

John 15:18-16:4

"If the World Hates You"

Imago Dei Church | 3/3/19 | 3 Services

INTRODUCTION

(ILL) Have you ever questioned whether you're on the right side of something because the opposition is so fierce? Some dig their heels in, but everyone at some point starts to think, "Did I get this wrong?" LOTR, Civil War, Civil Rights, the sanctity of human life, etc.

Difficulty comes, and when it does, we can start to doubt or fall back.

In the passage in front of us today, Jesus continues what he's been trying to do for several chapters now: **prepare his disciples for coming opposition**. He knows that his time has come and that he will soon be rejected by men and put to death.

Those who executed him (and Satan himself) believed this to be their final victory over Jesus, but we know from Scripture that it was the sovereign plan of God to have him die to pay the just penalty for the sins of the world. And by rising from the dead and ascending to the right hand of his Father, Jesus guaranteed forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation for all who turn from their sin and trust him for salvation.

But Jesus also knows that (1) just because He is ultimately victorious, and (2) just because those who trust in him and walk in his ways are guaranteed eternal life DOES NOT MEAN that they won't start to doubt and be tempted to fall back in the face of opposition.

Jesus came as the Savior of a world that would fully and finally reject him. And Christians, as HIS people, should not expect that same world to celebrate, love, or even accept them. Instead...

Main Idea: Those who faithfully live out and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ should anticipate opposition from the world.

It's important to keep in mind that this entire discussion for Jesus is in the context of **what came before it**: Jesus commands his followers to abide in him, keep his commands, love his people, and bear his fruit.

THAT community should be prepared for the world to misunderstand and even persecute it.

And to THAT community, Jesus gives THREE BASIC ENCOURAGEMENTS in this passage:

1) ANTICIPATE OPPOSITION

(15:18-25)

[18] "If the world hates you..."

Jesus knows that his people will experience opposition in the world—“hatred” even.

Satan himself has been opposing Jesus for thousands of years. A city that welcomed Jesus will palm branches would put him to death 1 week later.

So it is no wonder that as Jesus sends his people into the world to continue his work, they too will experience the hatred of the lost and dying world.

But what does Jesus mean by “world”? Christians have interpreted and misinterpreted this in various ways throughout the years, leading to some interesting misconceptions about what it means to be faithful to Jesus in this life.

1. **not simply ALL PHYSICAL REALITY** — leads to asceticism; a posture towards God’s creation that refuses to see its goodness and supposes that Christianity is fundamentally about redeeming Christians out of the world rather than rescuing and redeeming all of creation. Distorts the biblical view of creation and even redemption.
2. **not simply ALL NON-CHRISTIANS** — Jesus is not saying that everyone you meet is plotting your downfall or trying to get you to worship Satan. Taking this posture causes us to see people

fundamentally as enemies to be defeated rather than image-bearers to be loved.

3. **not simply SECULAR CULTURE** —Jesus is not saying that everything not produced by Desiring God or Lifeway is a subliminal plot to get you to worship Satan. This view of the world—that sees everything that isn’t explicitly Christian as evil—leads to an approach to the Christian life fundamentally marked by withdrawing from the culture rather than engaging the culture with the gospel.
4. “world” IS USED as **shorthand for that which is contrary to Christ and the gospel**. Carson: world = “the created moral order in active rebellion against God” (525).

There is a sense in which all physical reality, all unbelievers, and all secular culture are marked and tainted by this active rebellion against God. But this does not mean that all of those things are to be discarded and opposed. **Rather, they are to be engaged with words and works shaped by the redeeming gospel of Jesus Christ.**

Jesus gives them no less than 3 reasons to anticipate opposition from the world:

A. ANTICIPATE OPPOSITION **BECAUSE THE WORLD OPPOSES JESUS.** **(18-20)**

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

Jesus' initial word of comfort is to identify with them. If they receive hatred from the world, that does not mean they are departing from his example.

Later on in verse 21 Jesus will clarify that he's talking about opposition that comes from the world "on account of my name."

(APP) Don't be a jerk

But if we are walking with Jesus and the world comes against us, we should not be surprised, we should not assume we're doing it wrong, and we should not be deterred — **Our Master received a similar treatment.**

[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.

If disciples walk in step with the world, there would be no conflict. The world would love and embrace them.

But Jesus makes clear that they are NOT to do this. Why? Because he has **chosen them out of the world.**

Again, this is not a call for removal from all culture or earthly things. Instead, he’s reminding them of their salvation and the reorienting of their lives around him instead of the world.

And because [20] ‘a servant is not greater than his master’ we should expect similar responses to us as Jesus received:

If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.

