

John 15:18-16:4

Intro

- Happy Father's day. My Father's Day Reflection after 8 Years: Parenting is both wonderful and extremely challenging.
- There is a dangerous misconception about following Jesus that goes something like this: If you commit to following Jesus: your circumstances will improve. Your earthly life will only get better. There will be no troubles. Not true.
- This passage is in a section of John commonly referred to as the Farewell Discourse (chs. 13-17) where Jesus is giving his departing words to his beloved disciples.
- In last week's passage of scripture Jesus teaches on the importance of abiding in Him, clinging to him by faith so that our lives bear fruit.
- Today's passage is directly related to last week: Jesus is warning and preparing his disciples for the opposition they will face as they abide in Christ before a watching world.
- John 15:1-17 is primarily about the disciple's relationship to Jesus Christ.
- Today's passage is primarily about the disciple's relationship with the world.
- Point: When we face opposition for our faith in Jesus, we respond with Spirit-empowered witness.

- 2 Questions
 - How will the world respond to Christians?
 - How will Christians respond to the world?

1. How Will the World Respond to Christians? (15:18-25)

- The world will respond to disciples of Jesus with hatred. (If the world hates you...)
- Two words we need to define:
 - The World: The system of mankind that is opposed to God. The world that God created has been broken by sin. And all who are of that world are opposed to God.
 - Hatred: This is strong word. To hate is to "detest, abhor, persecute in hatred." Suggesting an ongoing opposition and hatred toward someone.

- **Why does the world hate Christians? (3 Reasons)**
 - Because the world hates God (18, 20)
 - v.18 "...it has hated me before it hated you." then in verse 20 Jesus reminds his disciples what he said back in chapter 13: "A servant is no greater than his master. If they persecuted me they will also persecute you. "
 - ILL> When people hear me speak, they ask, "where in the south are you from?" I'm actually originally from C.A., but being immersed in the south for 15 years means I've picked up a southern accent. I'm identifiable.
 - The reasoning is this: The more you abide in Christ, the more you become like Jesus. The more you become like Jesus, the more the world takes notice. The more the world takes notice, the more the world opposes you (just as it opposes Christ).

- Because you are no longer of this world (v.19)
 - v. 19- "...you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."
 - John 15:16 "I have chosen you out of the world."
 - ILL> Think of a trade between rival teams. Yankees to Red Sox. You have a new uniform. A new identity. A new team. And what you now stand for, is all that your former team is opposed to.
- Because the World Hates God the Father (v.21-24)
 - They do not know God. v.21- *"But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me."*
 - Show their hatred for God by rejecting the WORDS (v.22) and WORK (v.24) of Christ.
 - v.22-24 This doesn't mean that those who rejected Jesus would have been sinless if they never heard Jesus or saw his miraculous works. It means that the specific sin of rejecting the revelation of God, Jesus, incurred a severe guilt.
- Because of God's plan for salvation (v.25)
 - "must be fulfilled" shows that even the hatred of Jesus was a part of God's sovereign plan to bring about salvation (v.25, Ps. 35:19, 69:4) "Hated me without cause"
 - Their hatred of Jesus will lead his enemies to crucify him, nail him to a cross. And while that may seem like defeat, it's actually God's plan to pay for the sins of the world.
- You may hear this and say. Does the whole world really hate Christians? This doesn't mean that every single person will be opposed to Christians in a violent way. This is why Jesus says at the end of verse 20 says, "If they kept my word, they will also keep yours." So, by God's grace people hear the gospel, encounter Jesus, turn from their sins and believe in him. Praise God!
- But what Jesus tells us here is that there are really only 2 kinds of people: Followers of Jesus and enemies of Jesus. Or to use Jesus' words in Matthew 12:30- "Whoever is not with me is against me." So we shouldn't be surprised when we face opposition.
- **What does this hatred and opposition look like for us?**
 - Let's be clear: We do not understand what true persecution is like as Christians in our context. It is not persecution when someone tells you "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry Christmas." Every one of these disciples (except for John who was banished to an island) were brutally killed for proclaiming Jesus. There are brothers and sisters in Christ around the world as we speak who have to gather secretly to pray and worship and hear God's word. We don't want to trivialize true persecution by pretending we know what that's like.
 - At the same time, we live in a time and place where Christianity is increasingly opposed. We are seen as close minded, old fashioned, intolerant. In every age and in every place, there is opposition to God.
 - You may be ostracized at the work place when you voice that you're a Christian. Your friend or loved one may ridicule you.
 - That stranger or neighbor you share Jesus with may oppose you.
 - And as the culture shifts and changes, there may come a day in your lifetime when voicing the truths of Christianity is not just unpopular, it's illegal.

