

153. The Gospel of John—15:18-25

Hated Without a Cause-Part 2

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We are in a section in John's Gospel where Jesus has been comforting His disciples' hearts, preparing them for the difficult days that were coming after His death, resurrection and return to His Father in heaven.

They would be continuing the work He had begun upon the earth and although it would be a glorious work—it wouldn't be an easy life.

In verses 18 through 25, the Lord lays out for them the harsh reality of what they would face when they went into the world preaching the Gospel.

In this passage the Lord gives them 3 reasons *why* the world would hate them so vehemently—

- **The World Hates Christians Because We Are Not of the World**
- **The World Hates Christians Because It Hates Jesus**
- **The World Hates Christians Because It Does Not Know God**

1. The World Hates Christians Because We Are Not of the World—verses 18-19

John 15:18-19 (NKJV)

¹⁸ "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated you*. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

Last week we pointed out that Christians are no longer a part of the world—we still live in it, but we are no longer a part of it—

1 Peter 2:9 (NKJV)

⁹ But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

We have been called out of the world *morally* and *spiritually*—but we are still in the world *physically*.

We could say, "*We are still living in the world, but the world is no longer living in us—or at least it shouldn't be, that's what **sanctification** is all about!*"

The word "**world**" that Jesus used here in John 15 is the Greek word "*kosmos*." *Kosmos* is not a word that refers to *nature* or *ecology*—it's a word that refers to the world system.

It's a theological expression denoting "*the whole fallen world system of depravity, evil, open hostility and rebellion against God and the people of God.*"

1 John 5:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway of* the wicked one.

“If you were of the world, the world would love its own” (verse 19)

The bottom line is that those people who belong to this fallen world system will always love those who are like them (in what they believe and in how they behave) because misery loves company!

And darkness always hates the light—

John 3:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Proverbs 29:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ An unjust man *is* an abomination to the righteous, And *he who is* upright in the way *is* an abomination to the wicked. [*the battle between light and darkness...*]

REFLECTION: What does it mean “Christians are not of this world”?

2. The World Hates Christians Because It Hates Jesus—verses 18, 20, 25

John 15:18, 20, 25 (NKJV)

¹⁸ "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you... 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 keep yours also...²⁵ But *this happened* that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, '*They hated Me without a cause.*'

Over the years I have tried to tell Christians who were being persecuted for their faith that when unbelievers mistreat them or even hate them—it isn't really a hatred for them personally per se—they hate us because we love and represent Jesus!

In that regard—it is the devil in them hating and persecuting the Lord in us!

1 John 3:10, 13 (NKJV)

¹⁰ In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God...¹³ Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you...

>>> The devil (the prince of darkness) hates Jesus (the Lord of light) and so he works in the hearts of those he controls to hate those who represent Jesus in this world—those who are *“light in the Lord”*—

Ephesians 5:8-11 (NKJV)

⁸ For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), ¹⁰ finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. ¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*.

We expose the darkness of this world simply by living a Christ-like life and letting our light shine! Unbelievers love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil—and so as Jesus warned they will persecute the light in an attempt to extinguish it.

Jesus was the original “Light” of the world—

John 1:4-5 (NKJV)

⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

John 8:12 (NKJV)

¹² Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

John 9:5 (NKJV)

⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

However, at one point in His ministry, Jesus turned to His disciples one day and said—

Matthew 5:14-16 (NKJV)

¹⁴ You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

The first thing this implies is that the world is in a state of moral and spiritual darkness—and we as followers of Jesus alone are its only ‘light’ source.

One author had this to say on the subject—

"It's interesting how the world is always talking about enlightenment ever since the Renaissance of the 15th and 16th centuries which ended the Dark Ages.

It was regarded as an age of enlightenment where mankind began to take a new interest in knowledge and learning. Regarded by many as the great turning point in the history of civilization as mankind began to look to knowledge, education and science for the answers to man's problems."

Sadly, man is still looking to knowledge, education, and science to save us from our problems. However, as we stand here this morning at this point in human history—mankind has more knowledge in medicine, science and technology than was known in all of the previous centuries in the history of the world combined.

➤ The question is—*has all of this accumulated knowledge solved man's problems or added to them?*

The sad reality is that the more our knowledge has increased instead of solving our problems **it has only exacerbated mankind's problems** by allowing man to invent more and more sophisticated weapons so that we've become more efficient in killing one another—weapons that now threaten man's very existence.

I know that many people will defend modern science and technology for all the good things they have done for the human race—and yes there have been many positives—but also many negatives. Look, if the negatives wind up destroying mankind, then the positives won't mean much.

REFLECTION: How can we expose the darkness in this world?

So, God's word rightly says that mankind is in darkness and the greatest 'enlightenment' the human race needs isn't scientific it's spiritual—fallen man needs spiritual light that comes from God.

Spiritual light is *truth*—the truth of God revealed to man (hold on to that thought).

God's word is truth and therefore it is *light*—

John 17:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

Psalms 119:105 (NKJV)

¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

Spiritual light is the revelation of God's truth found in His Word and declared by His Son.

