

IF THE WORLD HATES YOU

John 15:18-16:33

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. All throughout history since the founding of Christianity, Christians have faced severe persecution.
2. We live in a remarkable period of history, in which Christians in America experience a relatively low level of persecution. This is because...
 - i. Our religious liberty is protected by the Constitution.
 - ii. Most people in America identify as Christian.
3. But this is rapidly changing in the United States. Christians are being fired and sued. Their businesses are being shut down. They are being canceled by social media.
 - i. An elementary student in Massachusetts was told she could not read a religious book as her favorite book about Christmas traditions.
 - ii. A high school student was threatened with a five-day suspension for posting flyers of the Ten Commandments around his school. The student was also told that the Bible was not suitable material for the silent reading period.
 - iii. A principal and athletic director were charged with criminal contempt because they prayed over a meal, because they were “promoting religion at school events.”
 - iv. An Allstate Insurance employee was fired for writing a newspaper column against homosexuality. They said it was because he wrote it on the company laptop, which violated the company’s diversity standards.
 - v. An employee for Cargill Foods was fired for a bumper sticker on his car that read, “Please vote for marriage on Nov. 7.” The sticker represented his religious conviction of biblical marriage.
 - vi. San Diego firefighters were forced to participate in a Gay Pride Parade, even if they were Christians who objected to the parade because of their religious beliefs.
 - vii. The High School Teacher of the Year in New York was suspended when he wrote against the sin of homosexuality on his personal Facebook page.
 - viii. An honors student in Fort Worth shared with his friend that he was a Christian and believed that homosexuality was a sin. The teacher overheard and became irate. The school suspended the boy for three days.
4. But this should not surprise us. It should surprise us when we are not persecuted, not when we are persecuted.
5. On the night before Christ’s death, Jesus spoke to His disciples about persecution. He gave them some words of instruction and encouragement. These words were recorded by the apostle John for our edification today. This is found in John 15:18-16:33.

II. TEXT: John 15:18-21

1. 18 “If the world hates you, understand that it hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, the world hates you. 20 Remember the word I spoke 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 also keep yours. 21 But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they don’t know the one who sent me.
 - i. In this passage Jesus tells us the three threats of persecution, which are the reason for His words of encouragement.

III. THREE THREATS OF PERSECUTION

1. Stumbling.

- i. **John 16:1** “I have told you these things to keep you from stumbling.”
 1. ESV “to keep you from falling away”
 2. NCV “to keep you from giving up”
- ii. There are two ways that persecution can lead to stumbling:
 1. Fall into sin. Compromising. “If you don’t bake the cake, you will lose your business.” So, you bake the cake.
- iii. Stop serving the Lord.
 1. When the choice is be silent or be canceled; be silent or be mocked; be silent or be rejected; then you choose to be silent.
- iv. Jesus spoke these words to keep us from stumbling.

2. Lose faith in Christ.

- i. **John 16:4** “But I have told you these things so that when their time comes you will remember I told them to you.”
- ii. Surely if Christ were real then I wouldn’t be experiencing such pain. He wouldn’t let me suffer.
- iii. Jesus said these things so we wouldn’t lose faith in Him.

3. Loss of peace.

- i. **John 16:33** “I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world.”
- ii. Inner peace. How are we going to live for Christ in this world? How are we going to raise our kids for Christ in this environment? How am I going to be faithful in this environment? How am I going to provide for my family in this environment?
- iii. Relational peace. We blame each other for the conflict with the world.
- iv. Jesus said these things so that we would have peace.
- v. Let’s go back to John 15:18 “If the world hates you, understand that it hated me before it hated you.”

- vi. For us to be prepared for persecution, there are things Jesus wants us to understand. That is what this passage is about. There are eight points we need to understand.

