"Hated by the World"
October 18, 2026
John 15:18 – 16:4

I. Introduction

As Jesus and His disciples were on their way to the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus talked about the relationship of believers to Himself. Knowing what was coming in the hours and days ahead, He cautioned them to never give up. In John 15:4 He said, **"Remain in me, and I will remain in you."** Later, He said, "**Apart from me you can do nothing."** A Christian's strength and peace come from relying on the Lord Jesus Christ and not from themselves. As Paul wrote in Philippians 4:13, **"I can do everything through him who gives me strength."** If instead, one takes his eyes off of Christ, he can do nothing. For example, turn to Matthew 14:25-31.

Jesus then talked about the relationship between individual believers. In John 15:12 He said**, "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."** This isn't *"brotherly love*" for one another, this is *agape love*, sacrificial love for one another. This is a love that one chooses to have for others. Such love will be seen—must be seen in Christian lives as we bear fruit in Jesus' name. I John 3:18 says, **"Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."**

From the time that Jesus and His disciples had gathered around that Passover meal, knowing what was ahead, Jesus' message had been one of comfort and hope. He had reassured the disciples of His continued love for them and made several promises to them, including the promise of the Holy Spirit. But the disciples would still have to face the hostile, Christ-rejecting world. The world would hate and persecute them as it hated and persecuted their Master; facing that hostility is the cost of being His disciple then and now. As Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:12, **"Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."**

In today's Scripture, Jesus warned His disciples about the hatred of the world towards believers. In the first 14 verses, Jesus used some form of the word "hate" 7 times. Throughout his Gospel, John has shown the hatred of the religious people who had opposed Jesus (John 5:16; 7:19, 25; 8:37, 59; 9:22). As

Jesus' ministry progressed, the opposition progressed from resentment to hatred to open hostility and finally to Jesus' crucifixion. So, the disciples should not have been surprised when Jesus brought up the subject of persecution, for they had heard Him warn them before and they had seen Him face men's hatred during His ministry. In today's Scripture, Jesus gave 3 reasons the world hates believers.

II. Three Reasons the World Hates Believers

A. Believers are identified with Christ. Jesus said that **"If they** (i.e. the world) **persecuted me, they will persecute you also."** The world hates believers because *believers are identified with Christ.* From a Christian point of view, the "*world"* includes all the people, plans, organizations, activities, philosophies, values, and anything else that belongs to a society without God. This is the evil, fallen world system made up of unsaved people and controlled by Satan. 2 Corinthians 4:4 says, **"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."** Satan hates God, and he also he hates God's children. Because of this hatred, Christians are targets of Satan's wrath—1 Peter 5:8 says, **"Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."** Since the ruler of this world hates believers, it is hardly surprising that those of the world also hate believers--Christians. The world resents believers because their godly lives condemn their evil works. Turn to 1 John 3:11-13. As Proverbs 29:27 says, **"The wicked detest the upright."**

In John 15:20 Jesus repeated the statement He had made earlier in John 13:16: **"No servant is greater than his master."** Jesus is the Master; we are the servants. We have no right to expect better treatment from the world than Jesus received. As Jesus went on to say, **"If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also."** One commentator put it this way, *"If with all of His greatness and perfection, Jesus does not escape persecution, what hope is there for us with our imperfections."* The world hates believers because believers are identified with Christ.

B. Believers do not belong to the world. In John 15:19 Jesus gave the 2nd reason that the world hates believers, **"You do not belong to the world. . . I have chosen you out of the world."** The world hates

believers because: *Believers do not belong to the world.* In 1 John 2:16 the Apostle John wrote, **"For everything in the world-- the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does-- comes not from the Father but from the world."**

When a person trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ, he is moved into a new spiritual position; he is now *"in Christ*" and *"out of the world."* Obviously, we are still *"in"* the world physically, but we are no longer *"of"* the world spiritually. Jesus prayed in John 17:16, **"They are not of the world, even as I am not of it."** Ephesians 5:11 adds**, "Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them."** Christians are no longer to be interested in the treasures or pleasures of this world; Hebrews 3:1 says, **"Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess."** As children of God, Christians are to look at the things of earth from heaven's point of view—from God the Father's point of view.

The world system operates on the basis of conformity. As long as a person follows the fads and fashions of the day and as long as he accepts the values of the world, he or she will get along just fine. But as Christians, Romans 12:2 tells us, **"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world."** We have been changed. Christians are not to be conformed to the world. Turn to 2 Corinthians 5:16-17. In the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus said that the children of God are to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth, but the world doesn't want light or salt. As Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:19, **"This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil."** The believer is out of place—turn to 1 John 4:4-6. The world hates believers because believers do not belong to the world.

