

Hatred of the World

John 15:18-27

Introduction

1. Throughout His teaching, Jesus made it clear that following Him was NOT a life of ease and comfort. Jesus, speaking in Mark 8:34 says, “If anyone would come after me let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.” A life of following Jesus is one of commitment to the point of self-denial, suffering, and even death. Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it this way, “When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die.”
2. Context—in our text this morning, we will see these same themes. As we come to John 15, Jesus has already entered Jerusalem and has been there four days. Jesus was preparing His disciples for life without His physical presence as His crucifixion would take place the next day.
3. As Jesus warns us of the world’s hatred and of suffering for the sake of His name, the question is unavoidable: if persecution were to come to this city, would you be a target? Would there be enough “evidence” in your words and actions to “convict” you of being a follower of Jesus?
4. Read John 15:18-27.

Hatred of the World (v. 18-25)

1. Persecution—Expect it. It is the norm.
 - Verse 18: “If the world hates you” could be accurately adjusted to “when the world hates you.”
 - See verse 20: “A servant is not greater than his master, if they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” Jesus does not speak of persecution as a possibility, but as a certainty.
 - Note: Jesus is not saying that persecution is a goal, as if it is something we pursue. It is, however, a reality for the one who faithfully follows Jesus.
2. Persecution: Why it will come #1—because we are not like the world.
 - Verse 19, “If we were of the world, the world would love us”, but because we are not of the world, the world will hate us.
 - Application: Is your life one of different priorities, values, and loyalties? Or do you so fit into the world that there is no recognizable difference from them? Would there be enough evidence to convict you?
3. Persecution: Why it will come #2—because of His name and what His name represents (verse 21).
 - Why does the name of Jesus Christ stir up hatred and persecution? → Because people’s sin and rebellion are exposed.
 - This is precisely what Jesus is saying in verses 22 and 24. He is not saying the world would be sinless had He not come. He is saying that His coming and His dying would expose the fullness of man’s rebellion and sin. The gospel of Jesus Christ is offensive because it exposes the hearts and souls of sinful men and women.
 - Application: Does this gospel ever leave your lips?

4. Persecution: How God uses it.

- 1 Peter 1:6-7, “In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith--more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire--may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”
- As fire refines gold, our faith is refined by persecution. Through it we become more like Jesus.
- Faithfulness in persecution results in “praise and honor and glory.”

“You cannot show the preciousness of a person by being happy with his gifts. Ingratitude will certainly prove that the giver is not loved, but gratitude for gifts does not prove that the giver is precious. What proves that the giver is precious is the glad-hearted readiness to leave all his gifts to be with him. This is why suffering is so central in the mission of the church. The goal of our mission is that people from all the nations worship the true God. But worship means cherishing the preciousness of God above all else, including life itself. It will be difficult to bring the nations to love God from a lifestyle that communicates a love of things. Therefore, God ordains in the lives of his messengers that suffering severs our bondage to the world. When joy and love survive this severing, we are fit to say to the nations with authenticity and power: Hope in God.” (John Piper, *Let The Nations Be Glad*, p. 101)

Our Helper in the Hatred (v. 26-27)

1. Jesus promises to send us a “Helper,” the Holy Spirit, who will help us in the face of this persecution (verse 26). He will not leave us to go it alone. This is the same promise given at the end of the Great Commission (Jesus’ final words to His disciples after His resurrection and before His ascension) where He said, “And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Think of the difference this promise made in the disciples’ faith from the crucifixion (hiding) to the start of the early church (fearless).
 - Application: Do you know that He is with you? He will protect you, provide for you, and use you.
2. This Spirit will bear witness of Jesus through His Word and through us (verses 26-27). We will be witnesses. Not *if*, but *will*. And did you notice the promise hidden in verse 20b? “If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.” There will be some who will keep His word. God promises success here. We will witness, and He will bring success through that witness.
 - Application: Do we really believe this? Do we live like we believe this? We have 78,000 neighbors in Harrisonburg/Rockingham many of whom remain dead in their sins and trespasses. Will we take this gospel of life to them? What a privilege God has given us to bear witness to Jesus.

Conclusion

1. Will you deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Jesus? Will you come and die in response to the call of Christ? This is the normal Christian life: faithful witness even at the cost of suffering because Jesus is worth it. Will you be ready?
2. Pray.