



**Relationships: The Importance of Perseverance  
What Does It Really Mean to Abide in Christ?  
John 15:18-16:4**

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Deep down inside us, we all want to be popular. Not one of us woke up this morning, looked in the mirror and said, “what can I do to make everyone around me miserable today.”

If you did, see me after the service.



But popularity is something, per our culture, that is important. We measure it when it comes to various political figures, restaurants, destinations, and yes, churches and pastors too. You can add your ten cents as well on many platforms and cause the popularity of a church or pastor to grow or even kill a church.

But we need to beware. Based on what we see in the Bible, beware of the “Christian” “Pastor” or “Church” that is popular with the world. The quotation marks around the word indicate that this is an individual or organization who has told everyone that they follow Jesus, yet they are popular with the world system.

The person says they are saved yet they are darlings of the news media. They say they are saved yet on social media, anything they say or do winds up going viral. They say they are saved yet their lifestyle makes you scratch your head and wonder about that statement. They say they are saved, yet they publicly support causes and issues which are specifically addressed in the scriptures as being abominations to God.

There is a problem though with this desire to be approved by the world, it drives decision making that is questionable at best. John wrote about that back in chapter 12.

John 12:42–43

“Nevertheless many, even of the rulers, believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, so that they would not be excommunicated from the synagogue; for they loved the approval of people rather than the approval of God.” (NASB 2020)

And there it is, exhibit one of what kinds of decisions popularity drives. Was popularity among the people He was ministering to, top of mind for Jesus? Hardly.

Here in John 15, the third group of relationships that Jesus addresses, after discussing our relationship with Him and with other believers, is with the world.

The disciples have already learned that rather hard lesson when at the peak of His popularity with the people of Galilee, Jesus talked with those following Him about bread and wine clearly telling them He is God.

John 6:48

“I am the bread of life.” (NASB 2020)

He went further in the conversation and using bread, wine and His body and blood as images in the conversation, revealed to them that He is going to give His life for them.

John 6:52–58

“Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?” So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, the one who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. This is the bread that came down out of heaven, not as the fathers ate and died; the one who eats this bread will live forever.”” (NASB 2020)

He is not saying for them to begin to eat Him and to drink His blood! What He is saying is that He is going to give His life. (McGee 1991, 111)



As a result of Him giving His life, since He has come from heaven, what He offers is not simple physical satisfaction for a day and then death at some point in the future. No, what Jesus is saying is that by His offering Himself on the cross, He will shed His blood and His physical body will be sacrificed. Salvation is accepting that sacrifice that was done on our behalf and receiving Him intimately.

After hearing that, His ratings on Yelp took a nosedive and most of those who were following Him, stopped doing so. He simply was no longer popular because He told them, being Jewish doesn't save you with what it is He will achieve on the cross. That is not a popular thing for a bunch of Jews to discover.

John 6:65–66

“And He was saying, “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father.” As a result of this many of His disciples left, and would no longer walk with Him.” (NASB 2020)

The disciples were all witnesses to this. They were there with the thousands following, and they were there when it was only a few hundred. They were there as Jesus intentionally engaged the Jewish leadership and now, they are with Him as He prepares them for what is coming. Full blown hatred from the world for no real reason.

Reminder, as believers, we are all engaged in spiritual warfare every day. We are no longer part of the fallen world system marching to the drumbeat of Satan and his minions. They rebelled against God, they hate Him, and since we love Him, they hate us too. Because they hate us, so do those who are in their control. What does our relationship with the world look like?

John 15:18–25

“If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you as well; if they followed My word, they will follow yours also. But all these things they will do to you on account of My name, because they do not know the One who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. The one who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. But this has happened so that the word that is written in their Law will be fulfilled: ‘THEY HATED ME FOR NO REASON.’” (NASB 2020)

Aw, but you missed it, Ken. This passage starts off with the word “if.” It is not a given that the world will hate us. Yeah, about that word.

In Greek grammar, the word (ei) εἰ as a (conditional particle if, since; with the indicative to express a condition of fact regarded as true or settled since, because. (Friberg, Friberg and Miller 2000, 130)

All that to say that when this word is used to modify a verb in the context of the sentence, and the verb is in the indicative, then it is expressing a condition of fact. The Greek verb that is translated hates, is in the indicative.

This means that it might make more sense to translate verse 18 like this, “Since the world hates you, you know it hated Me before it hated you.”



Did Jesus just say that as believers and followers of Jesus, that the world system hates us? Yes, that is indeed true. Satan and his minions hate us. Because they do, then as we step out to serve Jesus, they will do anything they can do to delay, prevent or stop us from being effective.