C. The world doesn't know God. Tehn in John 15:21 Jesus said, **"They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me."** This is the 3rd reason the world hates believers: *The world doesn't know God.* The world hates Jesus and His followers because it doesn't **"know the One who sent Him."**

When He was on the earth, Jesus had taught the Word of God, He demonstrated His deity in miraculous signs and a godly walk—1 Peter 2:22 says, **"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."** But despite all they had seen many, including the religious leaders of Israel, were blind to Jesus' identity. In spite of having witnessed firsthand Jesus' miracles and having heard His teachings, the Pharisees' conclusion is seen in their words from Matthew 12:24, **"It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons."** In John 1:10 John summarized Jesus' ministry this way: **"He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him."** Or as Jesus said in John 8:19, **"You do not know me or my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also."** The world, even the so-called religious leaders, hated Jesus Christ and His disciples because they did not know the One True God.

But this hated of Jesus wasn't a surprise; it was not out of God's sovereign plan. Quoting from Psalm 35:19 and Psalm 69:4, Jesus said in John 15:25, **"This is to fulfill what is written in their Law: 'They hated me without reason.'"** The world hated Jesus because He exposed their sin and confronted them with the truth of who He was. And it hasn't changed in 2000 years; the world still hates Jesus and anything or anyone identified with Him. They hate Jesus Christ and they have created a false god who is not the god of the Bible. They don't want to face their sin. They don't really want to know the only true God.

III. The Holy Spirit

The change in Jesus' conversation from comfort, hope, and love to hate must have been rather bewildering to the disciples. Jesus was going away, the disciples needed to love one another, AND the world was going to hate and persecute those left behind. It all must have seemed rather hopeless—how were these disciples going to face the world's opposition without Jesus running interference for them? So, Jesus reminded them of the Comforter who was going to come to live in them and give them power to do God's will. Jesus had talked about Him earlier in John 14; in verse 16 He said, **"I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor,** a Paraclete, **to be with you forever."**

As the Counselor and Comforter, the Holy Spirit would encourage believers who experience the hatred and opposition of the world. Primarily, as Jesus said in John 14:26, **"But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."** Jesus said that as well as encouraging and comforting believers, the Holy Spirit would testify to them so that they can witness to the world. In Mark 13:11 He said, **"Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit."** Jesus also said in Acts 1:8**, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."**

Jesus didn't want His disciples to be surprised or caught off guard. Persecution would come. It wasn't to be a surprise. Believers are warned over and over that trials and tribulations will come on those who love God—sometimes even from religious people who actually think they are serving God. Turn to 1 Peter 4:12-19.

IV. Conclusion

Things haven't changed; Christians today are still being persecuted. In a large part of the world, people lose their jobs, their families, their freedom, even their lives when they become identified with Christ—when they become a Christian. It is estimated that 100,000 Christians are killed every year just because of their faith. Here in the United States persecution is for the most part subtle, although not always. For example, if you are a military chaplain, you are not to pray in "Jesus' name;" in many states, pharmacists must dispense abortion pills even though they feel it is going against God's commandment not to kill; in many places of work, you are not allowed to have a Bible visible on a desk or carry on a Christian conversation. But so far, although you may lose your job, you can't lose your life for any "religious" activity. But times of persecution have always been, for church and for individual believers, times of proclamation and witness. Think of people like the Apostle Paul or Corrie ten Boom or those Christians

around the world today that demonstrate God's love to others even while they are being persecuted. You can read about some of them in magazines like "The Voice of the Martyrs" that are in the foyer.

So how about you, are you identified with Christ? Does the world know that you belong to God, or is this a best kept secret? Do you blend in with everyone else or are you a light shining in the darkness? Do you stand for the principles found in God's Word or have you allowed the world to corrupt your actions and attitudes? The world says, *"Times have changed, and if you want to be relevant you need to change too. So, forget that antique Bible and its God, come make "god" in your image."* BUT Christianity is more than social justice or feeding and clothing those in need or remaking "my god," Christianity is the Gospel— **"Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners"** (1 Timothy 1:15). **"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved"** (Acts 4:12). **"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved"** (Acts 16:31).

In Ecclesiastes 1:9 Solomon wrote, "**What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun."** Just as in Christ's day, many in the world today, including those who call themselves "religious," claim to know God. But they don't want to bow their knee to Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the only Savior of the world—they want to make god in their own image. Turn to Romans 1:18-23, 32. These are the people who persecute real Christians.

So, are you a real Christian? Is God's Word the only blueprint for your life? Are you ready to be persecuted—hated by the world? Let me close with some words of comfort from David—Psalm 33:20-21:

"We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield.

In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name."