

TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

John 15: 18-27: Despite This World's Opposition, a Believer is to be a Faithful Witness

"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. 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. 21 But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. 22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 He who hates Me hates My Father also. 24 If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. 25 But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause.'
26 "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. 27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

Background Notes

In verses 18-19 the Lord used the word "world" six times. Let's read those verses once again: *"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."* What is meant by the word "world" as it is used six times in these two verses?

In this context, the "world" as used here is not the material world that God created. In these verses the Lord is speaking about the "world system" that opposes God. It is the satanic system of values and attitudes that is contrary to the biblical system of values and attitudes. This is the world system is characterized by the lust or strong sinful desire of the flesh, by the lust or strong sinful desire of the eyes, and by the pride of life or vanity. 1 John 2:15-16: *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world."* This then is the "world" of which the Lord is speaking here in John 15, 18, and 19. It is the world system that is opposed to God and His Word.

In verse 22 the Lord said, *"If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin."* And in verse 24 we read, *"If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father."* The Lord didn't mean by this that these unbelievers would have been sinless if He had not come. No! But if the Lord had not come and spoken to them, and had not done the miracles before them, they would not have committed this great sin of rejecting the Messiah -- the Messiah who had come specifically

to them, and done these miracles before them. Other sins are as nothing in comparison with the great sin of rejecting Christ! These people rejected Jesus Christ after hearing His claims and seeing His miracles -- greater miracles than any prophet of the Old Testament had ever done (v24)! Greater first-hand exposure to the words and works of Jesus meant greater sin. They had no excuse (v22).

One more background note. In verse 25 we read, "*But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause.'*" This is a specific quote from one of the Messianic psalms, Psalm 69:4. "*Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head; they are mighty who would destroy me, being my enemies wrongfully. Though I have stolen nothing, I still must restore it.*" Although these Jews who had rejected Jesus Christ were guilty of great sin and were without excuse, God's purpose was being accomplished. God's sovereign plan of redemption was being carried out. Even though the Jews who rejected Christ were in fulfillment of Scripture, each one of them was fully responsible for the great sin of personally rejecting Christ.

Doctrinal/Teaching Points

1. The world hates Christ, and therefore it hates Christians.

In verse 18 the Lord said, "*If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.*" 1 John 3:13 says, "*Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you.*" Why does the world hate Christians? Because the world's system is opposed to Jesus Christ, the world **hates** Christ. Oh, the world may speak of Christ as a great human teacher, and a great moral leader, but when it comes to the claims of Christ to be God and to be the judge of all mankind, the world hates Christ. The world hates Christ, and therefore it hates those who follow Christ. Before we became Christians the world didn't hate us -- in fact, before we became Christians, we were part of this world system! "*If you were of the world, the world would love its own*"(v19a). But when we became Christians, we were transformed and transferred out of this world system: "*Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you*"(v19b). The world hates us because we are no longer part of it, and we are now identified with Christ.

Have you ever experienced the hate of this world because you're a Christian? A few years ago I was sitting next to a person on a plane. We both had tennis racquets and we got into a very friendly conversation about the finer points of the game of tennis. It was a great conversation until I was able to work the conversation around to the subject of Christ and the Christian faith. The atmosphere immediately changed, and I remember that person saying to me, "You don't really believe all that stuff in the Bible about Jesus Christ, do you?" I said "Yes!" and from that point on, I would have to say I experienced the hatred of this world. Even though I tried my hardest to be friendly and show the love of Christ, but I was the target of "this world's" hatred. Why? Because I was identified with Christ! The world hates Christ and therefore it hates Christians.

2. The world hates Christ, and therefore it hates God.

In verses 23-24 the Lord said, "*He who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father.*" It is impossible to love God and reject Jesus Christ -- Christ and God go together. Jesus Christ is God! Thus the world system that opposes Christ and hates Christ, opposes and hates God.

The "religious world" claims to love God and honor God, but the religious world rejects the Jesus Christ's teachings that He is the only way of salvation, and that there is a heaven and

a hell, and that there is eternal punishment, and that most people are on the broad road that leads to destruction. When the religious world rejects this teaching, they're showing their disdain and contempt for Christ. They're showing their hatred of Christ and thus their hatred of God's Son and God's way of salvation. They may say they worship God, but the "God" they worship is not the God of the Bible -- it is a "God" that they have made in their own image. The religious world is part of this world system that is opposed to the claims of Christ. The world hates Christ and therefore it hates God.

Practical Applications

1. Be concerned if the world loves you.

In verse 20 the Lord said, *"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."* The point here is not that we should try to get ourselves persecuted and try to be hated by this world. No! The point here is that if we openly identify with Jesus Christ and share His Word with others, which we should do, then we **will** be hated and persecuted by this world. In 2 Timothy 3:12 we read, *"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."* Notice -- it doesn't say that Christians who seek to live godly lives **may** suffer persecution -- it says they **will** suffer persecution! So be concerned if the world loves you.

Notice in verse 20 that it is assumed that we will be sharing the words of Christ and not hiding our faith: *"If they kept My word, they will keep yours also."* It's great to find an unbeliever who is open to hearing what the Bible has to say! That's evidence that the Holy Spirit is at work in the life of that person. Yes, there are folks out there in this world who are being probed by the Holy Spirit. You may find them open to the Word of God. But overall, the world system is opposed to Christ. Again, we shouldn't try to get ourselves hated and persecuted by this world, but it **will** happen if our lives and lifestyles are in line with the Word of God. It may not be physical persecution -- it may be mocking or the cold shoulder -- but persecution will come if we are living godly lives. So -- be concerned if the world loves you.

2. Remember -- you can't have one without the other!

What can't you have without the other? We're talking about the effective witness mentioned in verses 26-27: *"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. 27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning."* The Holy Spirit would come at Pentecost, and He would help the disciples remember everything that the Lord had said and done throughout His public ministry. The disciples had been with Jesus Christ since the beginning of His ministry on earth. They were eye-witnesses who could testify of what He had taught and done. They were to be effective witnesses for Him (v27).

Notice that the Holy Spirit would witness or testify of Christ (v26), and the disciples themselves would witness or testify of Christ (v27). The same word is used in both verses. How does the Holy Spirit testify of Christ? Not only through the written Word, but through us. How do we have an effective testimony for Christ? We should be open channels, ready for the Holy Spirit to use. We should take advantage of opportunities to speak. We should build relationships with people. We should memorize Scripture and study how to defend the faith. We should make ourselves responsible to witness.

You can't have one without the other. We can't have an effective witness or testimony apart from the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit can't have an effective witness apart from us taking on the work and responsibility of being an effective witness. Remember -- you can't have one without the other!