

## John 15:18-27

*18 "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.*

18 Why does the world hate us? It is because it hates Jesus. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus exhorted the people that if they were insulted, persecuted, and slandered they should be happy because that is how the world treated the prophets (Matthew 5:11,12). If they treat the prophets that way, shouldn't we be treated the same? If we live a righteous life, it will be the same for us. Jesus encouraged them to remember that our reward in heaven will be great when we suffer for righteousness (Philippians 1:29).

They hated Jesus first. It is hard to find someone today who will admit to hating Jesus. The hatred is seen in the way they re-create Jesus and change what He said so that their newly defined Jesus fits with their preferences. They do not accept the words of the disciples who Jesus chose, but ascribe to them various nefarious motives. When you try to share a quote from Jesus, they either interpret it in some bizarre way, or get angry and tell you that it was mostly made up by those "evil" disciples. They hate the real Jesus, the Jesus of the Bible, because His teachings do not match with what they want to hear (2 Timothy 4:3). I would rather see them get angry, because that often means they are wrestling with it in their hearts. Being hated is not such a bad thing. At least they are not apathetic, which is even worse (Revelation 3:15).

There is also the persecution that comes in the form of calling us ignorant simpletons. That is probably the most common form of anti-Christian bias in our culture. As I was preparing this message, a member of Sedona's clergy invited me and "anyone who was truly a student" to come hear a speaker from the Jesus' Seminar. In case you do not know what that is, it is a gathering of liberal scholars and some media types that decided they would edit the Gospels down to what they all could agree was really from Jesus. The implication was that if you are really educated you would be interested. Stupid people like me believe that eyewitnesses who died for their faith are more capable to tell us what Jesus said than a Hollywood director that lives 2000 years later. Man am I slow! I guess I am just not open to other ideas.

Why do they hate the real Jesus? It is for the same reason that the Pharisees hated Jesus. He infringes on their goals of power, pleasure, and wealth. They have their hearts set on the things of this life and Jesus tells them having their heart set on those things is not only wrong, but it will end in judgment (Matthew 5:29). Jesus has the audacity to tell us we need to repent, to turn around our thinking (Matthew 23:33; Mark 1:15). Pride hates to hear that.

*19 If you were of the world, the world would 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.*

19 Jesus uses the word "world" here to represent the present condition of mankind set in opposition to God and His kingdom. He called Satan the prince of this world (John 12:31). Verse 19 is telling us that when we become Christians, we no longer belong to this world order. We become citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20), and so we no longer think like the world. We take on the mind of our King. We become aliens like the

patriarchs. We do not belong here (Hebrews 11:16). God reached down into this system and pulled us out and set us in His kingdom (Colossians 1:13).

We tend to be suspicious of that which we do not understand. So, when God transforms a life and the person starts to act differently and associate with others who act differently, it is no wonder that suspicion and even hatred follow. It is easy to use them as scapegoats. If something unexplained happens in the community, it must have been those weird people.

We even see it in the latest danger assessment warning from our own Department of Homeland Security. Those weird people who are against abortion, volunteer to serve in the armed forces, believe the Bible, and are opposed to redefining marriage are a likely threat to the nation's security.

*20 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. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.*

20 If the world treated Jesus as it did, then why should we expect it to treat us differently (Ezekiel 3:7)? If the life of Jesus is flowing through us, do you not think you will be as much of a threat as Jesus? It is not a physical threat. It is a spiritual threat. It is light shining in the darkness exposing sin and injustice. It is calling evil, evil. It is making godly judgments with God's standards and not backing down. Our world is more afraid of words and ideas than they are of weapons.

*21 But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.*

21 It is because of Jesus' name. The name, in Hebrew culture, is all that the person is and stands for. We saw before how the name means the sum of the person's attributes and authority. They do not like Jesus' attributes of justice and righteousness and they certainly do not want to accept the fact that all authority in heaven and earth has been given to Him. They will take the love and mercy, but His justice, righteousness, and authority are abhorrent to them. You are just a reminder to them of those attributes of Jesus and so they will treat you like they treated Him. When you share the need to repent, you remind them of the real Jesus, and they will hate you for it.

They persecute us because they do not know God. Jesus was not speaking of an intellectual attainment, but of an intimate relationship. They have not yielded to God. They do not love God. They love self and yield to none. They will not surrender to the Spirit of God convicting them of unbelief (Matthew 12:31).

*22 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.*

22 When Jesus speaks, His words bring conviction. If God was never manifest in human form, speaking with absolute clarity what God expects from His creation, we would not be as accountable. But He did come and did declare the truth. We have heard it. We can read it. It is declared by Christians around the world. To reject the words of

Jesus makes us guilty of sin. We have no excuse because He came and spoke to mankind (John 12:48).

*23 Whoever hates me hates my Father also.*

23 I have heard people say they believe in God but do not accept the Bible's version of Jesus. Jesus says that is not possible. If you hate the real Jesus, you hate God. These black and white declarations of Jesus are really challenging. They declare that this is the way it is-take it or leave it. We cannot read the words of Jesus and think He was just a little overboard. He is clear and intentional. He was crazy or He is God. You cannot read the words of Jesus and just go your way. They challenge us to decide for or against Him (Luke 11:23).

*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.*

24 Jesus said that if we had not heard His words, we would not be guilty, but now we have no excuse. He is adding that His unique miracles have also made it clear that He is who He claimed to be (John 10:38). No one else has ever calmed the wind and waves. No one else calls paralytics to rise and walk. And certainly no one has ever walked out of their tomb after being dead for three days. To reject all that is to declare a hatred for Jesus and God who sent Him. Since Jesus only did what the Father showed Him, to reject Jesus' miracles is to reject God (John 3:36).

*25 But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'*

25 The world rejects the words and miracles of Jesus. It has no acceptable or justifiable reason. Jesus was quoting Psalm 69:4, a messianic psalm. The Jews considered groundless hatred as evil as sins of idolatry, immorality, and bloodshed (b. Yom 9b). In the previous passage we are commanded to love one another, to remain in Jesus' love, and that our love for Jesus will result in obedience to His commands. That was immediately followed by these verses of warning about the world hating us. It is quite a contrast! We are to love while the world hates God, Jesus, and us. The world has a different spirit (John 18:36). It operates under another power, but Jesus has come to change that one heart at a time.

*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. 27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.*

26, 27 The Helper, the Holy Spirit, is sent to us by Jesus from God. The Spirit testifies/bears witness about Jesus. In other words, He lets us know the truth of who Jesus is and convinces our hearts of the truth of His message. Verse 27 specifically is about the Apostles conveying to the world about the truth of who Jesus is and His message. But this applies to us too as we are to let the Helper help us to do the same for others by our lives and by our words.

Questions:

Why does the world hate Jesus' followers?

Why does it hate Jesus?

What is the subtle persecution we face in the USA?

Why are we different from the world?

Why must we speak out?

Why are people accountable to God?

What verse did Jesus quote? Implications?