

# WEEKLY SERMON

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## The Thorn of Rejection: Persevering in Faith and Purpose

*2 Samuel 5.1-5,9-10; Psalm 48; 2 Corinthians 12.2-10; Mark 6.1-13*

In this week's Gospel reading from Mark 6:1-13, we encounter a poignant moment in Jesus' ministry. Returning to His hometown, He faces scepticism and rejection from those who knew Him as a carpenter's son. This rejection echoes a universal truth: sometimes, the hardest place to be accepted is among those closest to us.

The Apostle Paul, in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, speaks of a 'thorn in the flesh' - a persistent challenge he faced. While we don't know the exact nature of this thorn, we can relate it to the pain of rejection that Jesus experienced. Both Jesus and Paul persevered through these difficulties, recognising that God's grace is sufficient.

Recently, we witnessed a similar scenario during the Euros, where Kevin De Bruyne, a talented footballer, faced booing from his own team's supporters as he chose a conservative approach to secure their progression in the tournament. Despite their team's success, fans continued to express disapproval, leading the players to forgo their usual post-match appreciation.

This situation presents us with a choice. We can be like the crowd, quick to judge and reject when things don't align with our expectations. Or we can emulate Jesus, who persevered in His mission of love despite facing rejection.

Called to Love, Regardless.

In 2 Samuel 5:1-5, we see David finally accepted as king over all Israel. His journey to this point was fraught with rejection and challenges. Yet, like Jesus, David remained faithful to his calling.

As followers of Christ, we are called to love and serve, even when faced with rejection. It's often easier to dismiss the challenging aspects of Jesus' teachings, to boo from the sidelines when things don't go our way. But the harder, more rewarding path is to persist in love, to keep sharing the Good News even when it's not well-received.

Let us remember that our mission, like that of Jesus, is rooted in love. Whether we face rejection in our homes, workplaces, or communities, may we find strength in God's grace, as Paul did. Let's choose to persevere, to love unconditionally, and to trust that God's power is made perfect in our weakness.

**Iain Parks, Director of the Diocesan Board of Education**