

Three people came up from the crowd Jesus had been addressing, and asked for a moment's quiet conversation. They looked concerned.

Master, said the first. I have spent most of my adult life rejecting other people. It was my family culture, to look down on the people around us --- because they weren't as rich, or as nice looking, or as liberal or as conservative or as morally squeaky clean. I'm not sure whether we got this way from an inferiority complex, or jealousy, or fear that if we dared stop looking down at others and looked into our own hearts, we'd see we were a mess. The idea that there might be someone in the world full of God --- I mean you --- that doesn't reject anybody ever --- is such good news I don't think I can really believe it.

Jesus smiled: perhaps when you see me lifted on the cross, utterly rejected by the chief priests, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the elite, the common people --- perhaps when you see me on the cross absolutely rejected by everybody ... yet still not rejecting a soul, even my crucifiers ... you can come to believe.

The second said: Master, my problem isn't that I reject others, but ... I reject myself. I've spent my life thinking I wasn't good enough. I cannot imagine someone knowing me intimately and not rejecting me. Jesus sighed: When you grow in your faith, you'll trust God and trust God's opinion of you more than yours. Little by little you'll realize that the least of your brethren, that I command you to love, is you. And you'll feel compassion for you, and feel for you and cherish you the way I want.

The third said: Master, I want to believe in you, and in a kingdom where there is no more rejection. But rejection is built so strong into us human beings. It's like a web woven all cultures and nations. We reject people because of race, sex, politics, sexual orientation, moral evil: real or imagined, wrongs done to us: real or imagined. Sometimes we reject others without even knowing why. How can this new world come?

Jesus wept. I am baptized to bring about this new world. It is what the Father wills. God has willed that no one who comes to me will reject or be rejected. You can count on this: Tears will be wiped away and reproaches removed. No matter what it takes I will not lose anything of what God gave me. This is the will of my Father. Everyone who sees the Son and believes in him has eternal life, and I shall raise him, shall raise her, on the last day.

The dead will rise to hear this, and be very glad.