

1-28-24

John 15: 18-27, 16:1-4

For the last several weeks we have been working through a five chapter segment of the book of John. This entire 5 chapters, 13 through 17, takes place in the upper room, just hours before Jesus would be murdered on the cross.

In these chapters, we see Jesus teaching and ultimately preparing His disciples for the time that was ahead of them...a time when Jesus would no longer be with them.

Jesus shows them what it means to humble themselves by washing their feet. He shows them how to remember Him when He is gone by veering from the traditions of the Passover meal and instituting the Lord's Supper.

He teaches them about sacrificial love, and gives them hope that this is not the end and that they will one day "dwell together forever".

In the second half of chapter 14, Jesus promises the Helper, the Comforter, the Counselor, The Holy Spirit. And this was an amazing gift because Jesus specifies that the Helper will LIVE IN THEM! He will help them carry out God's plans.

Then in the beginning of chapter 15, He reminded them that they will produce much fruit, but in order to do that, they must allow the Gardener, The Father, to prune and cleanse them.

In last week's teaching, Pastor Duane taught about the True Vine, and how the pruning of the dead branches allows a higher quality fruit to grow. The dead must be cut away in order for the healthy branches to thrive.

In those passages, the word "remain" showed up over and over again. I counted 10 times that the word remain (or abide) appeared in the 17 verses that Pastor Duane covered last week.

Jesus was stressing the fact that He is leaving His friends with these gifts, these ways to thrive without him. But in order to fully access and use these gifts, they must remain in Him. Why?...so He can remain in them!

A branch that is severed from the Vine cannot produce fruit...WE cannot produce quality fruit for the Lord if we are not abiding in Him...if we are not remaining in Him. In fact...Jesus says we can do NOTHING without Him.

Jesus says very clearly in **John 15:5**...

“Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.”

And that brings us to this week’s teaching. When I was first assigned these passages, I thought Pastor Duane was pulling a “good cop, bad cop” situation on me.

He got to teach about love, and producing fruit, and the Holy Spirit, and hope...and I get to teach about how the world hates the followers of Christ and we will all be persecuted terribly! THANKS DUANE! 😊

But as I started to dig in, I quickly realized that the fact that Jesus is giving this warning to His friends was also a gift. He was preparing them to withstand the evil of this world after He was gone. He was getting them ready persevere in the face of what the enemy had coming their way.

So...let’s dive in to today’s verses beginning in...

John 15: 18-19

***¹⁸ “If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. ¹⁹ The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you.*”**

After reassuring the disciples of the Love that He has for them, and the love that they should have for each other, He shifts the conversation to the hatred that they will face down the road.

He also tells them that the world will hate them because it first hated Him. The disciples have already seen this hatred in action in their time following Jesus.

In fact...while Christ was still an infant, Herod put a plan together to have him killed.

In the three years of Jesus’ public ministry, he was ridiculed relentlessly...he was called a sinner, a “Samaritan” indicating that he was the enemy of the Jewish people, he was told that he “had a devil” inside Him.

He was also nearly stoned more than once, and taken to the top of a cliff to be thrown off before the crowds dispersed without incident.

The disciples witness firsthand the hatred that Jesus experienced, and would have been no strangers to this hatred themselves as I am sure that the hatred directed at Jesus would have spilled over onto them as well.

Jesus explains this hatred in verse 19...

¹⁹ The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you.

People love and gravitate toward similar people. The things of society are built on this principle. Clubs form where likeminded people gather to converse and socialize. Cliques of people seem to form in every corner of our lives, where those that are different are not as easily accepted.

The movement of Christianity was a threat to everything that the religious leaders of the time held dear. It was a threat to the powers that be, and it was a threat to those who did not “buy in”...and so it was hated...Jesus was hated.

Jesus came as a light to shine into the dark places, exposing the corruption, the dysfunction and the sin of the world. And the world didn't like it.

The world readily accepts those who are “of the world”. Look at the people that the world celebrates. Look at the evil in the world that is accepted and even fought for through activist groups and political policies.

Sinners like to surround themselves with other sinners, most likely so they don't feel as bad about their own sin. Misery love company. But Jesus makes it clear that His disciples are no longer a part of that world. He chose them to “come out of the world”.

He also chose each of us who have accepted the gift of salvation to “come out of the world”. I find that to be a very liberating thought.

The world we live in is a broken place. Right is wrong and wrong is right and we are seeing more and more of this with every passing year. It should be comforting to us that Jesus has

called us out of that chaos. And while we are called to minister to the world, we are not part of the world. We are just passing through!

“Take this world and give me Jesus...this is not where I belong”.

