

May 21st, 2017

THE WORLD HATES YOU BECAUSE I CHOSE YOU

John 15:18-16:4

As we have seen so far in this farewell discourse, Jesus has been focusing on preparing His disciples for His departure. He was heading for His crucifixion. He been comforting them, equipping them, and commanding them. Now Jesus prepares them for the hatred and persecutions that they will face from the world. But this hatred and persecution was not reserved only for those first disciples. Every Christian, regardless of time or country, will at least face these these things to a greater or lesser degree. **Matthew 5:11** “Blessed are you *when* others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.” Jesus doesn’t say *if* but *when*. Paul says in **2 Timothy 3:12** “Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,” So Jesus is addressing you this morning, if you belong to Him.

For the disciples, this persecution would cost them their lives. Look at **16:2** “Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.” The disciples were going to be murdered. Martyred. Oh church, consider the weight of Jesus words’. He told them ‘If you stay on this path, if you continue to follow me, it will result in your death.’ Many disciples of Christ face that same reality today. Fox News¹ reported on January 17th, of this year that nearly 1 million Christians were martyred in the last decade. That’s nearly 100,000 believers every year. The world is not becoming more peaceful it is becoming more brutal.

But surprisingly, Jesus is not mainly concerned with death but rather with apostasy.² In **16:1**, He says “I have said all these things to you to keep you from

¹ <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2017/01/17/nearly-1-million-christians-reportedly-martyred-for-their-faith-in-last-decade.html>

² Is your fear centered on the right objects in your life? Jesus said “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (**Matthew 10:28**)

falling away.” As D.A. Carson says “The greatest danger the disciples will confront from the opposition of the world is not death but apostasy.”³ And this is the greatest danger you face. Not everybody who begins with Jesus ends with Jesus. And the main factor behind this is the hatred of the world. When persecution comes, how will you respond? When you are hated for Christ’s sake, where will you turn for comfort? Jesus says in **16:4** “But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you.” So this is where we are going. **First**, Jesus is telling you that you *will be* hated and persecuted, **Secondly**, Jesus tells you *why* you will be hated and persecuted. And **Thirdly**, Jesus tells you *how* you should respond when you are hated and persecuted and *why* you will be able to.⁴

- ☆ The Reality of the World’s Hatred
- ☆ The Reason for the World’s Hatred
- ☆ Your Response to the World’s Hatred

The Big Idea...

If you belong to Christ you will be hated by the world

I. The Reality of the World’s Hatred

The condition for the world hating us has already been met

Notice that if you belong to Jesus, the *condition* for the world hating you has already been met. Look at **v.19** “If you were of the world, the world would

³ D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According To John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), pg. 530

⁴ This brief overview was taken from Tim Keller’s sermon entitled Conflict found at <http://www.gospelinlife.com/sermons/conflict-9607> accessed May 20th, 2017

love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, *but I chose you out of the world*, therefore the world hates you.” Christian, why does the world hate you?⁵ Because Jesus elected you by free grace and that invincibly results in a changed life. **v.16** from last week, Jesus said “I chose you and appointed you that *you should go and bear fruit* and that *your fruit should abide...*” When the world sees that fruit, it sees Jesus, and it hates what it sees.

Let’s be clear. The world can hate you because “you are an obnoxious, belligerent, sinful, self-righteous [jerk].”⁶ Peter says that type of behavior is worthless. **1 Peter 2:20** “For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure?” Christians who strut their superiority over others are Pharisees. They earn the world’s hatred. Jesus is not talking about that kind of hatred. There is a different kind of hatred that is spawned from following Christ. Augustine in his Confessions tells how he and some boyhood friends stole some pears from a neighbor’s vineyard. He says “We took away an enormous quantity of pears,” Augustine recalls—and “not to eat them ourselves, but simply to throw them to the pigs.”⁷ As he reflected on this later in life, it grieved him. He said “Perhaps we ate some of them, but our real pleasure consisted in *doing something that was forbidden.*”⁸ He didn’t want the pears to eat. He wanted the pears because they were forbidden. Inside our sinful hearts,

⁵ Calvin touches on how the world even hates each other: “But there is still another objection that may be urged; for we see that it commonly happens that wicked men, who are of the world, are not only hated, but accursed by others. In this respect, certainly, the world liveth not what is its own. I reply, earthly men, who are regulated by the perception of their flesh, never have a true hatred of sin, but only so far as they are affected by the consideration of their own convenience or injury. And yet the intention of Christ was not to deny that the world foams and rages within itself by internal quarrels. He only intended to show, that the world hates nothing in believers but what is of God.” John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries Vol. XVIII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 124