John did write a commentary on portions of his gospel, is this something he addressed. Yes, it is.

But first John gives us some basic instructions on how to do life.

His instructions are designed to prevent us from getting bummed out over the world not being happy with us. If we find ourselves wanting what the world has to offer, then we need to gut check and see how real is, our faith in Christ.

Abiding faith in Christ provides a realization for us through the Holy Spirit that this world is not our home. Our loyalty is no longer here, but with the Lord and the place He has promised to make for us (John 14:1-4). That is truly our home. But first a warning from John.

1 John 2:15–17

“Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.” (NLT)

John then takes what Jesus is saying here in John 15 applying it across all of the relationships Jesus has discussed. He does this in order to provide some practical instruction.

1 John 3:13–22

“So don’t be surprised, dear brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. If we love our brothers and sisters who are believers, it proves that we have passed from death to life. But a person who has no love is still dead. Anyone who hates another brother or sister is really a murderer at heart. And you know that murderers don’t have eternal life within them. We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God’s love be in that person? Dear children, let’s not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions. Our actions will show that we belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before God. Even if we feel guilty, God is greater than our feelings, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if we don’t feel guilty, we can come to God with bold confidence. And we will receive from him whatever we ask because we obey him and do the things that please him.” (NLT)

Now we know, the world system, the word used in the Greek is *cosmos*, is the one that is currently in alignment with Satan. That system hates us, hates Jesus, and wants us out of the way. Very soon, what the unseen realm desires, they will have, but only for a few years.

What we learn here, beginning in verse 18, is what it costs to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. As a church, we are following the Great Commission, we are making disciples. As disciples, we all share in Jesus, we abide in Him, and we share in His ministry as we do life empowered by the Holy Spirit. But Paul, being the extremist that he is, also wrote a bit of a commentary on these relationships as well.

Like John, he also ties the pieces together.



### Philippians 3:8–11

“Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God’s way of making us right with himself depends on faith. I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!” (NLT)

That is extreme rejection. That is not the future for every believer. We live in a nation where we, as Christians, are tolerated, for now. But what it is the potential for every believer, is what Jesus is teaching here. “Jesus in this section wants to educate his disciples about the reality of what is to come. They must understand that being a Christ follower will entail serious rejection from all around them. They have the words of life, but people don’t want to hear them.” (Osborne 2018, 365)

Do we see this rejection and pushback here in the ministry of Calvary Chapel? Yes, we do. The world is interested in money, cash is king. Because of the world worshipping money, we as believers find ourselves negotiating through the moral morass it causes.

Where did this pushback due to economic concerns come from? The Second Missionary journey of Paul tells us.

### Acts 16:11–12

“So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days.” (ESV)

Paul was determined to begin ministry in Macedonia proper, so arriving in Philippi they began to do so on the very next Sabbath day. That first day saw Lydia and her family coming to Christ and then Paul established her home as a base of operations for the team.

When Paul entered Macedonia, he entered territory that Satan thought was his. What Jesus did on the cross and through the resurrection changed all of that. Now Satan and his “safe space” from God was no longer safe and was to be directly assaulted per Jesus and what He promised in Matthew 16:18 while at Caesarea Philippi.

The very next day, Satan plants a fortune teller following Paul around. Of course, after she did this for “many days,” Paul became annoyed and cast the demon out of her setting her free and ending the fortune telling. Suddenly, this was now an economic issue for those making money off her fortune telling.

That isn’t unusual today either. The moment following Jesus and being faithful to Him impacts the bottom line of unbelievers, that is when the pushback tends to ramp up. Why is it we have been unable to find a place to meet? Well, I have been told, it might impact the other businesses in this shopping center. Parking you know is limited and we can’t cut into their bottom line.

We have also heard that properties we were interested in were already being involved in other negotiations. Churches are not allowed in shopping centers in this county, the major tenant doesn’t want a church in the same location they are in, and on and on.

Paul and Silas decided, after they were subjected to pushback to include humiliation and beating, to assert their rights under Roman law. As a church, have we reached that point yet.



We already have teed up some of what we have encountered with a couple of law firms who specialize in this. The issue, the moment we pull the trigger, who will do business with us in the future?

So, we pray and rely on guidance from the Holy Spirit as we look for that next place, He wants us to minister from.

The disciples as well as us, we used to be part of the world system. In that condition, we experienced acceptance from others in the world. I remember wondering why anyone would want to read the Bible much less study it. I had friends who accepted me as I was my fallen state, but then I became a believer. Over a period of a year or so, I discovered I had less and less in common with my friends. They no longer even wanted to hang out with me anymore.