Let's look at our next verse....

John 15: 20

Do you remember what I told you? 'A slave is not greater than the master.' Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you.

Jesus now reminds them of the words he had spoken to them earlier in chapter 13...while he was washing their feet. “A slave is not greater than the master”

The first time these words were spoken, Jesus was teaching a lesson of humility. If He could humble Himself and serve...if He can take the place of a servant and wash the feet of the disciples, then they also should serve in humility.

This time, in chapter 15 when Jesus speaks these words, He is telling them something altogether different. If Jesus is the master, and He is persecuted, then the disciples should expect nothing less than persecution themselves.

And we know that these words will become a stark reality for the disciples as all of them are later martyred for their faith. All except for John.

If the “world” would have listened to Jesus, then of course the “world” would listen to those that carry on that message after Jesus is gone. But the world did not listen. And it would continue to not listen...and it continues to not listen to this very day.

This warning from Christ is also aimed directly to His followers today. The world is still persecuting Christians. In fact...David Guzik, in his commentary said this...

“Christians through the centuries have known the hatred of the world, and millions have died for Jesus. It is said that more died as martyrs for Jesus in the 20th century than in all previous centuries combined.”

Think about that for a second...in the last 124 years...more people have been killed standing up for Christ than in all 1,900 years before that. That is incredible. And knowing that, it should be very clear to us that these words of Jesus have clear and direct implications for us as well.

Now...relatively speaking...we have it very easy living here in the United States when compared to the rest of the world.

I don't think that any of us walk around looking over our shoulders or sneaking into this building on a Sunday morning. No...we put our sign out front, we advertise that we are here, and we generally feel safe gathering together to worship and to learn.

But what about places like India and China, where Christians are murdered on sight, and churches are broken up in the middle of the night and the members and pastors hauled off to jail or killed.

These things are happening somewhere in the world as we are sitting here this morning.

Our friends from the Prasana India ministry who have spoken at our church on a few occasions tell of the horrors that happen in India. Their own family members, who continue to practice the Hindu religion, tell them that if they return to India, the family members themselves will try to kill them.

This is the level of persecution that still exists around the world, and Jesus made it clear that it would continue. We should feel blessed that we do not yet experience this kind of evil, but make no mistake, those days may be on the horizon for all believers, everywhere, including here.

So why does this level of persecution exist in the world...? Jesus answers that question in our next verse...

John 15: 21

They will do all this to you because of me, for they have rejected the one who sent me.

The NIV translation says it this way...

They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me.

Because they do not know the one who sent me.

The commentator Trench said this...

“Men may prefer to evolve an idea of their universal Father, but that idea of theirs will take their own colour and the colour of their Age. The only true idea of Him is to be gotten from The Son.”

If you don't know Jesus, you don't know God. It's that simple.

Lots of people think they know who God is...but the only way to truly know who FATHER GOD is, is to know Jesus Christ. And those who do not know Jesus, but think they know the Father, are fooling themselves.

Their view of God is contrived in their own mind, through their own circumstances, and from their own surroundings, and not through the Word of God.

The persecution Jesus references is due to the fact that the world rejected Him and thus rejected His Father.

Again...Jesus came and shined a light into the darkness of the world, exposing it, and the world didn't like being exposed.

Jesus says that they will be persecuted not because of anything that they have done wrong, but because they bear the Name of Christ...Because they are Christians.

The commentator Gill put it this way...listen to this list...

They will be persecuted...“because they were called by his name, and called upon his name; because they professed his name, and confessed him to be the Messiah and Redeemer; because they loved his name Jesus, a Saviour, believed in his name, and hoped in him for eternal life; and also preached him, and in his name salvation, and encouraged others to believe in him”

That should connect with every one of us who is a born again Christian. We should expect persecution if we fall somewhere on that list...

If we are called by His name (Christians...root word CHRIST), If we call on His name (we do that in prayer all the time), if we profess His name, if we accept Him as the Messiah and Savior, If we believe in Him for eternal life, if we preach or teach, if we encourage or evangelize...

If we are Christians, then there is something on that list that applies to EVERY ONE OF US! And if that list applies to every one of us, then we too, like the disciples, should EXPECT to be persecuted because we belong to Christ.

The Apostle Paul made that same case in **Romans 8:17**...

And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. (That's great!...but...) But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

Listen brothers and sisters...Jesus makes it clear...and Paul repeats this notion...If we call ourselves followers of Christ, and if we are bold and outward with our faith, then the world will hate us. The world will persecute us. We should expect it. Jesus would not have said it if were not true, because Jesus IS truth.

