



“I shall always be ready to remind you of these things...” 2 Peter 1:21

If the World Hates You

By Alex Hale

“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. 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” (John 15:18-19).



So many times, we long to be loved and accepted. If we are honest, many times our perceived “self-worth” is tied to the opinions of others. Have you ever said something ... or done something ... or bought something in an attempt to be popular? Do you have an inner longing to be admired or loved by others? I don’t mean to rain on your parade, but Jesus warns us that if we follow Him we should expect exactly the opposite of love and admiration.

What is “the world” which Jesus says will hate us?

In scripture, “world” is used three ways. It can mean “the created world” (John 1:10). It can mean “humanity as a whole” (John 3:16). It can also mean “the system of the world,” i.e. society apart from God or opposed to God. This final way is how Jesus refers to the world in John 15. Scripture warns us repeatedly about “the world” in this sense (Romans 12:2; 1 John 2:15-17). “The world” in which we live is largely opposed to God and His kingdom. In a very real sense, disciples are living in enemy territory.

Why does the world hate us?

Jesus gives us a simple answer – He says that the world hates us because it hates Him (John 15:18). He then expands on that simple truth, stating that the world hated Him because the light of His sinlessness made their sin and rebellion stand out (John 15:22, 24). As we follow

the steps of Jesus, we are shining a light on the darkness of sin, and people do not like that (John 3:20; 1 Peter 4:3-4). Warren Wiersbe has quipped, “We are the light of the world and the salt of the earth but a dark world does not want light and a decaying world does not want salt.”

If you pattern your life after Jesus, you will face various forms of suffering for the same reasons He did. However, when we face persecution for our faith, that should *encourage* us, not discourage us. It is an indication that we are on the right side! If we are not experiencing any sort of persecution, suffering, or sacrifice, that should be a cause of concern. It may mean that we are too much like the world. After all, the world accepts those who accept it (Luke 6:26). We cannot have a relationship with both the world and God (James 4:4).

Jesus says, “*If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you*” (John 15:20). It is much like an equation which says, “If *A* is true, then *B* will happen.” In this sense, *A* was the persecution of Jesus, and *B* is the fact that we too will be hated for our faith. William Barclay has written, “One of the outstanding qualities of Jesus was His sheer honesty. He never left men in any doubt as to what would happen to them if they chose to follow Him.” In spite of what many in the religious world teach, Jesus did not teach a *prosperity* gospel, but rather a *persecution* gospel. Bonhoeffer sums it up well as he states, “Suffering is the badge of the true Christian. The disciple is not above his Master ... Discipleship means allegiance to the suffering Christ, and it is therefore not at all surprising that Christians should be called upon to suffer.”

[NEXT WEEK: How Do We Respond?]



CABOT WESTSIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST

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When We Meet

Sunday

Bible Classes – 9:00 am

Worship – 10:00 am, 5:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Classes – 7:00 pm

Our Elders

R.D. Hopper

Norman Kemper

Our Preacher

Alex Hale