

Hate - John 15:18-6:4
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

In Christ, we have a lot for which we should be thankful. We have been born again to a new hope, forgiven of our sin, cleansed and made righteous. Christ has died for our salvation and we have the gift of the Holy Spirit, the very presence of Christ within. God has chosen us and granted us peace and reconciliation, and has adopted us as sons and daughters of God. We have eternal life that includes restoration and transformation now and the promise of the resurrection and heaven. So much! But this does not mean that our lives in Christ will be cushy, worry free, or devoid of pain. Furthermore, the Scriptures consistently warn us that to live a godly life will mean that we will suffer persecution. After Jesus calls His disciples to lives of sacrificial love for each other and toward the world, He then warns them that their love will not be received with love, but with hate.

“If the world hates you, know that it hated me before it hated you.” Not the most encouraging of words. I really prefer the message that I can have my best life now, and that if I believe in Jesus I will get a shiny new car. I absolutely don't like the suffering and persecution part. But this is a promised reality, that all who desire to live a godly life will be persecuted (1 Timothy 3:12). Jesus even elaborates on this as He tells His disciples that people will actually think they are serving and worshiping God as they harass, beat, and kill followers of Jesus.

Now, as Americans, few of us have had persecution run this deep, to the point where we have been expelled from some organization or had the threat of physical violence. And some of us have lost relationships with family or friends when we found Christ. But most of us have had the awkward moment of having our beliefs ridiculed by a college professor or having a friend reject because of the views we have that flow from the Gospel. For many of us, what this means is a privatized faith, a belief in Jesus that I keep to myself. For others, the desire to be loved and accepted by the world is too much, the result being that we lose our faith and walk away from Jesus. Funny that this is the very reason Jesus is clear about this warning (16:1), he wants us to be ready for the actual cost of our discipleship.

Of course, Christians can suffer persecution and ridicule for reasons that are not merely the worship of Jesus. We can be, shall I say, just offensive idiots sometime. I cringe when I see people claiming the name of Jesus taking a confrontational and combative posture toward the culture. This is not the posture of Christ. Other times people come up with bizarre and ridiculous views that they claim come from Scripture, making all of us look simple minded and silly. Yet, the truth is that anywhere Christ is proclaimed and made manifest in His glory it will offend and repel rebellious sinners. The mere presence of Christ reveals guilt and leaves people without an excuse. But this means that to embrace Jesus they must acknowledge their idols, repent of sin, and pursue Christ as central and ultimate. I often feel that the problem is my argument, if I could just make the Gospel more clear, more understandable, people would believe. But this is not the case. The scope of Jesus presence in the world and ministry went like this; He preached and did His miracles, some people believed and had their hearts changed, many enjoyed the show but never surrendered to Christ, and others took a posture of opposition from the beginning. Eventually the last two groups banded together, conspiring to get rid of Jesus by killing Him.

Now those who follow Jesus personify Him in the world. We go with His works and His Gospel, proclaiming Christ and living with Him as our Lord and King. We have been chosen out of the world, so we do not follow the idols and dictates of the world. The mere fact that they don't own us and control us creates tension. Of course, a Christianity that will bow its knee to the dictates and morals of the culture is acceptable. But a Gospel rich Christianity that realizes that humanity is desperately lost in sin and in need of redemption, well, that will be just unacceptable and worthy of intolerance from the crown that is preaching tolerance.

But the key here is to understand our posture toward persecution and hatred. Too often we respond to the lost world by treating them as our enemy and engaging in a culture war. Others withdraw, seeking to insulate and isolate themselves and their families from the world.

Still others will try to figure out ways to make Christianity and the Gospel more acceptable and less offensive. None of these is the way of Christ! Jesus did not respond to persecution with attacks and a posture of combat. Had He, realize Jesus had the command of a battalion of angels ready at a moments notice. Rather He humbly proclaimed the Gospel then laid down His life for the world. And yes, Christians are called to be separate and holy, but this is a reference to lives being transformed by the Gospel in the world, it is not a call to leave the world. Furthermore, way too often our attempts to make the message of Christianity more acceptable end with us actually denying the Gospel itself and the power within.

The previous passage is our clue. We are to love. "For God so loved the world.." The posture of the Christian toward the world must mirror that of Jesus. But love is active. If we know that our neighbors, family members, friends, and co-workers are living on a trajectory that ends in their destruction, it would be absolutely unloving for us to keep the story of Christ from them. So, when they hate without cause (v. 25), Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit is still going to bear witness, to testify of Christ. And that the Holy Spirit is in us to empower us to bear witness to the world. This is the call, and the opportunity we have. Yes, the more active we get in proclamation of the Gospel the more vulnerable we will be to ridicule and hatred. So the question will remain, is it worth it. The only way we can answer that is to focus on the riches of Christ.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Genesis 37	Genesis 38	Genesis 39	Genesis 40	Genesis 41	Genesis 42	Genesis 43

Reading from this past week: John 15:18-16:4

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: John 16:5-15

Family Worship

It is Finished - Dustin Kensrue version here

<https://youtu.be/9iSDUthUuDg>

Gospel Project Main Point and Big Picture Question

Story: A Song of Thanksgiving

Main Point: We are thankful because Jesus died on the cross and rose again to save us from our sins.

Big Picture Question: What is our mission as believers?

Answer: Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.

Scripture: Isaiah 12

Scripture

John 15:18-16:4

*Why would Jesus tell His disciples that the world will hate them?

*What are some reasons people in the world reject Christ and His people?

*According to verse 26-27, what is our calling in a world that hates us?

Prayer

*Pray for the persecuted church.

*Pray for the Genesis Family Christmas Celebration this Friday night.