⁶ R.W. Glenn, *Crucifying Morality*, (Wapwallopen, PA.: Shepherd Press, 2013), pg.104

⁷ <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-15/and-saint-in-pear-tree.html>

⁸ *ibid*

there is a rebellious cry “No one tells me what to do.”⁹ Anything that comes along and threatens that personal autonomy is met with hatred. So when the church witnesses to what Jesus said: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”(John 14:6), how do you think the world will respond? With hatred.

II. The Reason for the World’s Hatred

Why does the world hate Jesus?

Why does the world hate Jesus *mainly*? I don’t believe it’s because Jesus taught or even claimed to be God. Most of the world believes in a god of sorts. When Polycarp, the disciple of John, was sentenced to death in 339 a.d., he was given one last chance by the Roman governor to have his life spared. All he had to say was “Down with the infidels”¹⁰—meaning down with the Christians, *because* they only believed in one God. Polycarp refused. He was burnt alive. But not because Rome was filled with atheists. Likewise, the Jews believed in God. Their hatred of Jesus wasn’t *mainly* over Jesus even claiming to be God.

Neither do I believe that the world hates Jesus *mainly* because He convicted the world of sin. Non-believing Israel believed in sin. They had elaborate systems designed to atone for it. Even mainstream America believes in sin. Intolerance, as they define it, is regarded as the chief sin in our culture.

So I don’t believe that Jesus’ teaching about God or sin is the *main* reason the world hates Him. Why then? Please turn with me to John 7.

After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him. **2** Now the Jews' Feast of

⁹ https://books.google.com/books?id=tzepCQAAQBAJ&pg=RA5-PA19&lpg=RA5-PA19&dq=Tim+Keller+augustine's+pears&source=bl&ots=tjx8EkbKqc&sig=15qBS9Jqs4rvsxJ3kEhVPnYACX8&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjUzdn0_f_TAhUFyGMKHVQIDr8Q6AEIzAA#v=onepage&q=Tim%20Keller%20augustine's%20pears&f=false

¹⁰ *Eerdman’s Book of Christian Classics*, Compiled by Veronica Zundel, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdman’s Publishing Company, 1985), pg. 18

Booths was at hand. **3** So his brothers said to him, “Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. **4** For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.” **5** For not even his brothers believed in him. **6** Jesus said to them, “My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. **7** The world cannot **hate** you, but it **hates** me *because I testify about it that its works are evil.*

Notice what Jesus doesn't say. He doesn't say that *the world's sins are evil*. He says that *its works are evil*. What works? All of them! Not just their sins, but even their good deeds. Jesus is speaking about the religious people who are going to Jerusalem to work works of God. And He says that those *works* are evil. This is the reason why the world hates Jesus. Because Jesus says that everything that the world does to try and repair it's relationship with God *through good works* is evil. It's not just that good works are inadequate, they are wicked. Because good works divorced from Jesus are nothing but self-salvation projects. So that is my thesis in this text: **the world hates Jesus mainly because Jesus says that everything that it does to try and justify itself before God is deeply offensive to Him.** The world hates Jesus because Jesus testifies that it's best works are an abomination before Him.

And this is why the world hates Christians. The world doesn't mind if you try to be a good person. In fact, the world applauds good people. It loves self-righteousness. But what the world hates is when your good works flow from the righteousness of Christ. If you receive righteousness that causes you to exalt over the righteousness of Christ, then you will be hated by the world. That's why Jesus says in **v.20** of our passage “Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” The world will persecute you if you testify that without Christ you are nothing. The gospel is offensive to the world, because it says even their best works are offensive before God.

J. Gresham Machen

This was J. Gresham Machen's main contention with the liberalism of his day. Machen, who was a professor at Princeton University for 23 years, during the early part of the last century, had to resign from the once prestigious Christian University because it sold its soul to a social gospel. The liberal Christians of his day had so watered down the gospel, that being a Christian *meant* doing good things in culture. Supernaturalism was denied, which included the miracles of Jesus. Truth shifted from that which was objective to that which was useful. And because he opposed these things, he was the chief adversary of liberalism in the 1920's. His last recorded words on his death bed on New Year's Day 1937 summed up best what was at stake: "I'm so thankful for [the] active obedience of Christ. No hope without it."¹¹ In other words, Machen *found comfort* not from vague ideas about Jesus "but from a doctrinally precise understanding of the active obedience of Christ—which He believed was credited to his account and would make him a suitable heir of eternal life."¹²

They would not have been guilty of sin?