- This doesn't mean that we go looking for persecution and hatred. Or that we are obnoxious and disrespectful to non-Christians to show that we're disciples of Jesus. ILL.> There's a popular group of people who call themselves followers of Jesus and are known for their vulgar and detestable speech and protests. They're not hated because they represent Christ, they're hated because their obnoxious.
- As Christians, we should labor to be sure that the only offense we place before people is the offense of the Gospel. Romans 12:18 says, "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all"
- That said, if you never experience any opposition to Jesus, then maybe you are not as committed to Christ as you think you are. We are to "go and bear fruit" (15:16). And a result of this will be opposition of some kind.
- This leads us to our second question...

• **How Will Christians Respond to the World? Spirit-Empowered Witness**

- Should we retaliate? This is what Peter does in Chapter 18 at the arrest of Jesus. He pulls out his sword, tries to fight back, and cuts off one man's ear. But Jesus tells Peter to put his sword away. We do not respond to persecution with physical retaliation. We are no longer of this world and our battle is a spiritual battle, not a physical one.
- Should we retreat? If the world is going to oppose us, maybe it's just better for us to stick together as Christians and never engage anyone with the gospel, that way we don't cause a stir. We do not retreat because, as we will hear Jesus pray in John 17: "I do not ask that you take them out of the world... as you have sent me into the world so I have sent them into the world."
- Should we be surprised? No! Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you (1 John 3:13 ESV)
- Should we take it personally? No. the opposition is not primarily of you, but of God himself.
- We respond with Spirit-empowered witness: (15:26-27)
 - *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 will also bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.*
 - This is a testimony to God's love for people who hate him. He will continue to pursue them! Even as they are opposing his people, we will tell of Jesus, who came and lived a sinless life that you and I could never live, died a death on the cross that we deserved to die because of our sin against him, rose from the dead so that haters of God could turn from their sin, trust in Jesus, and have life.
- This is an encouragement to Christians
 - We are promised the help of the Holy Spirit. EXAMPLE: This is how Peter went from a man who denies Christ 3 times to a man who preaches Christ boldly. The power of the Spirit.
 - We are promised protection from falling away (16:1-4). *Verse 1- I have said these things to keep you from falling away.*

- Closing
 - Key Question: What would lead someone to devote their lives to something that promises so much opposition? ie. This sounds like a terrible sales pitch for Christianity.
 - In 1956 missionary Jim Elliot and 4 others were speared to death by the Huaorani people. A tribe they were trying to reach with the Gospel. His wife Elizabeth Elliot, and the family of the other missionaries went back to that tribe, shared the gospel with them, and the entire tribe came to know Jesus.
 - *He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep (his life) to gain what he cannot lose (The joy of knowing Christ).*
 - The world will call us foolish. We may be ridiculed and mocked.
 - Because Jesus is worth it, we endure opposition. Because Jesus has prepared us and promised to keep us when we are hated, we are not surprised when the world rejects Christ. And because the world needs to know the gospel, (point) When we face opposition for our faith in Jesus, we respond with Spirit-empowered witness.