Jesus is setting expectations and giving a word of hope. Some will see Jesus in our lives and hear him on our lips and persecute us. Others will see, hear, and receive.

B. ANTICIPATE OPPOSITION BECAUSE THE WORLD OPPOSES JESUS’ FATHER. (21, 23)

Continuity is a big issue for Jesus. (ILL) Continuity errors in movies.

Jesus wants to make sure his disciples know that he is in continuity with his Father—and that is precisely why the world opposes him and why it will oppose his followers.

[21] But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. ... [23] Whoever hates me hates my Father also.

The world doesn't know the Father. They are in rebellion against God, and so they reject his Messenger (Christ) and his messengers (disciples).

As long as we are in that continuity, we should anticipate opposition from the world.

C. ANTICIPATE OPPOSITION BECAUSE THE WORLD OPPOSES JESUS'

WORDS & WORKS. (22, 24)

[DON'T READ]

[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. ... [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.

Bottom line: the full revelation of God in the person, words, and works of Christ removes every excuse for the world's rebellion against God.

When Jesus says, “**they would not have been guilty of sin**”, he's not saying the world was innocent without his coming. He's talking about their awareness of it.

It's almost to say, “If I had not come, the world's sin would have remained hidden. But now that I've come, it's impossible to deny.”

In these two verses, both Jesus' **words** and his **works** are emphasized. You cannot look at Christ—hear the things he said, see the things he did (Obedience ...

Miracles ... Forgiveness ... Atonement)—and claim ignorance of the one true God. That’s the whole point of what Jesus has been trying to explain!

He is the IMAGE OF GOD.

He is the PERFECT REVELATION OF GOD.

He is the PERFECT MESSENGER OF THE WILL OF GOD.

(APP) In our evangelism...give them Jesus. Present his words and works.

Verse 25 reminds us that the world’s rejection of Jesus was not a violation of God’s sovereign plan but the accomplishment of it—it **“must be fulfilled”**.

He quotes from the Psalms of David—**‘They hated me without a cause’**—to remind them that God’s anointed messengers have often been rejected by the world. Christ as the ultimate messenger from God must also be rejected so he could die for the sins of the world.

2) PREACH CHRIST

(15:26-27)

[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.**

Jesus will soon depart from the world, but that does not mean the world has won. The testimony of his

truthfulness as God’s appointed messenger will continue through the Holy Spirit and his disciples.

The Spirit is called the Helper—he does not testify in isolation, but from the Father, by commission of the Son, through the people of God who have been with Jesus.

Obviously only the 12 had been with Jesus “**from the beginning.**” They had seen and heard firsthand how Jesus had been faithful to his Father’s calling. And now they were to take that knowledge and continue that work.

(APP) But you and I are also invited into this. We also are invited to abide in Christ—to be with him. To know him, his words, and his works. We, too, can preach Christ to the lost and dying world. We too, by the way we pursue holiness, righteousness, and justice in the world can present Christ. We, too, can open up our mouths and testify to the sinfulness of the world and the grace, kindness, and mercy of God to that same world.

And this passage promises us that we are not alone in that endeavor. The Spirit is the one who is sent to do this work. But Jesus’ clear implication is that he—as Jesus’ ‘replacement’ in this world—intends to do this through those who have been with Christ.

Preach Christ!

3) REMAIN FAITHFUL**(16:1-4A)**

Why is Jesus telling them all of this? What is gained from the disciples knowing the unity of purpose and mission between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—and the world’s consistent opposition to and rejection of them?

Jesus is telling them this because he knows that if they continue in the same continuity, they will also experience persecution, and when that happens, he wants to encourage them not to back off but to press on.

[1] “I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away.

Opposition *IS* coming. And the temptation will be to quiet down, give in, renounce Christ, and maybe even join in persecuting others.

But he calls us to remain faithful.

Persecution *IS* coming.

And it’s coming from many who might be really sincere in their persecution.

[2] They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.

[3] And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me.

Sincerity can be both genuine and insufficient.

(APP) Belief is not the point. Belief *in Christ* is the point.

It's interesting what Jesus is concerned about in this passage, isn't it? He doesn't tell them how to *avoid* the persecution but to *be faithful despite it*.

[4] But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you.

Nowhere in Scripture do we see persecution celebrated. Sometimes in the history of the church and even now people have taken passages like this and thought that maybe persecution is a good thing. Maybe we should want it. I just don't see that in Scripture.

But that does NOT mean avoiding persecution at all costs is best. Jesus knows that even if his followers are not looking for persecution, and even if they try to avoid it, it will find them if they are being faithful.

His greatest concern is not protecting them from persecution but preserving them through it.

CONCLUSION

Anticipate Opposition

Preach Christ

Remain Faithful