

John - Part 49 - Sermon Manuscript - When the World Hates You

Today we'll continue in John chapter 15. Go ahead and turn with me to John 15:18. So just to recap... and I know you're hearing me say this every week, but that's on purpose...

Our passage still takes place on the night before Jesus was crucified. He and the disciples already broke bread together - they had their last supper. He washed His disciples feet and said they should also wash one another's feet - because Jesus, their Messiah and King, was setting an example for them as to how they should serve and love other people.

But not all of them were on the same page. Judas decided to betray Jesus - so he already left the room and is meeting with the religious leaders in Jerusalem to let them know where Jesus would be later that evening so they could arrest Him.

Then over the past couple weeks we've talked about how Jesus took this last opportunity to teach His disciples. He started off with some shocking news! He said He was going to leave them, and where He was going they couldn't go! The disciples were clearly troubled by this, but Jesus comforted them by letting them know that not only will He be back, but He's going to send the Holy Spirit to be with them and in them.

And that was a real comfort because Jesus said the prince of this world, Satan, was coming. But Satan holds no power over Jesus. And after He said that, it seems that they left the upper room and headed toward the Garden of Gethsemane.

But Jesus kept teaching - and we talked about that last week. We learned that Jesus is the true vine and God the Father is the gardener. And in that illustration, we are the branches of the vine when we remain in Jesus. We'll produce fruit that the Father wants when we remain in Jesus, our true vine.

How do we remain in Jesus? By loving Him, and loving each other with the love of Christ. Elsewhere in the New Testament this is called the Great Commandment - Loving God and loving others.

But as we'll see today, when we show people the love of Jesus, we won't always receive positive responses. And in those cases, the question for anyone that follows Jesus is:

How will we respond?

So, let's read from John 15:18-25...

John 15:18-19 - "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you."

What does it mean when Jesus says: "I have chosen you out of the world"?

On one hand, He's talking to the disciples and no one else. They were specifically chosen for this task. Much like God specifically chose Abram way back in Genesis 12, Jesus chose these specific disciples and appointed them so that they would go out into the world and bear fruit in the name of Jesus.

So does this passage apply to us today? That's a good question to ask. I'd say that these truths apply to all of God's disciples throughout history because of what we see in the rest of Scripture.

So, for *us* to be chosen out of the world, that's all part of God's master plan; His plan that's been around since before the creation of the world. He chose to provide a way for humanity to be in a right relationship with Him.

In other words, He chose humanity in such a way that they now have a choice to come to Him and remain in Him.

What Jesus is not teaching is the idea that He picks some people to be on His team but not others. No... Jesus chose to die for the sins of the world ... *the world* ... meaning everyone in rebellion against God - which is really all of us because everyone has sinned against God.

But Jesus chose to die for the sins of the world so that *whoever* comes to faith in Him would be saved from their sins and have the gift of everlasting life.

Verse 20 - Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.'

Jesus said this in John 13:16 - right after He washed His disciples feet and told them to follow His example. Jesus said...

John 13:16 - Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

So when Jesus says in...

John 15:20, "Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also."

He's reminding them that He wants them to do the same things and preach the same message He's been preaching all along. But He's also telling them a hard truth - If they follow the example of Jesus, they will be persecuted, because Jesus was persecuted for the things He said and did.

But, in the second part of verse 20, Jesus said...

John 15:20b - "If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also." In other words, there will be some that listen and come to faith in Jesus!

John 15:21-22 - They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin.

This isn't saying that if Jesus never came, then everyone wouldn't be guilty of sin. He's saying that if He didn't come, then people wouldn't have had the opportunity to reject Him... we'll see this again in the next couple verses...

John 15:23-24 - Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. 24 If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of

sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father.

Again, if Jesus didn't come, then people wouldn't have rejected Him. But He did come, and they did reject Him.

The Greek behind "As it is" in verse 24 can be translated, "In reality." In reality, Jesus did come, and they have seen, and they hated Him - they rejected Him. Therefore, they're guilty.

By the way, He's specifically talking about the Jewish religious leaders... we see that in the next verse...

John 15:25 - But this is to fulfill what is written in *their Law*: "They hated me without reason."

Jesus is quoting from the Psalms here. For those of you in the Hebrew Bible Sunday school class, you might be wondering why He refers to the psalms as the "Law." Sometimes when the New Testament refers to the Law, it's talking about the entire Hebrew Bible - our Old Testament. So, in that way "the Law" can be used as a catch all phrase.

