

Home Group Leader's Notes

Week of February 13, 2022

John 15:18-27

Sermon Series: *This is Love*

IT'S HARD TO BE HATED

Can you remember a time when someone said they 'hated' you?

How is this for a cheery way to start a conversation?

LEARN FROM GOD'S WORD

Jesus began the evening (John 13) by affirming His love for and service to His disciples. In chapter 15, He promised that He would abide in them, repeated the importance of loving one another, and said that He considers them "friends." Thus, the believer's relationship with God and one another is one of love. In this week's passage, Jesus addressed their relationship with "the world" (i.e., those who do not believe in Jesus and His message, those who live in rebellion against God).

Read John 15:18-27 and consider the following questions.

What do you see and feel as you read this passage?

Some might feel fear, confusion, etc. In the previous passages, we read about God's love for us ("as the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.") This passage will tell us what we are facing in the world.

What different words are used about how "the world" will treat Jesus' followers?

Hate, persecute, hated without reason

According to this passage, why does "the world" hate Jesus? (see also John 7:7)

Jesus reveals the truth about us, that we are sinners, that the world is evil.

In what ways did Jesus make the world "guilty of sin?" (15:22-25) How is this guilt expressed by the world?

With revelation comes responsibility. Jesus revealed the truth about our sin and evil, and he revealed that they needed to trust and follow Him. If they do not, then their guilt remains on them. This guilt is expressed by hate, denial, rejection of Jesus and His followers, and even plotting to kill.

What did Jesus do so that we don't feel this same guilt? What changed our status with God? (see 13:10; 15:3)

Jesus cleansed us from guilt. Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sins (atonement) and clothed us in His righteousness. When we understand His grace, we can live without the guilt. Through faith, we are "in Christ" and without the guilt.

How did Jesus prepare the disciples and us for the hatred to come?

Jesus was intentional to prepare disciples:

- 1) He told them what He was going to do (the cross and resurrection)
- 2) He repeatedly told us that He loves us and that we are now clean and His friends
- 3) He warned us that “the world” would hate us
- 4) He modeled how to respond to the world
- 5) He assured us that whatever happens, He is with us

In the context of being hated by the world, Jesus commanded us / His disciples to “testify” about Him. What help is promised? How does this fit with Jesus’ subject matter of chapter 15?

Clearly, He reminded them that the Holy Spirit is (a) the Spirit is from the Father, as Jesus is from the Father (oneness in essence and purpose), (b) He is the Spirit of truth, (c) the Holy Spirit will testify about Jesus, and (d) that we will have the privilege of testifying about Jesus because we are in the know.

Jesus is continuing to express ‘How’ we will bear fruit (chapter 15) and continue the works/mission of Jesus (14:12).

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO US THIS WEEK?

“Hate” is a common word in our culture. We will hear and read it this week. How should we respond as we experience or hear about hatred toward Jesus followers (and or what they believe)? What have we learned that we can apply as we encounter “the world?”

It is not enough to stop at the informing side of Scripture. The purpose is transformation of character and actions. These questions are meant to call us to reflect on ourselves and how these truths can be applied.

For this week, our application can take multiple aspects:

- We can realize that what we see and hear matches what Jesus said, i.e., that He is right about how people will treat us as we testify and live before the world.
- We can choose to continue to love and testify to them, knowing that they remain in their guilt
- We can choose to entrust our responses and feelings to Jesus, knowing that He, more than anyone, experienced this hatred but continued to love and share the good news.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

What are some of the ways that we are seeing more hatred for those who follow Jesus? How does this passage help us understand and cope with this?

This is so apparent in the world (not just the U.S.). Many observations could be shared.

The application question above has some thoughts about how we are to go beyond coping.

How will we personally respond when we are treated with hatred, rejection, disdain? How can we empathize and even love those of “the world?”

We represent Jesus to a dying and guilty world. I personally hate feeling guilty, but this is what the world feels. I have family who don’t like me and it hurts. But I am called to be like Jesus and to keep loving them, praying, and perhaps will have opportunity to testify to them what Jesus has done for us all.

Americans haven't experienced hatred and persecution like much of the world has throughout history. However, we see it coming on in America. What do you feel or want to do when you read Jesus' command, "And you also must testify . . . ?" (27)

From Jesus teachings, we know that this doesn't mean to stand on street corners and testify (unless that is your calling). Jesus has just said what it means to testify: we abide in Him together, we pray, obey, and love one another, and continue His mission in our worlds. That mission will include a huge variety of testifying to Him through our actions, relationships, and words.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Pray for the following families who are experiencing serious disease or loss: Mantonyas who lost Ruth's dad, Giffords who lost Don, Luevanos who lost Carlos, Thompsons because Don was diagnosed with bone cancer, Maxwell family because John is in hospital with pneumonia, Cavarnos who lost her mom
- Pray for Pastor Todd, Elders, Pastors, and Directors as they pray and shepherd
- Pray for The Hospitality teams as they welcome and connect with new people coming to Trinity

Prayer is what Jesus repeatedly said would help us abide in Him, bear fruit, and persevere in this world system.

This is another amazing passage of Scripture! I pray that the Holy Spirit will give you love, wisdom, and words, as you shepherd God's people.

Steve