

Sunday, January 9, 2022

This is the twelfth in a series of sermons on John 13-17 (“The Farewell Discourse”).

1. [Jesus Loves His own \(13:1\)](#) [7/5/2020]
2. [Foot Washing \(13:2-17\)](#) [8/30/2020]
3. [Identifying the Traitor \(13:18-30\)](#) [10/18/2020]
4. [Christ’s Glory and How We Are To Live In His Temporary Absence \(13:31-38\)](#) [12/6/2020]
5. [Preparing a Place \(14:1-4\)](#) [1/31/2021]
6. [The Only Way to the Father \(14:5-7\)](#) [3/21/2021]
7. [Seeing God \(14:8-14\)](#) [5/9/2021]
8. [Peace and Comfort \(14:15-27\)](#) [6/27/2021]
9. [Loving God \(14:28-31\)](#) [8/15/2021]
10. [Abiding in Christ, the True Vine \(15:1-11\)](#)[10/3/2021]
11. [Friends of Christ \(15:12-17\)](#) [11/21/2021]
12. **The Hatred of the World (15:18- 16:4a)**
13. The Work of the Holy Spirit (16:4b-15)
14. Your Sorrow Shall Be Turned Into Joy (16:16-24)
15. Prayer in His Name (16:25-32)
16. He’s Spoken That You Might Have Peace (16:33)
The High Priestly Prayer (Intercessory Prayer)
17. Jesus Prays For Himself (17:1-5)
18. Jesus Prays For His Present People (17:6-19)
19. Jesus Prays For His Future People (17:20-26)

We’ve been going through John chapters 13-17 in detail, and Lord willing, today we will be finishing up chapter 15 and ending with the very first part of chapter 16. We’ve heard a lot of amazing words about ministering to one another, loving one another, how to have an untroubled heart, the return of Christ, the Trinity, good works, prayer, loving the Lord, keeping His commandments, peace, abiding in Christ, joy, being friends of Christ. Mostly, Jesus has focused on the relationship between us and God, and our relationship between one another. But today, we begin a new topic – the relationship between us and the world:

“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.” (John 15:18-16:4a)

As I've been doing on a lot of these sermons, I'd like to break this down into three pieces: "The Hatred of the World," "Bearing Witness of Christ in the Midst of the Hatred of the World," and "Not Being Offended by the Hatred of the World."

The Hatred of the World

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause." (John 15:18-25)

The meaning of the word "world" depends on the context, and what it means here is the wicked world of unbelievers, who are motivated and characterized by sin and rebellion against God. And we are no strangers to the hatred of the world. We've been beaten, hospitalized, prosecuted, arrested, jailed, bombed, denied employment (fired or not hired/promoted), denied services, cursed, mocked, ridiculed, slandered, misrepresented, excluded, demonized, marginalized, plotted against, had laws passed against, etc. The word translated "persecute" has several facets to its meaning: "to make to run or flee, put to flight, drive away; run after, pursue in a hostile manner; in any way whatever to harass, trouble, molest one." We've experienced every one of those facets. I say, we are no strangers to the hatred of the world. It's no coincidence that this passage comes on the heels of Jesus's commandment to "love one another." We need to love one another, because we're not going to get any love from the world. We're in this together against an increasingly hostile world.

I would encourage everyone to read the book of Acts to see how the hatred of the world immediately sprung into action against the early church. True Christians throughout every age have been the object of hatred and persecution, and in fact, you cannot claim to be a true Christian if you have not been the object of the world's hatred and persecution. You know that I could multiply verses on the matter, but one will suffice:

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Timothy 3:12)

If you've ever had some delusion that the world was going to accept you with open arms and pat you on the back for a job well done, please allow me to disabuse you of that delusion. Jesus tells us that the world hates us, and He tells us why the world hates us. In short, they hate us because ultimately, they hate God and they love their sin. So, let's go through this passage and flesh that out a bit.