And that idea—that Christ alone makes you suitable for eternal life—is the train of thought that we see in the middle of our passage. Look at v. 22-24

If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. **23** Whoever hates me hates my Father also. **24** If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father.

Jesus is not saying that if He wouldn't have ministered among the Jews that they would have been sinless. The sin here is not sin *in general*, but the very specific sin of hating Jesus. They wouldn't have been guilty of *that sin* had not

¹¹ John Piper, *Contending For Our All: Defending Truth and Treasuring Christ in the Lives of Athanasius, John Owen, and J. Gresham Machen*, (Wheaton, IL.: Crossway, 2006), pg. 116

¹² *ibid*, pg. 116-117

Jesus spoke such things among them as Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.” (**John 6:35**) And Jesus did works among them that no one else did like raising Lazarus from the dead (**John 11:43**).

In rejecting the ministry of Jesus they were guilty of trying to establish their own righteousness. Paul says this about the unbelieving Jews in his time. **Romans 10:1-4** says

Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. 2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and *seeking to establish their own*, they did not submit to God's righteousness. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

That's what a rejection of Jesus Christ is: it's trying to establish a righteousness of your own. Trying to establish a way that you feel right in the world.

Self-righteousness is more offensive than fleshly sins

Jesus' point here, is that this sin—self righteousness—is *worse* than all others. Dear congregation, we are on very dangerous grounds on this point. We tend to have a grading scale for sins. We place sins like *murder* at the top, and then after that probably *homosexuality, adultery, stealing, lying* etc. That is not how Jesus grades sins. The worse types of sins are religious sins—so-called good works. Good works that subtly become the reason you believe that God is pleased with you. This type of self righteousness is more offensive than any fleshly sin. Jesus emphasizes this point in **Matthew 11:20-24**

Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. **21** “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. **22** But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of

judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. **23** And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. **24** But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you.”

Self-righteousness is more offensive to God than any sin of the flesh. I’m way more ashamed of the sins that I have committed “in the church” than “in my flesh.” And I blush with shame when I think about my former carnal life. I think I committed almost all those things that Paul said that if you persist in them you will not inherit the kingdom of God (**1 Cor. 6:9-11**) But the sins I’ve committed in the church are far worse. Because those are sins of self-righteousness. Looking down on others because they haven’t arrived like me. Those sins belittle Christ. They say “Jesus, I don’t really need what you have to offer because I’ve got it figured out.” Dear congregation, the main enemy of the gospel is not pagan hedonism, but religious self-righteousness.

Where does Jesus say we will be hated by the world?

Perhaps your thinking, ‘Josh, I don’t see what you see. It seems like a stretch to say that the main enemy of the gospel is religious self-righteousness. I don’t see that in this passage.’ Ok. Let’s connect a couple verses together. In **v. 21**, Jesus says “But all these things *they* [the world] will do to you on account of my name,” What “world” does Jesus mean? What “things” is he talking about? Look at **16:2** “They will put you out of the synagogues.” Where does Jesus say the main opposition for His disciples will come from? From the self-righteous in the synagogues—meaning from religious people. Continuing on in **v.2** “Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.” Do you see? The real enemies of the church are people that think they are on God’s side, simply by what they do. In the disciple’s day that was the Sanhedrin, and you can see this played out in the book of Acts. In our day, it’s any number of manifestations. D.A. Carson notes “Christians have often discovered that the most dangerous oppression comes not from careless pagans

but from zealous adherents to religious faith, and from other ideologues. A sermon was preached when Cranmer was burned at the stake. [Thomas Cramner was a leader of the English Reformation in the 1500's] Christians have faced severe persecution performed in the name of Yahweh, in the name of Allah, in the name of Marx—and in the name of Jesus.”¹³