IV. Understand the Following:

1. The world hated Jesus.

- i. **John 15:18** “If the world hates you, understand that it hated me before it hated you.”
- ii. It is not because there is something wrong with you.
- iii. It’s not because you are sinful.
- iv. It’s not because you are judgmental.
- v. It’s not because you aren’t Christlike enough.
- vi. If the world hated you because of your sinfulness, then that’s your fault. But if the world loves you because of your association with Jesus, the problem is not with you, but with them.

2. It is because you are different.

- i. **John 15:19** “If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, the world hates you.”
- ii. Remember the word “world” is used in three ways in the NT:
 - 1. The place we live; planet earth as contrasted with heaven.
 - 2. All the people in the world.
 - 3. The invisible spiritual system of evil dominated by Satan and all that it offers in opposition to God, His word, and His people (John MacArthur). It consists of unbelievers who hate God and His followers.
- iii. It is the last sense that Jesus is using here. The unbelievers of this world who are under Satan’s control hate you.
- iv. Why?
- v. Because you are not of the world:
 - 1. People are naturally unkind to people who are not like them. As a Christian, you are very different than the world.
 - 2. Your beliefs are different.
 - 3. Your values are different (the things you think are important).
 - 4. Your morals are different.
 - 5. You don’t cooperate with the world. For example, not baking the cake, not cheating at work, not voting for abortion.
 - 6. You don’t join in with the world in their sinful living.
 - 7. Your behavior convicts and condemns the world.

3. You cannot avoid it.

- i. **John 15:20** “Remember the word I spoke 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 also keep yours.”
- ii. If you serve Jesus, you will be persecuted. Don’t think that you can be smarter than Jesus and figure out a way to serve the Lord and be loved by the world. It’s not going to happen.
- iii. If Jesus could not avoid it, then you won’t. If Jesus, who was perfectly loving, supernatural, doing miracles, perfect in every way, could not avoid it, then you can’t either.
- iv. **Martin Luther** said, “Cain will go on murdering Abel as long as the church is on earth.”
- v. **Spurgeon** “The disciple cannot be loved where his master is hated.”

4. It is because they don’t know God.

- i. **John 15:21** “But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they don’t know the one who sent me.”
- ii. When they persecute you for following Jesus, it is proof that they don’t know God.
- iii. They may claim to be good; they may claim to be godly; they may claim to be spiritual; they may claim to be religious; but anyone who rejects Jesus Christ does not know the true God.

5. We have the Holy Spirit to help us.

- i. **John 15:26-27** “26 “When the Counselor comes, the one I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father—he will testify about me. 27 You also will testify, because you have been with me from the beginning.”
- ii. **John 16:7-9** “7 Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don’t go away the Counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send him to you. 8 When he comes, he will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment: 9 About sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me; 11 and about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”
- iii. **John 16:13-14** “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. For he will not speak on his own, but he will speak whatever he hears. He will also declare to you what is to come. 14 He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.”
- iv. One of the primary reasons that the Holy Spirit indwells Christians is to enable us to serve the Lord in a hostile environment. He helps us to be faithful, and He helps us to be effective.
- v. Let’s observe all that Jesus says about the Holy Spirit in these three passages:

1. Called the Counselor (paraclete). v. 26. Counselor, Advocate, and Comforter.
2. Sent by Christ. v. 26. "The one I will send to you from the Father." He is Christ's gift to us.
3. Proceeds from the Father. v. 26. "The Spirit who proceeds from the Father." He is God's Spirit
4. Testifies about Jesus. v. 26. "He will testify about me." His purpose is to lead people to Christ.
5. Benefits us. v. 16:7. "It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don't go away the Counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send him to you."
6. He will convict the world about sin, "because they do not believe me." v. 16:8. The world doesn't believe the words of Jesus, so the Holy Spirit will work to convince them.
7. He will convict the world about righteousness, "because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me." v. 16:8. God's definition of right and wrong. Because Jesus is no longer with us giving us the perfect picture of righteousness.
8. He will convict the world about judgment, "because the ruler of this world has been judged." v. 16:8. The ruler has already been sentenced to the Lake of Fire, and all those who persist in unbelief and disobedience will meet the same fate (Rev 20:10, 15).
9. Guides us into the truth. v. 16:13. "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth."
10. Declares what is to come. v. 13. "He will also declare to you what is to come." The Spirit told the apostles about the future.
11. Glorifies Jesus. v. 14. "He will glorify me." The Spirit doesn't glorify Himself. The Spirit-filled Christian doesn't glorify himself. The Spirit's mission is to point to Jesus; to glorify Jesus.