We will experience persecution in this world...but remember, Jesus also said that we are NOT OF THIS WORLD. If we are His disciples, then He has chosen us to come out of this world.

"Take this world and give me Jesus, this is not where I belong"

John 15: 22 – 25

²² They would not be guilty if I had not come and spoken to them. But now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ Anyone who hates me also hates my Father. ²⁴ If I hadn't done such miraculous signs among them that no one else could do, they would not be guilty. But as it is, they have seen everything I did, yet they still hate me and my Father. ²⁵ This fulfills what is written in their Scriptures^[a]: 'They hated me without cause.'

Now Jesus explains to His disciples that it didn't have to be this way. The chance was given to those who Christ came to, to see and believe. To know the Messiah in the flesh. To connect all the prophecy of the Old Testament scriptures with the Man who stood before them.

He performed miracles among them...things that no one else could do.

He spoke to them, opening the Old Testament writings and making them come alive before their very eyes...but they did not see. They were blinded by the world, by greed, by power, by their own sin. They could not believe.

They saw the miracles, they heard His voice, and they still hated.

And Jesus says in verse 23..."anyone who hates me also hates my Father".

Before Jesus arrived, I am sure there were many who believed they loved God with all they had. Believed that they knew God...but When God stood before them in the flesh, they did not recognize Him.

How incredibly sad. And even more sad is that Jesus said they had no excuse for their sin...for their rejection of Him and the Father.

David Gusick had this insight in his commentary...

Because Jesus did come to and speak to the world, *they knew something of God that they did not know before*. This made them without excuse for hating and rejecting Jesus and His Father in heaven. Jesus did among them the works which no one else did, and they still hated and rejected Him.

Let's look at verse 25 again...Jesus said...

²⁵ *This fulfills what is written in their Scriptures^[a]: 'They hated me without cause.'*

Jesus is quoting from the book of Psalms when He says this...

Psalm 69:4

*Those who hate me without cause
outnumber the hairs on my head.
Many enemies try to destroy me with lies,
demanding that I give back what I didn't steal.*

The word for "scriptures" used in verse 25, in the Greek translates to mean "in their law".

What I noticed when I read this passage was the Jesus uses the word "their". "what is written in their scriptures" ...or in their law

Man, that stings. These were religious people that rejected Jesus. Jesus is referring to the Old Testament writings, but it's almost as if He is saying that the scriptures they thought they knew, they really didn't.

Over and Over the Old Testament gives prophecy about the coming Messiah. These people should have recognized Jesus.

It's as if they read the words, but they didn't connect with the words. And then when the WORD showed up in front of them, they were completely lost. And they hated Him without cause...and in turn...hated the Father who sent Him.

Does that happen to us sometimes? Do we draw down the full power of the Old Testament scriptures, the "Law", condemnation on those around us, instead of realizing that Jesus came to teach us something new. Something of love and grace...of mercy and forgiveness? Of accountability and second chances?

Do we sometimes miss opportunities to show Jesus to people because we are caught up in the way the world handles issues? Because we jump straight to judgement and condemnation? I know I can be guilty of that from time to time.

It's something we need to be aware of...something I need to be aware of.

In this scene in the upper room, Jesus has told the disciples that they will experience persecution because of Him, they will feel hatred because of Him. He tells them that the world will not listen to their words because the world didn't listen to Him.

After all the lessons about love, and loving each other, and hope, and fruit...this must have been a bit of a downer for the disciples. But Jesus then reminds His friends again that He is not leaving them alone.

John 15: 26 -27

"But I will send you the Advocate^[b]—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me. ²⁷ And you must also testify about me because you have been with me from the beginning of my ministry.

Two weeks ago, Pastor Duane taught through the second half of the 14th Chapter of John where Jesus also references the Holy Spirit, or the Helper. Let's take a look back at those two passages...

In **John 14: 16** Jesus said...

¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate,^[e] who will never leave you. ¹⁷ He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you

In **John 14:26** Jesus said...

But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

The Greek word used in those two passages is the same word used in our passage today. That word is PARACLETE...and there is no English word to fully match it. Other translations use the words Comforter, Encourager, Helper and Counselor.

Jesus knew that when He was gone, His followers would NEED a Helper, an Encourager, a Comforter and Counselor. He knew we would still need that today, and we are extremely blessed to have that in the form of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit would come to the disciples to TESTIFY about Jesus. Jesus tells His friends that very thing in chapter 14 when He says that the Holy Spirit will “teach you everything and remind you of everything I have told you”.

So here is yet another purpose of the Jesus leaving and the Holy Spirit coming to His followers...so they can continue to be taught. The Holy Spirit is also an interpreter.

