

The Gospel of John

The Cost of Following Jesus

John 15:18-25

INTRODUCTION:

For many weeks now, we have been experiencing the night before Jesus died on the cross for our sins.

In our scripture text this morning, Christ and His disciples have left the upper room where Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, and they are on their way to the Garden of Gethsemane. During this journey, Jesus continues to prepare His disciples for what lay ahead of them by teaching them that they (and we) must love one another.

You must remember that every day that you wake up you are stepping onto a battlefield. There is an ongoing battle that is raging around us. And the enemy would like nothing better than for you to forget that there is a war and take a nap under a tree on the battlefield. We tend to forget who the enemy is and start attacking our own fellow Christians. If I am the enemy, if I am Satan, there would be two extremes that I would be perfectly happy with: (1) **falling asleep on the battlefield** or (2) **misdiagnosing the true enemy**. As Christians we must not allow ourselves to become complacent.

1 Peter 5:8 (NASB)

⁸ Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Do not fall asleep on the battlefield. Be sober and of good mind.

"This I command you, that you love one another."

If you forget who the enemy is on the battlefield, don't be surprised when you incur friendly fire.

There is one way to defeat Satan. By becoming more like Christ every single day. Cause the prowling lion to be on guard because **you** are in its presence instead of him "**devouring**" you.

Stand and Read Scripture

John 15:18-25 (NASB)

¹⁸ "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 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, because of this the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you as well; if they followed My word, they will follow yours also.

²¹ But all these things they will do to you on account of My name, because they do not

know the One who sent Me. ²² If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ The one who hates Me hates My Father also. ²⁴ If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. ²⁵ But *this has happened* so that the word that is written in their Law will be fulfilled: 'They hated Me for no reason.'

Prayer

On January 15, 2020, Christianity Today reported that "somewhere in the world, 8 Christians are killed every day because of their faith. Eighty-two churches or Christian buildings are attacked every week. And every month, 309 Christians are imprisoned unjustly."

The 2020 World Watch List shows the worst 50 countries where Christians are persecuted. In those nations 260 million Christians suffer high to severe levels of persecution. One of every 8 Christians worldwide are facing persecution.

In verse 21 Jesus said, "All these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me." Thank God for the freedom we still have in the United States! But there are many Jesus-hating people in our country too. And they also hate us, because we belong to Jesus.

BODY:

I. WHY DOES THE WORLD HATE US?

A. THEY HATED OUR LORD.

John 15:18, 20 (NASB)

¹⁸ "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it hated* you.

The world hates us because it hated Jesus.

...²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you as well; if they followed My word, they will follow yours also.

Jesus had reminded His disciples many times that the world would hate Him and thus would also hate them. They would also suffer persecution. "A slave is not greater than his master."

The apostle Paul described his persecutions in many places in the scriptures. One of them is found in...

1 Corinthians 4:11-13 (NASB)

¹¹ Up to this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed and roughly treated and homeless; ¹² and we labor, working with our own hands; when we are verbally abused, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure *it*; ¹³ when we are slandered, we reply as friends; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, *even* until now.

These were all wounds inflicted on Paul because of his faith in Christ.

Jesus told His disciples, "You're going to be persecuted, you're going to be hated for My name sake."

Stephen came along in the book of Acts and lifted up Christ and they stoned him to death. Just as they had crucified Christ. This preacher preaches Christ, they stone him to death; and in Acts, chapter 8, a wholesale persecution breaks out in Jerusalem. Many Christians are killed. Eventually they even kill all the apostles, except for John. But even he was exiled to a Roman penal colony on the Island of Patmos.

Why were they all persecuted? Jesus said, "Since they hated Me, they are also going to hate you."

Think about it this way: He was perfect; never sinned, never failed; never **said** the wrong thing, never **did** the wrong thing, never even **thought** the wrong thing. There was not one thing hypocritical about Him. He was absolute integrity, absolute perfection, and they hated Him anyway.

We fall far short of that. We can be hypocritical. We are struggling with sin. We think things we ought not to think, we say things we ought not to say, we do things we ought not to do. We bring reproach on the name of Christ. Our Lord is saying, "Look, if they hated Me, being sinless and without any flaw, do you **not** think they are going to hate you?"

They hated the perfect Lord Jesus Christ; they certainly aren't going to love imperfect Christians. So our Lord says, "Expect it. It's going to be this way. They're going to hate you because you're not of the world. They're going to hate you because they hated Me. And you belong to Me, and you preach in My name, and you live in My name, and you proclaim My name, and you proclaim My truth. They are going to hate you the same way they hated Me. You are not greater than your Master."

A second reason that the world will hate us is because we are not a part of the world.

B. WE ARE NOT OF THE WORLD.

John 15:19 (NASB)

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, because of this the world hates you.

What do we mean by world? We are living in a world of sin that is ruled by Satan. However, we are not a part of this world. Because Jesus has made us righteous through His blood spilt on the cross and we are now a part of the Kingdom of God.

Why do they hate us? Their deeds are evil and we no longer condone that behavior. That is a problem for the world. We are like a conscience to the world. It is very easy to demonstrate this in the world today. Just step up and say homosexuality is evil, lying is evil, deceiving is evil, greed is evil, fornication is evil. Just mention any of the list of sins and watch the world react.