He says, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." The "if" there doesn't indicate some uncertainty, like "maybe they'll hate you, maybe they won't." The meaning is, "If the world hates you, and it most assuredly does, then you must understand that it hated me first." The world hates Jesus. He says it hated Him "before" it hated you. That word "before" means "first in time or place" or "first in rank; chief; principal." They didn't only hate Him before us chronologically, they hate Him because of His position as our chief and master. As they treat the Lord, so they treat the servant. This is another nuance of our intimate union with Christ. This is why when Jesus came to Saul of Tarsus, He equated Saul's persecution of the church to persecuting Him personally – "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4). On the flip side, a remnant will believe. If they love God and keep His word, they will keep our word also (as long as we're faithful to that word).

So, they hate us, because they hate the Lord Jesus. But why would they hate Him? He tells us that they hated Him without a cause (Psalm 69:4). That is, He didn't give them any valid reason to hate Him. He wasn't a sinner – He never did anything that would justify their hatred. Fundamentally, they hate Him because He shines a bright light on their sins and renders them inexcusable. "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." (John 7:7). Through His words and His works, He testified that they were great sinners, and He a great Savior. And He continues to give that testimony today. He gives the diagnosis (i.e., they are hell-bound sinners), and He gives the cure. Instead of responding with humility at the grace of God, the world responds with hatred – they would much rather have their sin. They might strip Him of His "objectionable" attributes and say they love Him, but when faced with the Jesus Christ of the Bible, they will always choose Barabbas. So even as they incessantly yap about "love," they are a hateful lot.

Jesus says here that if He hadn't said the things He said and did the things He did, they wouldn't have had sin. What does He mean? Of course, it doesn't mean that they would have been sinless creatures – humans have been sinning since the Garden of Eden. He means that they wouldn't have been guilty of the sin of rejecting God's Son. He made it abundantly clear who He is, what He requires and what He came to do, and they rejected that, and still reject it today. He says they have no cloak for their sin – no pretense, no pretext, no excuse, no alibi. Knowing the truth and rejecting it only increases your responsibility and culpability. The call of the gospel isn't like some inconsequential dinner invitation that you can take or leave – it's a

command from the King of eternity to repent and believe. No sin is worse than rejecting the Son of God. Nobody who has seen Him can plead ignorance. Nobody can ride the fence – He forces a response. *“What will you do with Jesus? Neutral you cannot be.”* Beloved, they hate us because we come in the name of Christ – that is, we come on His authority, preaching His gospel, and insisting on His standards, His attributes, and His doctrines.

They hate us because Christ chose us out of the world, so we are not of the world. They hate election (both the doctrine, and the act). Sometimes we might feel a little bit out of place. The world is going in one direction, and we’re going in another. They want us to be like them. They want us to go along with their sins. It’s strange to them that we don’t. Peter says, “they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.” (1 Peter 4:4). But we’re not of the world. We shouldn’t want to be of the world. We should be different. We have new hearts. We are a new creation. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2 Cor. 5:17). We shouldn’t want to go along and be like everyone else. Our citizenship is in heaven. “For our conversation [politeuma] is in heaven.” (Phil. 3:20). Our very existence as the elect of God is an indictment against the world, so they hate us.

They hate us because they don’t know the Father. They certainly claim to know God. How often have you heard some pompous windbag pontificating about their god (usually a so-called “Christian”)? “My god doesn’t hate.” “My god doesn’t judge.” And how many times have you been accused of being “ignorant?” Jesus tells us here that the ignorance lies with them, and not us. They’ve concocted some strange god who not only tolerates their sin but encourages and delights in their sin – a god who is not holy, righteous, or just – a god who has no vengeance, wrath, anger or hatred – a make-believe god whom they call “Jesus.” But they don’t know the true and living God – they just think they do. He’s a stranger to them. When they’re faced with Him, they despise Him. They don’t know Him – they don’t look on Him with love and approbation; they look on Him with disgust. They don’t see Him like we do, this God who is altogether lovely to us. And because Jesus is God, they hate Jesus too. To hate the Son is to hate the Father, and to hate the Father is to hate the Son. And to hate us when we come in the name of the Son is to hate the Father and the Son. And there is no in between – you either love Him or you hate Him. You can’t claim indifference because indifference is hatred. When we preach, we dash to smithereens their false notions of God, and they hate that. They hate the God that we preach about. So, they hate us.