I started carrying a New Testament around and one of my buddies confronted me about it, said it was illegal for me to do so, and then never talked to me again.

Pushback though is not unusual for any of us as we seek to follow Jesus. He is telling us this here in the text. Jesus wants there to be a full disclosure before the cross of what is about to take place. It is all about to get very real.

The disciples are about to experience something entirely new, the men they have grown up listening to and respecting as teachers, the leadership of the Temple, the respected leadership of the nation, are about to turn against them. That's new. And it is much worse than that.

John 15:21–25

“But all these things they will do to you on account of My name, because they do not know the One who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. The one who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. But this has happened so that the word that is written in their Law will be fulfilled: ‘THEY HATED ME FOR NO REASON.’” (NASB 2020)

They are about to experience persecution from the religious establishment that they, at one time, respected. The world, Romans, Greeks hating them, that is one thing, but their own people, that is something entirely new.

Jesus tells them here, very clearly, it is because those who are doing this do not know YAHWEH. They say they worship and serve Him, they don't, not really. Jesus plainly called the leadership hypocrites, now He is telling His disciples just exactly what they will mean for them going forward. They don't love YAHWEH; they hate Him if they hate Jesus.

We have studied the various miracles Jesus did in the Temple. Works that screamed Jesus is God. Only God could heal a man born blind. Only God could raise a dead man back to life. Only God could make the lame walk. All clear attestations of His divinity and they rejected all of it. Jesus is here telling His disciples, even though they witnessed all of this firsthand, they rejected Him as Messiah and instead hated Him for no reason.

As we step out and serve the Lord, from time to time, push back will even come from someone in the church. I love quoting my father-in-law about the elders in his church, they had issues, lots of them.

He would tell me that all those issues would go away if the elders would just get saved. A couple of the men were active in the local community and very popular. By the way, that church no longer exists.



Yes, unbelievers are in the church. Jesus had Judas, and Satan continues to try and put his folks into churches globally as well. When we are on the receiving end of pushback, affliction, or even persecution, just remember this. The one doing it is simply following the bidding of who they are following. You want to turn the light on and see things happen, they want it off.

The world system wants you and me to be like them. But if we have met Jesus and decided to follow Him, that is not possible. Jesus tells us "...because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you." (John 15:19b, NASB 2020)

It is important to realize this, for we sometimes act as though it is surprising that upright worldly people oppose the things of God. On the contrary, it is inevitable. (Morris 1995, 602)

Jesus is letting His disciples know that God is in the process, now in real time, of redeeming the world. The Old Testament pointed to what is about to happen. They are about to experience it themselves and it will indeed be life changing.

He wants them to know that the hatred of the world system, reflected in the hatred of the Sanhedrin, is something that began back in Genesis 3. The sin and rebellion that began there resulted in a declaration of war, one which is about to suddenly come to an end with the total and complete destruction of the enemy. And they do not even see it coming.

1 Corinthians 2:6–8

"Now we do speak wisdom among the mature, but not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are perishing. Instead we speak the wisdom of God, hidden in a mystery, that God determined before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood it. If they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (NET 2nd ed.)

Jesus had been working throughout His ministry to bring His disciples to the point of understanding His going to the cross even plainly telling them. But, as we have covered before, they didn't hear Him.

God's plan will be fulfilled. Nothing will stop that; in fact, He will help it to fulfillment.

Okay, so we get it, Jesus is telling His disciples, in fact all of His followers that the world system hates us and this will manifest to us as His followers in different ways from discrimination to affliction all the way to persecution and for some, martyrdom. But once again, He tells them, I am giving you someone who will be with you the along the way. Someone who will never leave you. The Helper, the Holy Spirit.

John 15:26–27

"When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, namely, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, He will testify about Me, and you are testifying as well, because you have been with Me from the beginning." (NASB 2020)

As pushback takes place, there is one who will be with us testifying about Jesus. He is the one who gives us the words to say. He is the one who prompts us to turn the other cheek when inside of us we don't want to. He is the one who keep us focused on the overall mission rather than giving in to the satisfaction that a justified slap down might bring.

There are some events, yet to come, that will be experienced by the disciples, but filled with the Holy Spirit, they will know what to say and when the right moment to say it is.

We are not here in this world to be punching bags for the unseen realm, we are here to be witnesses and as we join with the Holy Spirit, who lives in us, we are enabled to be exactly that.





Romans 8:31–39

“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (ESV)

For the disciples though, they are looking at extreme persecution. The same as seen in some places in the world today, but not everywhere at this time.

Jesus has been trying to get them ready. Reminding them of the Holy Spirit is part of that. Now He gives them a picture of the next year or so.