Summary

The main reason that the world hates Jesus and therefore us is because when the true gospel of Jesus Christ is preached, it takes away the world's sense of control. This is why false gospels don't threaten the world. If the world hears “Be a good person and you can go to heaven” they—generally speaking—are not threatened by that. Because they can always think of someone worse than them. Or they think that their good deeds outweigh their bad. They still feel a sense of control. But when the true gospel is preached—the gospel of grace that says it depends entirely on God to save us—that Jesus had to be crucified because our best works are an abomination to Him—then the world loses all control. And that is when hatred and persecution arise.¹⁴

III. Your Response to the World's Hatred

The problem

How will you respond to the world's hatred? Jesus already said that you must bear fruit—the fruit of loving others (v.12)—and this has to include bearing witness about Jesus to the world. But how will you accomplish this knowing that the world hates you? For the apostles, their witness resulted in excommunication—“put you out of the synagogue”—and death—“whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.” (16:2) Jesus is telling them: “Listen men, I'm sending you out on a mission, and you will all be afflicted and

¹³ D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According To John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), pg. 531

¹⁴ Story of Home Depot lady crediting my honesty to Karma.

tortured, and eventually martyred. But if you don't go and bear fruit, you won't prove to be my disciples (v.8) Jesus sent them out as sheep among the wolves. How did they have courage to proceed?

“I will send to you the Holy Spirit”

Because Jesus promises them that He will not leave them alone in this battle, He sent them the Holy Spirit v. 26-27 “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.” Three precious truths from these two verses.

1. The Holy Spirit is our Helper

The book of Acts is called the Acts of the Apostles, but it should really be called the Acts of the Holy Spirit. What turned those cowardly men who ran at Jesus' arrest into men who defied the Roman empire? The Holy Spirit. He was their chief Helper. Jesus is telling the apostles ‘Yes, you must go, and yes “the world will rage against you; [and] mock [you, and] curse your doctrine, but none of their attacks will be so violent as to shake your faith”¹⁵ because you have been given the Helper. The Holy Spirit is the main actor in our gospel witness. Look ahead to 16:8-10, it is the Holy Spirit who convicts the world of sin—not you. It is the Holy Spirit who convicts the world of a need for righteousness—not you. It is the Holy Spirit who convicts the world of the coming judgment—not you.

2. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth

There are times when the deception of the world is so strong that believers will be tempted to believe lies. **Matthew 24:24** says “For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if

¹⁵ John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries Vol. XVIII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 130

possible, even the elect.” Why is it not possible for the elect to be deceived ultimately? Because we have the Spirit of Truth. It dawned on me last night about how the Spirit of Truth has protected me from such deception. I remember nearly a decade ago, I was starting to be influenced by some very liberal thinkers in the Emergent Church. They spoke spoke of Jesus’ crucifixion in terms of Divine child abuse, and openly questioned the existence of hell. I remember I was deeply confused about everything I had learned from Scripture. And then there was a moment of perfect clarity, the inward testimony of the Spirit showed me the absolute falsehood of those claims. And this is His promise in Scripture. **1 Corinthians 2:12** “Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.”

3. The Holy Spirit’s witness causes our witness

There is an Divine order to v.26 and v.27. Jesus says “He [the Holy Spirit] will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness about me.” Meaning, the reason why you will bear witness about me, is because the Holy Spirit will witness through you. In **Acts 4:7**, Peter was questioned by the council for healing the lame beggar. They asked “By what power or by what name did you do this?” Peter gives that most famous answer in v.10 “let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well.” How did Peter do that? v.8 says “Then Peter, *filled with the Holy Spirit*, said to them,” Peter witnessed to Jesus in spite of being arrested and threatened. How? Because he was filled with the Holy Spirit. Dear congregation, the Holy Spirit’s witness causes your witness.

Summary

That’s how the disciples responded to the world’s hatred. They trusted Jesus’ promise that the Holy Spirit would be their Helper, that He would lead them into truth, and that His witness would cause their witness. And that is

how we are to respond to the hatred of the world. Paul says “For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord,” (2 Timothy 1:7-8)

Application

Our Doctrine: Our main opposition is not hedonism but moralism

The Puritan Stephen Charnock said that “men are more willing to part with their sins than with their righteousness.”¹⁶ Moralism is a greater stronghold than hedonism. The hedonist seeks happiness through indulgence. But the moralist seek happiness through performance. And the moralist expects that God will bless him for his performance. And this is why the gospel is so offensive to him, because the gospel says that all the things that they rest in for their comfort and hope are deeply offensive to God. The moralist is most angry against Jesus Christ, because the gospel says that all of their moral living has been a complete waste of time. “They will [object] ‘All you do is cry out to God for his righteousness as a gift, and that somehow makes you perfectly acceptable to God? No matter what you have done? Then what is the point of being good?’”¹⁷