But what Jesus is saying presents a clear irony to John's readers. For the Jewish religious leaders that rejected Jesus, He's saying that their own scriptures is what condemns them.

They don't realize it... they think they understand their own Scriptures, but in reality the Scriptures were pointing in a different direction than where they were looking. That's why they didn't recognize Jesus. They didn't recognize Him because they never really knew God the Father to begin with.

[Blank] So that's our passage for today. It's a short one, but I have a few thoughts before we close...

The main takeaway here is that if we follow Jesus - if we remain in Him; if we're obedient to Him; if we follow His example - there will be times when we're hated and rejected due to our faith in Jesus.

We might be rejected because Jesus was rejected. If the world hates us, it's because it hated Jesus first.

So as I said earlier, when we show people the love of Jesus, we won't always receive positive responses. Sometimes we'll be hated and rejected. And in those cases, the question for Jesus followers is this:

How will we as Christians respond when we're hated and rejected?

There's probably any number of answers we could give to this because I guess it could depend on the situation. But I think all the ways we could react boil down to three possible responses:

[Responses]

Response #1: We could shut ourselves off from the world

Response #2: We could embrace the way our culture wants us to change

Response #3: ? [We'll talk about this in a bit]

Response #1 - What does it look like to shut ourselves off from the world?

[Blank] Back when I was a kid... **[StarCraft Illustration - 1998]**

[Picture?]

Jesus doesn't call us to shut ourselves off from the world. In fact, He very clearly calls us to go out into the world. We're to be a light in this dark world!

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Response #2 - Another way we could react to people hating or rejecting us because of our faith in Jesus is that we might start to embrace the way our culture wants us to change.

I think of verses like 2 Timothy 4:3-4 which says...

2 Timothy 4:3-4 - For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, *they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.* 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

So, the idea here is when people change the Bible to mean what it says they want it to mean.

Maybe we're being pressured by our friends, our family, and even the general culture around us to ease up on certain things we believe. An easy example is that our culture wants us to believe that there is no absolute truth. All truth is relative - what's true for you might not be true for me.

But what does Jesus say? "I am the ... truth!" In other words, He's the only way to God. There is no other way... there's no other religion... there's no amount of good works we can do... There's no mountain with several paths we can climb to the top.

I'll be the first to admit... I like options. I don't mind getting lost on different trails... that's part of the fun of hiking! But when it comes to matters of eternity, there is only one way... there's only one path... and His name is Jesus. He's the road less traveled. But again, the absolute truth is that the only way to God is through Jesus, because He is God.

That's a message the world doesn't like. And it's a gospel message that may cause physical or social persecution for those that live it and preach it.

It would be easy to say... In the name of Tolerance, I accept all religions as the truth. But in reality, the only truth is in the name of Jesus.

So the question we'll all need to answer for ourselves is this: Will we remain in Jesus? In other words:

Will we remain in the will of God or will we bend to the will of the world?

And that brings me to what I think could be a third response to people rejecting us because of our faith in Jesus.

Response #3: Will we love them?

What was the main command that Jesus gave in our passage last week?

“Love each other as I have loved you.” He said elsewhere...

Mark 12:30-31 - Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ 31 The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

Also, Paul echoes this in Romans...

Romans 5:14 - “For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: Love your neighbor as yourself.”

And John echoes this in one of his letters...

1 John 4:20b - For whoever does not love their brother or sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.

But we might think... Maybe these scriptures are only talking about other believers? Well, Jesus said...

Matthew 5:43-45 - “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven.

Pray for those who persecute you!! That’s an act of love that reflects the heart of God. That’s the kind of response He wants us to have when the world hates us. Remember, “for God so loved the world...” Therefore, we too ought to love the world.

We can’t love them if we shut ourselves off from them. And we’re not really loving them if we give up God’s will for the will of the world.

[Blank] Jesus wants us to walk right down the middle... following Him... remaining in Him... remaining in the truth... walking that narrow road where we love people with the love of Christ along the way, even if they persecute us.

And so I'd like to end this morning with some words from one of John's letters...

1 John 4:12, 19 - No one has ever seen God; but **if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us ... 19 We love because he first loved us.**

Let's Pray