6. Christians will experience horrible things.

- i. **John 16:2** "They will ban you from the synagogues. In fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering service to God."
- ii. John 15:18 says that the world will hate Christians. The word "hate" can just mean to dislike someone or something very much. But there is more to this Greek word. The Complete Word Study Dictionary this word "miseo" means "to hate.... usually implying active ill will in words and conduct, a persecuting spirit. By implication, to persecute." So this word hate is another way of saying they will dislike you so much that they will take action – verbal and physical – against you.
- iii. John 16:2 gives two examples of the type of persecution the early Christians could expect:

1. They will ban you from the synagogues. The synagogue was the Jewish version of a church. To be banned from the Synagogue was to be cut off from the community. People were forbidden from speaking to you, doing business with you, or helping you in any way. If you lived in a town that was majority Jewish, such as Jerusalem, the only solution was to leave town.
 2. Kill you in the name of serving God. The world will hate us so much that they will kill us; and they will think they are doing a good deed. They will believe that they are doing the world a service; that they are cleansing the world from bad people.
- iv. If we look at the story of Paul, we can see how badly the early Christians were treated. On multiple occasions they tried to kill him. On five occasions he receive the thirty-nine lashes. Three times he was beaten with rods. Once he was stoned. On several occasions he was jailed. And in the end he was executed.
 - v. Don't be surprised when horrible things are done against Christians. Jesus predicted it.
 - vi. **Charles Fuller** "Fellowship with God means warfare with the world."

7. Be courageous.

- i. **John 16:33** "I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world."
- ii. Christ commands us to be courageous in the face of persecution.
- iii. What does it mean to be courageous?
 1. Courage is not the absence of fear.
 2. Courage is not allowing your fear to paralyze you. It is taking action in spite of the fear. It is being obedient. Being faithful. Being on mission even though you are afraid.
- iv. Keep serving. Keep witnessing. Keep testifying. Keep following Jesus, no matter how hard it gets.
- v. Charles Spurgeon "When confidence in God is considered vile, we determine to be viler still."
- vi. It is better to suffer for the faith, than the faith suffer because of us.

8. Christ has overcome the world.

- i. **John 16:33** "I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world."
- ii. There's one last thing that Jesus wants us to know about persecution. He has overcome the world. In other words, the world cannot prevent Christ from accomplishing His purpose. The world cannot stop us. Satan cannot stop us.

The world cannot stop us from living for Christ, and from spreading the gospel.

- iii. We will face resistance, but we will win. We may lose a few battles, suffer heartbreaking losses, but in the end we will win the war.

V. CONCLUSION

1. Persecution Around the World
 - i. Open Doors is a ministry to persecuted Christians around the world. They define persecution as “any hostility, experienced from the world, as a result of one’s identification with Christ.” This can be anything from verbal harassment to hostile feelings, attitudes and actions, beatings, physical torture, confinement, isolation, rape, severe punishment, imprisonment, slavery, discrimination in education and employment, and even death.
 - ii. Open Doors says that at least 100 million Christians are being persecuted for their faith worldwide.
 - iii. Each month, 322 Christians are killed for their faith, 214 churches and Christian properties are destroyed, and 772 forms of violence are committed against Christians.
 - iv. According to the United States Department of State, Christians in more than 60 countries face persecution from their governments or surrounding neighbors simply because of their belief in the person of Jesus Christ.
2. Persecution is real. And it is happening more and more in the United States.
3. Remember the words of Jesus.
4. **John 16:33** “I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world.”