

In and Out of This World

Small Group Study

Read together: John 15:18-27

¹⁸“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹If 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. ²⁰Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. ²¹They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. ²²If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. ²⁴If 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. ²⁵But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’

²⁶“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. ²⁷And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

Question #1: Have you ever been hated simply because you are a Christian? If so, share your story briefly.

Question #2: Have you ever hated someone else, an unbeliever or another Christian? If so, share your story briefly.

Question #3: What does hate do? Describe what you thought, felt and how you wanted to respond to hate.

In an out of the world study

Study:

Before diving into this text, take a few minutes to summarize what Jesus has been saying and teaching since releasing Judas from the Upper Room . . .

Remind one another that while Jesus is speaking, the clock is ticking . . . Judas is betraying Jesus to the Pharisees . . . the Pharisees are gathering a detachment of soldiers . . . the soldiers are preparing their swords and shields . . . the arrest party will soon leave to find Jesus.

Can you see it? What do you think is going through Jesus mind as these events are unfolding?

Let's think of the Gospel of John as a narrative, a story which, like every good story, has a scene, a plot, a conflict and a resolution.

SCENE: The World (cosmos)

Note the following:

John uses term "world" 78 times in the Fourth Gospel, 23 in the First Letter, and 1 in the Second Letter, for a total of 102 out of 186 total times mentioned in the entire New Testament.

- Why is this image important in John's telling and our understanding the "Gospel?"

The Greek word for world is κόσμος (cosmos). William Barclay defines the primary meaning for John is "human society organizing itself without God."

- The world stands in opposition to God, characterized by Light and Dark.
- See John 8:23 and 1 John 2:16

PLOT: Light & Darkness

Merrill C. Tenny wrote about the Gospel of John that: "Figures of light and darkness define the plot of the Gospel."

Look up and read together and discuss what John means by Light:

- John 1:4-9
- John 3:21
- John 9:5
- John 11:9-10

Look up and read together and discuss what John means by Darkness:

- John 3:19-21
- John 12:35-26; 44-46

CONFLICT: Love vs. Hate

Summarize what Jesus is saying about hat in these verses:

- **John 15:18** [*The World Hates the Disciples*] "If the world **hates** you, keep in mind that it **hated** me first.
- **John 15:19** 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.
- **John 15:23** Whoever **hates** me **hates** my Father as well.
- **John 15:24** 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.
- **John 15:25** But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: 'They **hated** me without reason.'

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In previous weeks we've heard Jesus say multiple times that the disciples are to love one another. Now Jesus is speaking about the world hating the disciples. Read and discuss Matthew 5:38-48 for how disciples are to respond to hate.

RESOLUTION: Holy Spirit and . . .

Jesus points to the resolution of this conflict that will come after his death through the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit. (Much more coming on this)

For now, what does Jesus say about the witness of the Holy Spirit and our witness. (See verses 26 -27)

Give examples about how can we begin applying this to our circumstances today . . .

Bonus discussion!!

Hate and Politics

My friend Steve Moore, writes: "Partisanship and nationalism of all kinds need two things: and in-group who you are supposed "love" and an out-group who you should "hate." The second may be the more powerful of the two. But Jesus says everybody should make their out-group full-fledged members of their in-group — and in-so-doing, Jesus disrupts every country, institution, community, group."

How can we receive through Jesus new eyes to see, new ears to hear and a new heart to love in our current political climate?

Prayer: End your time together inviting Jesus' Lordship and the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit into our personal lives, our church our nation.