John 16:1–4

“These things I have spoken to you so that you will not be led into sin. They will ban you from the synagogue, yet an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering a service to God. These things they will do because they have not known the Father nor Me. But these things I have spoken to you, so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them. However, I did not say these things to you at the beginning, because I was with you.” (NASB 2020)

The one concern Jesus has, and this is reflected by the disciples later in their ministry as well as by Paul is simple.

When persecution, or affliction, or pushback of any kind takes place, it is a temptation for some to take the path of least resistance and give in. Jesus did not want His disciples to be offended, skandalisthete is the word in the Greek, we get scandalized from it. He did not want them to be scandalized about the extreme persecution they were to undergo.

If I were starting a business, I would not start off by telling all of those who were committing to be part of the organization that as you begin to step out and work for us, you are going to need to work long hours, some of you may go to jail, and a few of you may be killed. Sign here.

That is what Jesus is now telling those who are to be central to the spreading of the gospel around the planet. “He said His followers are going to be in the world but not of the world and that the world will hate them. He made all of that very clear. He never said that it would be easy for His followers down here.” (McGee, Thru the Bible Commentary 1997, 471)

Jesus is very clear to them. They will be kicked out of the fellowship of the Temple. There will even be those who believe that they will be serving the Lord by killing believers.

That was Saul before meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus. As we study history, we discover that there have been more followers of Jesus Christ, killed by the various persecutions of the Catholic Church, than in Rome.

Jesus wants them to know this group who has followed Him, will be subjected to extreme persecution. He does not want them to find themselves giving in to the persecution and rejecting Him in order to secure safety for themselves.





Does persecution take place like that today, an offer of we will stop if? Yes, it does. Even Paul was concerned about the issue in Thessalonica.

1 Thessalonians 3:2–3

“and we sent Timothy, our brother and God’s fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you for the benefit of your faith, so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we have been destined for this.” (NASB 2020)

Timothy was sent to encourage a church enduring persecution, and Paul was also concerned about them being “disturbed by these afflictions.”

Is encouragement important. Yes. I have been encouraged several times as we stepped out to start Calvary Chapel.

We have podcasts on platforms throughout the world and our teaching is available on the web, and sometimes you wonder, is it working? Is anyone listening, then you get an email like the one we got this week.

GREETINGS From Eastern Africa. I look forward to many hours learning from you (such opportunities are "few and far between" here in Uganda.) I thank Almighty God for this opportunity and for having lead me to such a capable individual...I will continue enjoying your "teaching section," and, judging from it's endless size, will be doing so for quite some time. May God continue to bless your ministry and may His Holy Spirit successfully encourage many to "your shores."

We need to look for the opportunities that God gives us to be someone’s Timothy and provide encouragement.

About incentives to stop persecution.

In Iraq, a free university education has been offered to any Christian or Jew who will embrace Islam. A “bounty” of one thousand dollars has been offered to any South African black who will renounce Christianity and embrace Islam. They will also be paid \$500 for any other blacks they convert to Islam.

It has been quite common to tell Americans and Europeans that if they want to continue to work in the oil business in Saudi Arabia, they must convert to Islam. No church is allowed to be built on Saudi soil in the attempt to suppress Christian worship. (Morey 2003, 237)

Apostasy like this was the concern of Jesus and why He was being upfront with the disciples about what was coming.

The hour Jesus is talking about in verse 4 is about to take place. what appears to be their hour has been introduced by Jesus’ hour, but in his case, he seems to be suffering defeat in the very moment when he is winning the greatest of all victories, while at their hour they seem to be winning when they are suffering the greatest of all defeats. (Carson 1991, 532)

Why this level of warning now? Remember, they are headed to Gethsemane. He had been with them day by day is why He did need to do so in the past. As questions would come up, He would teach them and guide them. He is about to violently leave them for a few days. He wants them to know this beforehand.

When the trials begin, and for them there most severe trial to date is hours away, they will remember that He told them about it. They need to abide, now more than ever. They need to love each other, now more



than ever, and they need to be fully aware about the change in relationship with the world system they are going through.

As believers, we live in this world because Jesus has a mission for us to accomplish while He tarries. Making disciples. Are you a disciple?

I have no idea what the future holds for us as Christians here in the United States. We are deeply blessed and free to meet together, study and worship the Lord. Do we encounter pushback now and then, yes, but Jesus continues to be performing miracles on our behalf and provides for us. Very soon, He will come back for us.

If you don't know Jesus, right now is your opportunity to get to know Him. It really is not all that difficult either.

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

#### **ABC's of Salvation**

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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