I am standing up here reading through the things that I have prepared, but I can speak for all our pastors when I say that as we prepare, we are constantly praying for the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth to us.

We are praying for the Holy Spirit to connect the words that He has given us to the hearts and minds of those listening...meaning YOU! The Holy Spirit is our teacher and interpreter.

Each and every time you sit down with your Bible...pray that the Holy Spirit will reveal to you what God wants to teach you in that moment. It works...trust me, it works!

To close out the 15th chapter of John, Jesus tells His disciples that not only will the Holy Spirit TESTIFY about Him, but they must also continue to TESTIFY about Him as well...because they have been with Him from the beginning.

The commentator Tasker said this...

“The witness of the Advocate (Holy Spirit) and the witness of the apostles are in effect a single witness.” (Tasker)

The disciples must now partner with the Holy Spirit, drawing on the power of the Helper, to continue to tell the world about Christ. Whether they thought they were ready or not, the fact is that they lived with Jesus, knew Jesus, and were qualified to continue the mission. And now, they would have the Holy Spirit guiding them along the way.

God is still calling us to do that same thing. To utilize the power of the Advocate to learn the Word and then share the Word. Are we responding to that call? Are we calling on the power of the Holy Spirit to guide us as we seek knowledge in the scriptures?

I can't tell you how many times I've heard from people that the Holy Spirit brought exactly the right scripture to their mind at exactly the right moment for the exact person that needed to hear that scripture.

That's one of the things the Holy Spirit does...it teaches and reminds, just as Jesus says in John 14: 26. Tap into that power. Pray for that guidance. God gave us that access for a reason...and we would be foolish not to use it constantly.

We are going to finish this morning with the first 4 verses of chapter 16 in the book of John. Jesus finishes His warning with more news that the disciples probably didn't want to hear.

John 16: 1-4

***“I have told you these things so that you won’t abandon your faith. ² For you will be expelled from the synagogues, and the time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing a holy service for God. ³ This is because they have never known the Father or me. ⁴ Yes, I’m telling you these things now, so that when they happen, you will remember my warning. I didn’t tell you earlier because I was going to be with you for a while longer.*”**

Jesus begins by giving another reason for why He is warning them. And I can imagine by this time the disciples were more than a little rattled, thinking...“gee whiz, what’s next?”

Well...what’s next is that they will be expelled from the synagogues and killed. Wow...the hits just keep on comin!

But Jesus does not want them to be unprepared or blindsided, or abandon the mission, so He makes sure they are aware of all that will happen after He leaves them.

Jesus says that the disciples will be expelled from the synagogues. I can imagine that this one stung...being kicked out of the house of worship because you testified about the One who came to build the Church on earth.

I found this from the commentator Bruce...

“At the time when the Gospel was written these words had acquired a special relevance from the inclusion in the synagogue prayers of a curse on the Nazarenes, which was intended to ensure that the followers of Jesus could take no part in the service.” (Bruce)

Did you catch that...the synagogue prayers were altered to include a curse on the Nazarenes, so followers Christ could not participate.

But worse than being removed from the synagogues, Jesus tells them that they will be killed. And even more specifically, killed in the name of God. Isn’t that amazing? Jesus informs them that they will be killed by those thinking that they are doing a good work for God.

It's incredible...but it happened. Saul, before he converted to Paul, was a champion of persecution and murder of the followers of Christ. And he was backed by the religious establishment.

Acts 22: 3-5

³ Then Paul said, "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, and I was brought up and educated here in Jerusalem under Gamaliel. As his student, I was carefully trained in our Jewish laws and customs. I became very zealous to honor God in everything I did, just like all of you today. ⁴ And I persecuted the followers of the Way, hounding some to death, arresting both men and women and throwing them in prison. ⁵ The high priest and the whole council of elders can testify that this is so. For I received letters from them to our Jewish brothers in Damascus, authorizing me to bring the followers of the Way from there to Jerusalem, in chains, to be punished.

Religious persecution fully backed by the religious establishment...to honor "god".

As much as the disciples didn't want to hear this news, Jesus wanted them to be ready for what was ahead of them.

And this persecution in the name of god is still happening today. Christians are still being killed in the name of Allah. Christians across the globe are still being persecuted and murdered in the name of false gods. So these words of Christ still ring true to this day.

And why did this happen...why is it still happening?

Jesus says in verse 3...³ *This is because they have never known the Father or me.*

It is happening Because the ones who persecute have never known Jesus and thus have never known the Father. It is happening because they hate Jesus and thus hate the father.

And so this warning from Jesus to His friends comes full circle.