Since God is THE source of all spiritual light (truth) the only way we can be spiritual lights in this world is to surrender our lives to Jesus where the Light of the world, Jesus Christ, comes to live in our hearts.

It is only then that we become the *light of the world* as He said in Matthew 5:13 which means—it becomes our responsibility to share the truth of God with others through our words but especially through our lives as Jesus shines through us.

Philippians 2:14-15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Do all things without complaining and disputing, ¹⁵ that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world...

Remember, darkness hates the light because its deeds are evil—and it will try to extinguish the light through whatever means possible! Look, it's no use trying to figure out why so many unsaved people hate you and are determined to hurt you in some way.

REFLECTION: How would you describe “spiritual light”?

Don't torture yourself trying to figure it out (“what did I do to them?”) or rationalize it in some way—Jesus already told us the reason:

John 15:18, 25 (NKJV)
¹⁸ "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated you...*²⁵ *But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause.'*

The world will hate us, “without a cause.”

In other words, the people of this fallen world will hate us for no other reason than they hate Jesus, and we belong to Him!

In fact, many church goers who profess faith in Christ and attend “Christian” churches—are nothing more than religious unbelievers that, unbeknownst to them, really ‘hate’ Jesus although they profess to ‘love’ Him.

John 14:15, 21 (NKJV)
¹⁵ "If you love Me, keep My commandments...²¹ He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me...

But even though they go to church they aren't keeping His commandments...they aren't even walking in His 'light'.

Titus 1:16 (NKJV)
¹⁶ They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

Romans 10:3 (NKJV)
³ For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

REFLECTION: Try to define a religious unbeliever?

You must understand and accept a couple of principles as a child of God when you try to serve the Lord in this world:

A. Unbelievers will be antagonistic toward you

It is a 'given'—because they are under the control of the devil who is filling them with hatred for you.

But they are not your enemy—they have been taken captive by the devil to do his will—

Ephesians 6:12 (NKJV)

¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

2 Timothy 2:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.

Once again, **unbelievers (the world) will be antagonistic toward you.** So, either you're going to accept that 'going in' and love them with God's love, pray for them, and try to win them to Christ—or you're going to hate them and retaliate against them.

Or **you'll try to 'win them over' to yourself as friends.** It's just human nature to want people to like us—even when it comes to unbelievers. Because of it, many Christians believe they can be a friend of Jesus while at the same time be a friend of the world also—in other words, reach the world by making friends with the world.

The people of this world are NOT your enemies, that's true—but neither are they your friends either!! (not always an easy line to walk!) Again, one of the traps that Christians often fall into is trying to make friends with the world (unbelieving friends and co-workers) in an effort to reach them for Jesus.

Seeking to win them over by making them think that you're still the same person you've always been, the same person they've known all these years, the only difference now is— you love Jesus!

And so, to 'prove' this to their unbelieving friends, family, and co-workers—**Christians will sometimes lower their standards and go places with them they shouldn't go to** (R-rated movies or secular parties), participate in gossip with them or laugh at their dirty jokes.

I have even heard of Christians over the years that, in an effort to prove to their co-workers they're still "one of the guys (or gals)" will go out with them after work to a bar and have a drink ("it's only one drink"—or maybe you just sit at the bar and have a soft drink)... *Trying to be friends with the world is not only misguided—it's ungodly and forbidden by God—*

REFLECTION: People of this world are NOT your enemies; neither are they your friends; how would you evangelize them?

James 4:4 (NKJV)

⁴ Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Love the people of this fallen world enough to try and reach them for Jesus—but do it because you’re *His* friend and not because you’re trying to be *their* friend.

B. Unbelievers are notoriously fickle and prone to turn on you

We have to serve The Lord simply because we love Jesus and everything we do in ministry is for Him which is one of the cardinal principles of ministry.

When you serve the Lord by helping people (both believers and unbelievers) if they turn on you (and many will)—don’t take it personally.

If you do take it personally—it often signals that you were helping them in part to cause them to like you—and if that’s the case, you were trying to be a ‘man-pleaser’ and not a true servant of Jesus Christ—i.e., “a God pleaser!”

Galatians 1:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

So that if people turn against you, it doesn’t matter because you were doing it for Jesus anyway and He said, “*You can’t give a cup of cold water to someone in My name without receiving your reward...*”

If you make ministry about you (recognition, self-esteem, personal glory)—then when people don’t appreciate you, like you or they come against you and persecute you—you’ll be crushed and become resentful, disillusioned, and quit.

REFLECTION: Try to think of a time, when you were explain the Gospel to a family member, friend, neighbor or co-worker and they turned sideways against you.

I have seen it over and over again in my 40 years of ministry. But if you do ministry for Jesus, when they turn against you (even though it's not pleasant) it won't a 'deal breaker'—it won't be a ministry ending event because they weren't the focus, Jesus was!

Next week we'll continue our series, *"Hated Without a Cause."*

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#).

Want to know more? Click [here](#).