And that is the question I want to ask you dear congregation. What’s the point of being good? Do you do good? Why? Do you do it out of fear, believing that if you don’t live right that Jesus won’t accept you? Do you do it from the sense of superiority that you feel over others? Do you do good out of a sense of control, thinking that at least you can manage this one thing in your life? Let’s put some flesh on it. When you pray, why do you pray? Did you pray because you have a thirst for communion with Christ, or because you know

¹⁶ *A Puritan Golden Treasury*, Compiled by I.D.E. Thomas, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2007), pg. 225

¹⁷ R.W. Glenn, *Crucifying Morality*, (Wapwallopen, PA.: Shepherd Press, 2013), pg.108

that as a Christian it is your duty to pray? When you read the Scriptures, why do you read? Do you read because you are hungry to hear the voice of God, or because this is how you feel better about indulging in other areas of life? When you came to church this morning, why did you come? Did you come because being with God and His people is the delight of your soul, or because church attendance will help appease your conscience?

Here's the scandal of the gospel: **whether you do all those things for the purest reasons or for impure reasons, Christ had to die for them.** Your best performances can never gain you favor with God. You are either accepted by God because of the performance of Jesus Christ, or you are not. Either God looks at you in the righteous and perfect robes of His Son Jesus Christ, or not. The gospel is not, "Jesus does His part, and you do your part." The gospel is this: Jesus Christ laid down His life for yours. Not just for your sins, but for all your good works. That's why Martin Luther could say "Sin boldly, but believe in Christ more boldly."¹⁸ He didn't mean that we should sin. He meant that even in our best law keeping, there is sin. Even in our cleanest living there is sin. So sin boldly—meaning live boldly—but believe in Christ more boldly.

Perhaps a test. You ask God to forgive us for your sins. But do you ever ask Him to forgive you for your good deeds? Jesus said in **Luke 17:10** "So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'" Dear congregation, you need a stronger gospel than your obedience can provide. You need a gospel of the active obedience of Jesus Christ, so that what the Father sees is not your performance, but His Sons. And that is the gospel we have. **2 Corinthians 5:21** "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

¹⁸ <https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/ryanreeves/2016/04/20/did-luther-really-tell-us-to-love-god-and-sin-boldly/>

Our Duty: We are to witness to the World

The duty of our passage is clear from v.27 “And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.” Now Jesus is aiming this primarily his disciples—that’s what He means by “because you have been with me from the beginning.” Yet this applies to us. You are to bear witness to Jesus Christ in the world. Are you sharing the gospel? Tim Keller has said “If we get through our lives as Christians without upsetting or offending anyone, we have not ministered with integrity.”¹⁹ Are you ministering with integrity? I challenge you to pray for opportunities to share the gospel this week. Ask God to open doors to share Jesus Christ with your family, friends, co-workers. And expect opposition to come. Expect that the gospel will upset and offend some. Jesus said it would. But this gospel is the only gospel that will save.

That’s our **duty**: We are to witness to the world. Therefore our **delight**...

Our Delight: The Helper will come

We are not alone in our gospel proclamation. Jesus makes a promise in our passage. v.26 “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.” The promised Holy Spirit is our certain victory over the hatred of the world. Calvin says this “This single Witness powerfully drives away, scatters, and overturns, all that the world rears up to obscure or crust the truth of God. All who are endued with this Spirit...will obtain a glorious victory over the whole world.”²⁰ That is how Jesus overcomes the terror of this text.

Believer, the reason why you will not fall away (16:1) in your witnessing for Christ, is because you have been given the Helper.

¹⁹ R.W. Glenn, *Crucifying Morality*, (Wapwallopen, PA.: Shepherd Press, 2013), pg.114

²⁰ John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries Vol. XVIII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 130

Believer, the reason why being put out of the synagogues (16:2) or being put out of your family on account of Christ will not defeat you is because you have been given the Helper.

Believer, the reason why your physical death (16:2) or the death to your reputation or comfort or relationships will not overcome you in your witnessing of Christ is because you have been given the Helper.

Opposition from the world will be strong. But the Helper is stronger. He will bear witness about Christ through you.