

The Good Disciple

The Good Disciple is Hated by the World

John 15:18-27

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HDBC

A major supplier of football helmets for the National Football League, issues the following warning label on all their helmets and on their website's homepage: WARNING NO HELMET SYSTEM CAN PREVENT CONCUSSIONS OR ELIMINATE THE RISK OF SERIOUS HEAD OR NECK INJURIES WHILE PLAYING FOOTBALL.

The label continues with some information about symptoms for concussions and concludes by adding to the original warning: TO AVOID THESE RISKS [OF PLAYING FOOTBALL], DO NOT ENGAGE IN THE SPORT OF FOOTBALL.

You can't access any content until you check a box next to the words "Please indicate that you have read and understand [this warning label]."

In a similar way Jesus warned his disciples that some really painful things could happen if they continued to follow Him. In fact, He took it a step further, He indicated these things **would happen** if they followed Him.

He shared this only hours before His own enemies arrested, ridiculed, abused, scourged and then nailed him to a cross. His words, shared in the upper room would take on a terrifying reality within a few hours as they watched what was done to Him. His warning about what would happen to them, suddenly took on an urgency that terrified them. And so, for the most part, they ran, in fear.

But then, remembering his words and being empowered by the Holy Spirit they picked themselves up, and marched into battle. Most would be killed on that battlefield. But they courageously followed Christ, regardless of the warning.

The record is found in John 15. In this chapter Jesus outlines what is expected of good disciples. Good disciples manage three key relationships.

Relationship with Jesus, with others believers and with the world.

The good disciple abides in Christ (John 15:1-11)

The good disciple loves other believers (John 15:12-17)

The good disciple is hated by the world (John 15:18-27)

He spoke of the hostility that the world would have toward Christians. He goes on to answer four important questions that will help us not only survive but win!

Read the Text: John 15:18-27

1. Who are we up against?

Jesus makes it clear that our enemy in this battle for our souls, our families, our character and our eternal life is *the world*. *Cosmos*.

Can mean the physical universe. Here it refers to the fallen world system, operating according to the values of Satan rather than God. It also refers to those people who live by these values and willingly serve it rather than God.

Jesus came to redeem the world, but the world, by and large, rejected Him. But there are some, a minority who have responded to His offer of grace and forgiveness and follow Him. Others have chosen to remain loyal to the world. Therefore, there is hostility. Christ-followers are not hostile to the world, but the world and its system is very much hostile toward Christians.

Note the little word *if*. The grammar indicates that this word implies a condition that is assumed to be true. *Like a person saying, **if the sun comes up tomorrow I will be on the golf course**. You can expect that person to be on the golf course because the sun will come up.* It is true.

We are immersed in the world's system. Like a fish in water, we cannot escape contact with it. But unlike a fish in water, our environment is hostile, not supportive of us. This does not mean that every person, every company, every organization is out to get you. They are not. However, we need to

understand that we are very much living in a culture that is not naturally supportive of our faith, our values or our morality.

Governments. Schools. Businesses. Entertainment. Organizations. All will have a natural inclination to be hostile toward Christians. **Don't let that bother you.** It is expected. We need to have the attitude that Richard Winter, of the 101st airborne had, as is quoted in Band of Brothers.

2nd Lt. George Rice: Looks like you guys are going to be surrounded.

Winters: ***We're paratroopers, Lieutenant. We're supposed to be surrounded.***

Or like that of Chesty Puller, the most decorated Marine in American history. One time said, We've been looking for the enemy for some time now. We've finally found him. We're surrounded. That simplifies things.

So, who are we up against? The world and its system, influenced by Satan.

2. What will they do to us? Two things

A. They will hate us. (18, 19)

He is not saying everyone will hate us. **They**, here, is a reference to the world's system and the devil who is behind it. Not talking all people, but about some who will be influenced heavily by the world's system.

The climate and attitude of the society around you may change with the seasons and the generations. Also geographic location will have an impact on how the world around you feels about your faith. But do not be deceived, the world hates you. Even in America where we have religious freedom we must be reminded that in spite of that, the fundamental attitude of the world toward those of us who believe is hatred.

Many non-believers, non-church members would take offense at this. Think we are being alarmists and being inflammatory. They would even deny it. Most don't realize the influence that Satan and the fallen condition of creation have had upon them. They are simply acting in the way that seems most natural to them. **Let's cut them some slack!**

B. They will persecute us (20)

To drive away, press, harass, molest. To chase like a wild beast!

This is the natural outcome of hatred. When one hates another his hatred results in violent actions. This persecution has come in drastic and direct ways in many parts of our world. Oppressive regimes have brutalized, imprisoned, harassed and killed Christian. In more democratic types of countries like America the persecution is more subtle.

In this country we have enjoyed an amazing freedom from persecution. Even those who disliked Christianity recognized that it was the accepted norm in America and we have been somewhat insulated from attack. But that is rapidly changing. Let's be prepared! That's the point of this text!

3. Why will they do it? 4 reasons

A. We are not of this world. (19)

We are different. Does not refer to outward appearance. That is not the key thing that makes us different from the world.

The things that are important to us. Kingdom things.

How we treat others. (people made in image of God)

What we believe about God, our purpose and eternal life.

How we handle adversity. Sovereignty of God.

Reaction to our own sinfulness. Confession and repentance.

B. They see Jesus in us (20)

The world hated and persecuted Jesus. We are followers of Jesus. What they did to the leader they will do to the followers. That just makes sense. They see Jesus in us and will come after us with the same hatred and attacks that they did with Jesus.

It is better to be hated for what you are, than to be loved for what you are not. Andre Gide

It is Christ in us that the world hates and persecutes.

C. They do not know God (21)

Echoes of John 1:5,10.

*And the light shines in the darkness; and the darkness **did not comprehend it.**(5) He was in the world and the world was made through Him, and the world **did not know him.** (10)*

Though God has revealed Himself through His son, the world at large does not know him. They may have a belief that there is a higher power, but that belief is vague and ambiguous. They do not know the person!

D. They are fulfilling prophecy (25)

Short reminder that God has it all under control. All being fulfilled exactly as planned. Not one part of God's sovereign will is going to go unfulfilled. Even the hatred and persecution of the world cannot alter God's plan.

4. How do we respond? 3 things

A. Remember the words of Jesus (20)

Don't be surprised. The attitude and action of the world toward us should not surprise us because it did not surprise Him.

B. Rely on the Holy Spirit (26)

Over and over during these last few hours with his followers Jesus stressed the truth that the Holy Spirit would come and indwell us. He would live in us. Paul amplified this when he wrote that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. He lives in us and will empower us.

C. Share the Gospel (27)

Testify is our word martyr. Even in our death we testify of His power and love and grace. And of His ability to change lives. But the word also means just what we think it means, to share. What is it that we share? We share the gospel for it and it alone has the power to transform lives.

Outward, aggressive hostility toward Christianity is nothing new. It's the same old stuff that Jesus spoke of 2,000 years ago. When the world finds out that you belong to Christ it will impact the way it treats you.

Takeaways:

1. Let's respond to hostility with love

Just because the world is hostile toward us does not mean we are hostile toward others in the world. People in the world are not the enemy. They are people in need of the gospel.

2. Let's refuse to live in fear

There is a difference between caution and fear.

3. Let's endure suffering gracefully

If and when persecuted for Christ, let us endure gracefully