Let me conclude this little section with a few comforts and cautions.

Comforts:

- We are persecuted for a righteous cause. This is for the name of Christ.

- We are following in Christ's footsteps. The servant is not greater than the Lord.
- The hatred and persecution of the world is all part of God's sovereign plan of our redemption: "This cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause." They hated Him, and they will hate us. It has to happen. It's part of the plan.
- The hatred and persecution of the world is evidence that our calling and election is sure.
- The hatred of the world is for our own good, and we should pray for those who despitefully use us. Their hatred frequently drives us to the throne of the grace, the Word of God, and to love one another.

Cautions:

- It says, "They hated me without a cause" ...so don't give them a cause. Unlike Jesus, we're sinners. We shamefully do things that we ought not to do that cause people to hate us. We can't do that and then say that we've been persecuted for Christ's sake. Think of it like this: when you do that, you're provoking people to sin. Not only are you sinning, but you're encouraging others to sin. That's a Satanic thing to do. Peter tells us, "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." (1 Peter 4:15-16). Any vestiges of giving them a cause that might be lurking around ought to be diligently sought out and swiftly excised.
- Just because you're persecuted doesn't mean you're saved. It is necessary but not sufficient. In other words, it is necessary for a saved person to be persecuted to some extent. But persecution alone isn't sufficient. It may be evidence of salvation...but it's not the only evidence of salvation. So please don't get complacent and say, "Well, I'm being persecuted, so I can sit back and relax – I don't need to give any more diligence to making my calling and election sure."
- Don't rest on past persecution. You can't have the mentality that because you've suffered persecution at some point, you've put in your time and you can chill out now.
- Don't be distressed if you don't think you're being persecuted enough. God gives to each of us what we need, and never more than what we're able to handle. He promised that we would have persecution, but He never said it would be constant. In fact, He told us just the opposite on many occasions. For example: "For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity." (Psalm 125:3). He gives us peace for different seasons for our own good. But those times of relative peace are also times to be very circumspect lest we neglect the Lord and one another – in these times, prayer tends to go down, talking to one another tends to go down, and worldliness tends to go up.
- The hatred of the world takes on many faces. In the parable of the sower, Jesus identifies the two main crucibles in which a person's faith is tried: 1. Tribulation or

persecution. 2. The care of this world. (See Matthew 13:3-23). He addresses both of those here in this passage (the former directly, and the latter more indirectly). Sometimes the world shows its hatred by putting on its persecution face. Other times the world shows its hatred by putting on its flattery face, or its enticing face, or its “angel of light” face, to try to get us (who are not of the world) to rejoin the world. This is particularly important for a person who is younger in the faith to understand – it’s important for you to face these things to know that your faith is real.

So, they hate us because they hate Jesus. They hate us because Jesus chose us out of the world. They hate us because they don’t know the Father.

Bearing Witness of Christ in the Midst of the Hatred of the World

“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.” (John 15:26-27)

Sandwiched here in the middle of a bunch of talk about the hatred of the world is a little passage about testifying of Christ. The message is clear – even though the world hates us, we must continue to bear witness of Christ to them. It’s part of the fruit that we bear. Talking about Christ amongst ourselves is one thing – but this is specifically talking about bearing witness to an unbelieving, hating, hostile world. In the face of hatred and persecution, one might be tempted to retreat or grow weary. But He’s telling us here that we can’t do that – we must continue. It’s part of what it means to be a friend of Christ. Friends of Christ will testify about Him. And it should be self-evident that in order to testify about Christ, the content of the testimony must include something about Christ. On the flip side of that, the content of the testimony should not be about us, unless it’s how we relate to Christ.

