them in a gentle way with respect. Keep your conscience clear. Then people will see the good way you live as followers of Christ, and those who say bad things about you will be ashamed of what they said.

¹⁷It is better to suffer for doing good than for doing wrong.

Ps. 9: Be gracious to me, O LORD.

See what I suffer from those who hate me;
you are the one who lifts me up from the gates of death,
¹⁴so that I may recount all your praises,
and, in the gates of daughter Zion,
rejoice in your deliverance.

Isaiah 53

The servant grew up obeying the LORD.

He wasn't some handsome king.

Nothing about the way he looked

made him attractive to us.

³He was hated and rejected;

his life was filled with sorrow
and terrible suffering. Isaiah 53:3ff

Romans 8:

¹⁵The Spirit that we received is not a spirit that makes us slaves again to fear. The Spirit that we have makes us children of God. And with that Spirit we say, "Father, dear Father."^[a] ¹⁶And the Spirit himself joins with our spirits to say that we are God's children. ¹⁷If we are God's children, then we will receive the blessings God has for us. We will receive these things from God together with Christ. But we must suffer as Christ suffered, and then we will have glory as Christ has glory.

¹⁸We have sufferings now. But the sufferings we have now are nothing compared to the great glory that will be given to us.

It isn't easy living in God's love – following the path the Lord has shown us.

Suffering

- is to be expected,
- it is temporary, and
- God delivers us from it.

David and Jesus have much in common.

- Their anointing as king
- Their power in weakness
- And their suffering rejection by those closest to them.

"Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house." Jesus tells us.

Loving God is not easy.

When David is anointed king in the presence of his brothers who were passed over, he suffers jealousy and anger at their hands.

But when he comes of age and it's time to select a new king, the rest of God's people seek him out to lead them.

They like David. He is seen by them as being gifted to rule them

He rules 40 years.

Not perfectly – he is an infamous murderer and adulterer.

He suffers the loss of his and Bathsheba's child.

But he is remembered by God's people through the generations as a great king.

He is great because The Lord is with him.

The Holy Spirit gives him wisdom.

He repents of his sins and receives forgiveness.

He learns that suffering and rejection are overcome by trust and hope in the Lord.

Jesus is the last king in the line of David.

He, too, is anointed by the Holy Spirit,

Suffers the rejection of his own family

And finally, suffers the rejection of his own people, the agony of torture, and his own death on the cross.

Jesus suffers the finality of this mortal life with its burdens of sin and sorrow.

Our sins and our sorrows. Our trials and tribulations.

Our suffering becomes his suffering so that we are delivered from it.

And for what?

So that we can live joyfully, freely, hopefully, and without fear because we know that he rose from the dead as the first of all people.

Those who are baptized into his death suffer and die with him and rise with him to new life.

We don't need to fear the future, because we know that whatever happens on this earth, it cannot prevent the victory of Christ's resurrection from being the last Word.

People of God, this is the life we get to live each day!

This is what we are sent out into the world to announce and demonstrate.

Our Gospel today tells us that the twelve are sent out to the surrounding towns and villages.

They do four things that accomplish the one mission to make Jesus known:

1. Speak out so that people might repent
2. Cast out demons
3. Anoint the sick
4. Heal

This is consistent with the new life of Jesus' resurrection.

It is consistent with the work of the Holy Spirit to establish the kingdom of God.

Let's linger just a moment on the word "repent".

Quite literally, it means to "turn one's mind".

Because where the mind is, there goes the body.

So, Jesus' disciples are sent out by Jesus with his Holy Spirit,

and they **speak out to get people's minds focused on Jesus.**

They illustrate the message – not with cute stories and clever jokes –
but with **deeds**

■ **of exorcism, anointing and prayer, and healing**

– the very things Jesus is and does

– demonstrating the very wholeness the kingdom of heaven
promises.

They can expect to suffer and be rejected by some – just as Jesus is.

But they can persevere because they know that following Jesus isn't
easy.

- Suffering and rejection is to be expected,
- it is temporary, and in Christ,
- God delivers them from it.

Brothers and sisters – this is also true for us.

Each of us has been sent by the Lord with the Holy Spirit to point others to Jesus.

- Not all are sent to preach in public,
 - but each of us can use our voices
 - and our lives to shine a light on Jesus.
- Each of us has the power to turn people's attention from useless worry and resignation to Jesus
 - – who gives life beyond death,
 - mercy to convicted sinners,
 - and healing to those in distress.

Each of us has the power – and the opportunity -- to say to someone:

“Hey – what are you doing on Sunday?

I know a guy who will blow your mind with his grace and mercy.
I'd like to pick you up and take you with me to meet him.

Will you come?”

...

Will you invite someone?

Will you risk rejection knowing that Jesus has your back?

Alex Tran, a passionate young leader at Life.Church suggests focusing on the positive potential of invitation:

- What if God has been preparing the heart of someone and has been waiting for me to invite them?
- What if they say yes?
- What if they're hurting and find healing at church?
- What if they give their life to Christ because of me, and future generations are changed because of it?
- What if they say yes?
- What if they experience authentic community and love here for the first time?
- What if the church renews their faith and hope in Christ?

- What if they find their identity in Christ and walk in greater confidence?
- <https://finds.life.church/heres-easy-way-invite-people-church/>
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what a difference that would make!

Will you step out of your comfort zone

and go beyond just being a good person

to being a person who lives the life of Jesus

and invites others into that life?

I challenge each of us this week to make a list of people we know who need Jesus' healing, love, and grace and who do not have a church home.

Then pray for each of those persons and ask God how you can reach out to them.

Then, pick at least one of those persons and invite them to join you –for coffee, supper, and then – to meet Jesus in the church.

There are some great events coming up – Waterfest, Clothing ministry, Ice Cream Party.

Let's seize these opportunities for making Jesus known.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

BONUS: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BPVUN5ZjSrI>

This is just too funny!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zaF6VYtVBuI>

Pentecost 7 B

8 July 2018

St. Peter York

2 Samuel 5:1-10; Mark 6:1-13