The reason they want to "shut us up" is because they love evil and when they see us it makes them look bad. We have literally been transformed. The old things have passed away and we have become a new creature desiring to do live a godly life.. We love what is

true; we love what is right; we love what is honorable. “If you were of the world – ” Jesus said, “ – they would love you.”

You did fine before you became a Christian. Everybody accepted you; they loved you. You didn’t confront them; you didn’t expose them; you didn’t intimidate them. They had a natural affinity for that. “**but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.**”

We are to be the light of the world. And evil hates light. Remember what John told us back in chapter 3?

John 3:20 (NASB)

20 For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light, so that his deeds will not be exposed.

We are the light of the world. We shed light on iniquity. We pull the rock and uncover the evil underneath. We are hated because of that. We are now literally citizens of heaven who have been transformed. We have new natures. We love what is pure, and right, and holy, and good. We love God; we love the law of God; we love God’s people. We love truth, and we expose the world of their darkness.

So the world hated the Lord and we are not of the world. A third reason that the world hates us is because they do not know the Father.

C. THEY DO NOT KNOW THE FATHER.

John 15:21 (NASB)

21 But all these things they will do to you on account of My name, because they do not know the One who sent Me.

The world does not know God. Remember what Jesus told the Jewish leaders who **thought** they knew God better than anybody else in the world? Although they **claimed** to know God, He was not their father.

John 8:44-47 (NASB)

44 You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he tells a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, because he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 But because I say the truth, you do not believe Me. 46 Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? 47 The one who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear *them*, because you are not of God.”

This needs to be said and understood very clearly because most people **think** they know God. “Oh, I believe in God. Oh, I’m a spiritual person. I have a place in my life for God and I pray to God.”

Listen once again what Jesus says in verse 21.

"But all these things they will do to you on account of My name " In spite of all their claims to know God, they persecute and hate "because they do not know the One who sent Me."

They don't know God. We are talking about "religious" people. We are talking about leaders of religions. We talking about theologians, and priests, and pastors, and gurus. Unregenerate human beings in this world do not know God. They hate God. Their persecution may be, just as the Jews in Jesus' day, under the false belief that they are serving God.

Remember what John told us..."If you love Me, you will...**what?**...you will keep My commandments. The first of which is: 'This is My beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased. Listen to Him.'

Why do I say they hate God? Because they hate His law, they hate His moral standards, they hate the Scripture, and they are **comfortable** with sin and iniquity.

II. THE CONSEQUENCE OF THEIR HATRED.

John 15:22-24 (NASB)

²² If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ The one who hates Me hates My Father also. ²⁴ If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well.

Here Jesus was directly talking about the Jewish leaders who stubbornly rejected Him. But what the Lord said about them applies to everyone who rejects Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Listen to what the Lord said in verse 22. "If I had not come and spoken to them, **they would have no sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin.**" That might sound odd to us at first. Because we are told that "**all have sinned and come short of the glory of God**". What Jesus is simply saying is that on top of all their other sins, the Christ-haters add the greatest sin of all: **that is the sin of rejecting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.** They have rejected the only possible hope for their salvation, and they have no covering for their sins.

Remember what Jesus told the Jews about believing in Him?

John 10:37-38 (NASB)

³⁷ If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; ³⁸ but if I do *them*, even though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."

When they reject Christ, they are doubly rejecting God. Not only have they rejected Christ, but they have also rejected God as revealed in nature.

Listen to what Paul says concerning this...

Romans 1:18-20 (NASB)

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes, that is*, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, being understood by what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

As to knowing God there will be no excuse on Judgment Day.

III. THEY HATE US TO FULFILL SCRIPTURE.

John 15:25 (NASB)

²⁵ But *this has happened* so that the word that is written in their Law will be fulfilled: 'They hated Me for no reason.'

We must understand that the Jews were not **forced** to hate Jesus because it was prophesied. No. They hated Jesus, because they were selfish, self-righteous, and wanted to be in control. But God, who sees the end from the beginning, looked down the corridors of time and knew they would hatefully reject His Son. So the Holy Spirit led King David to write of their hatred a thousand years before Jesus was born.

This prophecy is found in Psalm 69, and it is definitely talking about the Messiah Jesus Christ.

Psalm 69:1-4 (NASB)

⁶⁹ Save me, God, For the waters have threatened my life. ² I have sunk in deep mud, and there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and a flood overflows me. ³ I am weary with my crying; my throat is parched; My eyes fail while I wait for my God.

⁴ Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head; Those who would destroy me are powerful, those who oppose me with lies; What I did not steal, I then have to restore.

CONCLUSION:

All of this takes us back to the Lord's crucial command for us to love God, do His commands, and love one another. The good news is that all of David's sins, and all of our sins were nailed to the cross in our Lord Jesus Christ!

Let us rededicate our lives to help many more people trust in the Lord, because God's wrath is on everyone who doesn't believe in Jesus.

John 3:17-18 (NASB)

¹⁷ For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but so that the world might be saved through Him. ¹⁸ The one who believes in Him is not judged; the one who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

He is Lord.