Here in this passage, Jesus returns to the Holy Spirit (see [Peace and Comfort – June 27, 2021](#)). We learn a little bit more about the relationships going on between the members of the Trinity – the Son sends the Holy Spirit from the Father (John 14:26 says the Father sends the Holy Spirit in the name of the Son, so they jointly do it). We also see that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. Whatever all that means, it at least means this: the role that the Holy Spirit has taken on is to be sent to do something. John 14:26 says He’s sent to teach us all things and to bring what Jesus has said to our remembrance. Here, it says He’s sent to testify of (concerning, about) Jesus. It is a full Trinitarian effort to make sure that testimony is given about the Lord Jesus Christ. Lord willing, next time, we’ll learn some more about this ministry of the Holy Spirit, so I’m not going to spend a lot of time on it today. Suffice it to say that the

primary way that He testifies of Jesus is through His people. That's why the two are linked together in this passage – He will testify of Jesus, and we will testify (or, bear witness) of Jesus. The Greek word “martyreo” is translated as “testify” and “bear witness” in this passage. A witness is someone who can testify about something or someone that he has experience with. If you get called to testify in court, you might get asked to tell what you saw, heard, smelled, felt, or otherwise experienced. To testify about a person means that you have some experience with that person, and you can tell people about him.

These guys sitting in the room with Jesus are unique. They were among a select group of people who Jesus said had “been with me from the beginning.” They were eyewitnesses from the beginning of His ministry up through His resurrection and ascension. They could testify in a way that we don't have the ability to testify, because they were there. When Peter said, “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses” (Acts 2:32), he meant that they were eyewitnesses – they actually saw and interacted with the risen Christ. They testified of these events, and they wrote it down for us, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And of course, they didn't just testify about the bare facts of those historical events – for example, they didn't just say, “Jesus was resurrected. The end. Have a nice day.” They explained the significance and meaning and application of those events. So, while we aren't eyewitnesses in the way they were, we can still bear witness about Jesus. We've been saved by Him, haven't we? We abide in Him, don't we? We're His friends, aren't we? We can read the Bible, can't we? I think that would qualify us as competent witnesses who have experience with Him. We know Him and we know about Him. John sums the testimony up like this:

“No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.” (1 John 4:12-14)

A few notes about that passage:

- It seems to me that 1 John is a companion to the Farewell Discourse. When you read 1 John, you know that John was paying close attention to Jesus in John 13-17, and I would recommend that everyone read it.
- Don't forget that “Saviour of the world” doesn't mean universal salvation. It means that He came to redeem people “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” – Revelation 5:9. He is the only Savior of mankind.
- A phony Christian understanding of that passage would be “don't preach about sin.” On the contrary, if anything, we should be preaching more and harder about sin, hell, the wrath of God, etc., because what is it that He came to save people from if not those things? Remember, He said, “I came not to call the righteous [i.e., those who think

they're righteous], but sinners [i.e., those who see and understand the condition they're in] to repentance." (Luke 5:32). You can't call sinners to repent unless you identify them as sinners, and they won't repent unless they see themselves as sinners.

- This is a summary statement, like when Paul said, "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1 Corinthians 2:2). Paul didn't run around mechanically parroting, "Jesus Christ, and him crucified! Jesus Christ, and him crucified!" His point is that Jesus Christ and His work should be the central theme, and all things we testify about radiate from and point back to Him. You don't have to follow some formula and say the same thing each time, and you don't have to say all of it all the time, but the overall body of the testimony is about Christ and His work.

So, when you bear witness of Christ, here's what's happening: the Father and the Son jointly send the Holy Spirit, proceeding (or, as it were, "flowing forth") from the Father; He works in you to testify of Christ, and the world hates you for it. In a very real sense, you're just along for the ride. But every child of God has a sober duty and privilege to bear witness; you can't wait for other people to do it for you, and you are without excuse if you don't bear witness, because you're empowered and commanded to do so.

Not Being Offended by the Hatred of the World

"These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them." (John 16:1-4a)

Why is Jesus telling them all these things? Two reasons:

1. So they won't be offended when it happens. When we hear the word "offended" we might think that he's telling us so we won't get upset and have our feelings hurt. But the meaning of the word here is a lot stronger than that. It is the Greek word "skandalizo." Strong's: *"to entrap, trip up, stumble; entice to sin, apostasy or displeasure."* Thayer's: *"to put a stumbling block or impediment in the way, upon which another may trip and fall; to entice to sin; to cause a person to begin to distrust and desert one whom he ought to trust and obey; to cause to fall away."* He's telling them up front so when it happens (and it will happen), it won't turn out to be a stumbling block for them and cause them to turn away from God.
2. So when it happens, they will remember that He told them ahead of time. Not only that He prophesied of it and the prophecy came true (which shows Him to be God), but to

remember His kindness in letting them know what to expect. I would recommend that every time you go through some persecution, remember what Jesus said here.



