

Monday, June 19 – Have you heard of the magazine called *Rejected Quarterly*? It was founded with the premise they would publish short stories that had been rejected at least five times. Want to know why you never heard of it – apparently its readers rejected it. But the pain we feel when we are rejected dwarfs that which was felt by these writers – especially when the rejection comes from a spouse, parent or child. And with rejection, you also get its cousins – insecurity, inferiority, perfectionism or compulsive drivenness. This way of think can only be combated and defeated with God’s acceptance. **Read Romans 8:14-16.** If we are co-heirs with Christ, what does that make us?

Tuesday, June 20 – Therapists offer different suggestions for how to address our fear and anxiety around isolation. Often chronic fear of rejection relates to childhood experiences of rejection, abandonment or abuse. Perhaps as an infant we were left alone for long periods with no one to attend to us, or as children a parent left the home or died. These can leave us feeling insecure about our relationships, about whether we are worthy of another’s love and friendship. They can leave us with anxiety that those in our lives will eventually leave as our parents did. Similarly, if we experienced regular rejection as a child, we might have tapes that play in our head that say things like, “No one would really want to be my friend.” Those who struggle with chronic loneliness tend to interpret every social interaction in the light of those childhood experiences, in the most possible negative way. If someone doesn’t respond to an e-mail within an hour, or a day, it can’t be that they were busy, or missed the e-mail—it must mean they don’t like me. Among the common sense therapies is the encouragement re-engage with people, though we don’t want to do it. It may be, if we’re retired, to take a part time job. It may be to volunteer, join a club or organization where you will connect with people. The older we get the more important this becomes. Often a plan is mapped out for combatting loneliness that includes all of these things. To be reminded that you are never really alone, **read Psalm 139:5-10.**

Wednesday, June 21 – **Read Numbers 14:6-10.** The Israelites, panicked by the negative report of ten of the twelve men who’d “spied out” the Promised Land, were ready to mutiny. Two of the spies—Caleb and Joshua—begged Israel to trust God, and not refuse to go into the Promised Land. But the people were ready to stone them (and Moses) to death, and choose another leader to take them back to Egypt—until God’s glory intervened. Fear would not win out to that absurd extent. But God did honor their negative choice. Except for Caleb and Joshua, God said, Israel would stay in the wilderness until all of those who didn’t want to go into the Promised Land reached the end of their lives. Imagine Caleb and Joshua’s feelings the next day as they packed up their tents and marched, not toward the “exceptionally good land” they had seen briefly on their scouting trip, but away from it, into the desolate Sinai landscape. God offers you an exceptionally good life, full of purpose, challenge and meaning, leading to eternity in a world made new with all the good things God has always intended for human life. Yet it can be scary to choose that life. How can you keep fear from making you turn your back on God’s exceptionally good life? How can you set your life’s course firmly in the direction of God’s promised land? What is the best approach in your life when everyone rejects you? (What did Caleb and Joshua do? You might have to keep reading in Numbers©)

Thursday, June 22 – Read Genesis 4:1-10. So what do you do when God rejects you? Ok, that question is a little misleading. When you read the Cain and Abel story, it is a rejection of what Cain offered to God. But too many times in our lives, we take ALL rejection to mean I AM rejected. Cain figured out quickly there wasn't anything he could do to God, but he could take out his frustration on his brother. He took extreme measures and it did cost him. And if we take every rejection to mean WE are rejected, then we will take action that will be harmful to us and harmful to others. And then we still have to face the consequences of our actions. What steps can you take to make sure you see rejection of what you do is not a rejection of you as a person?

Friday, June 23 - Read Psalm 8. As you read think about this: God made this incredible creation – all those magnificent stars – and yet he cares for you. He has made you a little lower than the angels and crowned you with glory and honor. That's how he sees you: crowned with his own glory. He sees you that way regardless of how much you have succeeded or failed in your life. Compared to the starry heavens you may feel small, but David says no, the night sky makes him amazed that he matters so much to God. Maybe you need to memorize this verse:
Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me. Psalm 27:10