John 15: 18

If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first.

John 15: 21

They will do all this because of me, for they have rejected the one who sent me.

John 15: 23

Anyone who hates me, also hates my Father.

Jesus didn't tell the disciples earlier, (probably a good thing to not lead with that), He didn't tell them because He was there to draw the attention, to draw the hatred to Himself.

But now that He is preparing to leave them, they must know what is coming. They must begin to wrap their heads around what the world will throw at them in His absence.

So as we come to a close, let's look at how this warning from Jesus to His disciples applies to us today? I think if we are paying attention, these passages have incredible significance to us in the age we are living in.

1. If you are a follower of Jesus, if you are a born again Christian, then you bear the name of Christ and you no longer belong to this world...in fact, you have been called out of this world.

When people meet us, when they interact with us, it should be noticeable that there is something very different about us.

Are there areas in your life where you still look like the world?

Maybe at work? Maybe at school? Maybe when you get angry about situations that arise in your day to day life? Perhaps it's a habit that we hide.

Does your language, your actions, your responses, your demeanor...do they look like Christ, or do you sometimes default back to what the world looks like in those areas?

I know that I am guilty of this. There are times when the world conspires against me and I so quickly go back to resembling the world instead of Christ.

I want to challenge each of us this morning to take an honest and hard examination of ourselves, to pray for God to reveal them to us if there are areas of our lives where we still look like the world.

And if God reveals those things to us, that we would repent and turn from them. As followers of Christ, we are no longer a part of this world and we should not resemble it. We are called to be different.

As Pastor Duane taught last week, we need to ask God to prune those dead branches out of our lives so that we can produce a higher quality fruit.

2. Jesus makes it perfectly clear that we WILL be persecuted. It's not a question of "if" ...we WILL be persecuted if we are living out our faith.

Because we don't look like the world, because we shine the light of Truth, the darkness of the world is exposed. And the world will never like that.

We are called to TESTIFY to the goodness of the Lord and what He has done for us...and what He wants to do for all those who call on His name in repentance.

We are called to continue to shine that light regardless of how the world responds. In fact...by doing so, we gain eternal rewards beyond what we can imagine!

I want to read **Romans 8:17** again...

And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

But now let's continue and read the next verse, **verse 18**...

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

Any suffering or persecution that we experience because of this world will be well worth it when we finally get to bask in the glory of God!

When God calls us to our true home in heaven, it will all be long forgotten, and for eternity we will be surrounded by the glory of the One we served.

That sounds like it's worth it to me!

3. Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit...the Helper, the Counselor, the Encourager, the Comforter, for a reason!

I have heard people say, and have even said myself how cool it would have been to be alive when Jesus walked the earth. How incredible it would have been to meet Him, walk with Him, learn from Him, touch Him.

Yes...that would have been awesome! But...we have to remember what Jesus gave us instead. If we lived with Jesus, the closest we could get is to be near Him, next to Him, to touch Him and hear Him speak.

When Jesus leaves, He gives us the Holy Spirit to literally DWELL INSIDE OF US! Jesus in the flesh could not do that...and so He returns to the Father so that the Helper could come to us.

Now we have the living God living inside of us! How absolutely incredible is that? We have access to the Father that would not be possible without the sending of the Holy Spirit and we should never take that for granted.

We were given an internal guide, a flawless teacher, and an ever present help in times of trouble.

Our God knows what He is doing!

4. The last application from today's teaching is this...the more time that passes before Christ returns, the harder things are going to get for His followers. The more push there will be to resemble the world around us.

Even the Church has begun to resemble the world in some areas. We are seeing Denominations conforming the Word of God to fit the narrative of the world. Going against the clear written Word in the name of "inclusivity" and "equity".

And those who stand up for the Truth of God's Word are called bigots.

We should expect this to continue until the Lord's return and it is our calling to stand and testify to the true nature God and what His Word says.

We do that in love, and compassion, but we never compromise the message. Pastor Thom always says, "the methods change, but the message never does".

We are not part of this world...this is not our home. But now more than ever, we must lean in to the Word...empowered by the Holy Spirit, the Helper, the Advocate...and testify TO the world about the ONE AND ONLY true God...who sent His Son to save the world.

“All I know is I’m not home yet. This is not where I belong. Take this world and give me Jesus. This is not where I belong”

I want to close with this verse from 2 Thessalonians 1:11. This verse sums up our prayer as pastors at Calvary Chapel for each one of you as we navigate this world together...

2 Thessalonians 1:11

¹¹ So we keep on praying for you, asking our God to enable you to live a life worthy of his call. May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do.