It's important to know up front what you're getting into. When someone wants to get baptized at this church, this is one of the things that I want to make sure I impress upon them up front – if you think that serving the Lord Jesus is going to make all your problems go away, think again: your problems have only just begun. The world is going to hate and persecute you. Can you imagine what would happen to these phony churches around us if their pastors told them up front what was in store for them if they truly serve Jesus Christ? If they told people up front that they needed to count the cost? (See Luke 14:25-33). Instead, they lie, compromise and withhold the truth so they can avoid conflict and persecution altogether. Ryle: *“Forewarned, forearmed! They*

must not look for a smooth course and a peaceful journey. They must make up their minds to battles, conflicts, wounds, opposition, persecution, and perhaps even death.” Pink: *“From the beginning (Genesis 3:15), the Lord Himself placed an inveterate enmity between the serpent and the Savior and those belonging to the one or the other, and in proportion as the disciples of Christ follow His example, walk as He walked, reflect His image, will they be opposed by Satan and his seed. (John 15:18, 20). God has predestinated His children “to be conformed to the image of His Son” (Romans 8:29): first in holiness, then in suffering, afterward in glory. Scripture reveals the solemn fact that the Christian is menaced by deadly foes, who will show him no quarter nor relax in their efforts to destroy him.”*

Before Jesus leaves them, He makes sure they're ready and that they know what to expect. He gives them two examples of the types of things that they're going to have to suffer:

1. “They shall put you out of the synagogues.” In the ancient Jewish world, to be unsynagogued was a big deal. Today, if Temple Beth Shalom tells me I can't come inside, not a big deal. Back then, big deal. It would impact every part of your life – economical, familial, social, educational. This is why the blind man's parents were afraid to speak in John 9 – “they feared the Jews: for the Jews agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.” (v. 22). The word “synagogue” at its very basic meaning means “an assembly of people” so I think we can apply that to our own situation by saying it means that groups of people don't want to have anything to do with us. They don't want to be associated with us. They're embarrassed that we're part of the human race. They'd just as soon we disappear. It's the very picture of “Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall

separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake." (Luke 6:22). Haven't we experienced this? Religious organizations, schools, places of employment, places of business, clubs, teams – any category of groups of people that you can come up with, we've likely been put out of it.

2. "Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." We haven't had anybody killed. People have plotted, people have tried, people have threatened, people have hoped, people have dreamed – but the Lord has stayed their hands. That doesn't mean that it won't ever happen to us, and He warns us here that it's something that could happen. And we know it certainly will happen to God's people in the future (Revelation). We ought to not live in morbid fear, but we also ought to not be surprised. This sheds a little bit of light on when Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13). About Priscilla and Aquila, Paul says: "Who have for my life laid down their own necks." (Romans 16:4). Sometimes we have to risk our lives for one another, and we regularly risk our lives for the Lord. "As it is written, **For thy sake we are killed all the day long**; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." (Romans 8:36). "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, **in deaths oft.**" (2 Corinthians 11:23).

What strikes me about what Jesus is saying here is that it seems like the hottest persecution is going to come from the really religious and pious people (think Paul, before his conversion). This has turned out to be an accurate prophecy, hasn't it? Look at the true church of God through the ages. This has been our experience, hasn't it? They think that they're performing sacred worship of God by persecuting this church. But He reminds us here – "these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me." Just remember – they talk like they know God; they use religious, holy sounding language; they think they know God. But they neither know the Father nor the Son.

So, we're about 2/3 of the way through this series of sermons. A lot of stuff has happened. He's washed their feet, dismissed Judas Iscariot, announced His own departure, told them to love one another, told them how to have hearts that aren't troubled (i.e., trust, love and obey Him), and explained their relationship to Him, to one another, and to the world. Next time, Lord willing, we're going to go into what the Holy Spirit does after Jesus departs.

"And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."
(Galatians 6:16-18)