**WHY THE WORLD HATES US**

John 15:18-27

Jesus has been talking to His disciples on the last night with them. It’s only a matter of hours now until He’s arrested. Up to this point there has been a lot of talk about loving. In Chap 13 v 1 John makes this comment about Jesus: “Having loved His own who were in the world [speaking of the disciples], He loved them to the end” [to the uttermost, with a perfect love]. And then Jesus modeled love for His disciples. He humbled Himself, grabbed a towel and basin of water, got down on his knees and, one by one, He washed each of His disciple’s feet. The lesson was simple - submit to and serve each other, love each other. Jesus told them: “A new commandment I give you… just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.” Jesus loves these guys so much. He knows what’s about to happen later that night and the next day. He knows that they’re troubled and need comfort and encouragement. And so Jesus does that. He gives them promises – of joy and peace and answered prayer and the Holy Spirit, the indwelling presence of God, a promise that one day Jesus will come back for them and take them to be with Him forever. Just wonderful promises! Jesus exhorts His disciples to “abide” in Him. Remain with Jesus. Don’t fall away. Just as a branch connected to a vine depends entirely on the vine to sustain life, so we are to be to Jesus. By abiding in Him we have all the resources needed to bear fruit – to live godly lives and to be effective disciples, teachers and missionaries. Yes, Jesus is going away, He’s going to die, which is a real downer for the disciples. No question about that. But Jesus’ words up to this point, in Ch 13-15, have been positive, encouraging words full of wonderful truths and great promises.

But then all of a sudden there is this dramatic shift. And it comes in Chapter 15, v 18. That’s where we’re going to begin our study this morning. Picking up where we left off last week…the words of Jesus to His disciples and to all believers.

18 “If the world hates you, know that it has hated ME before it hated you. 19 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 [last week’s lesson], therefore the world HATES you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ [He said this back in Ch 13, v 16 – a servant is not greater than his master nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him] If they persecuted Me [Jesus], they will also persecute you [Jesus’ followers]. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. [As His disciples we are carrying the Gospel message, His word, to the world] 21 But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. [speaking of God the Father, bottom line they do not know God] 22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. [something has changed – I’ve come, I’ve spoken truth, now they have no excuse for their sin, for rejecting Me] 23 Whoever hates me hates my Father also [Jesus had taught that He and the Father are one]. 24 If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, [the miracles, the healings, the signs] they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. [again, something has changed, I’ve come, I’ve performed great miracles proving that I’m God, now they are guilty of sin, of rejecting Me] 25 But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: ‘They hated me without a cause.’ [Ps 69:4] 26 But when the Helper [the Holy Spirit] comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. 27 And you [disciples] also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.”

So Jesus shifts from an emphasis on love to hate – specifically the hatred of the world toward our Lord and toward Christians, the faithful followers of Jesus Christ. That’s the subject of these verses at the end of John Ch 15. For starters let’s define what Jesus means by “the world.” Here He is referring to the cosmos, the ordered system of fallen, unregenerate, evil people who are dominated, influenced, deluded by Satan – the evil world system. The world operates completely by human wisdom and reasoning rather than on the wisdom and knowledge that comes from God. And where do we get the wisdom and knowledge of God? In His holy word. So the world here is a reference to the majority on this planet who oppose God, who are misled by Satan (Gen 3). So as Christians we are not of this world, are we? We’re aliens and strangers. We’re different. We have a different set of core values than the world. Our standards of good and evil are different from those in the world. So there exists an animosity between the world and Jesus, and between the world and those of us who openly follow Jesus.

OK, so we may not be of this world but we are IN the world. When we got saved we were left here for a purpose. We are Christ’s ambassadors, His representatives in the world. Jesus referred to Himself as light (John 8:12) and He calls those of us who follow Him light (Matt 5:14). We have the privilege and responsibility of carrying His message of love, hope and grace, the way of salvation, to those out there who are lost and headed to hell. We have the truth. We have the light. It’s no easy task, this task we’ve been given by our Lord because the people that we are going to hate us and oppose God.

In this passage Jesus mentions four reasons why the world hates us Christians. I’ll just briefly mention them and then we’ll go back and look at them. First, the world hates us because we are not part of the world system. Second, because the world hated Jesus first. Third, because the world does not know God. And last, because their hate Jesus and for us fulfills scripture.

V 18-19, we see the first reason why the world hates us. Because we are not a part of the world system. For example, today the world embraces homosexuality. We don’t. The world laughs at sexual sins and innuendos. We don’t. The world has begun to blurs the gender lines. We don’t. The world loves the latest juicy gossip whether it is true or not. We don’t. And on and on I could go. As Christians not only do we not go along with all of that. But we identify these things as sin. We call evil what it is – evil. We do what Jesus did in John 7:7. We testify that its works are evil, or we should. We don’t make excuses. We don’t give into the social pressures to accept it as normal behavior. We don’t lower the standard. We don’t try to explain it away. No. We believe what the Bible teaches because we believe the Bible contains the Word of God Himself. And, for this reason, the world hates us. It makes fun of us and tries to undermine us and our message. So the world hates us because we don’t condone their sinful behavior. We are not conformed to the things of this world. We’ve been transformed!

The second reason why the world hates us starts off in v 18 – because they hated Jesus first. Hey, if the world hated Jesus – and He was perfect, never sinned, had integrity, compassion, love, spoke only truth – if the world hated HIM, what makes us think that they won’t hate us too? After all, we’re Jesus’ messengers. We’re carrying the same message of hope and salvation that He brought.

V 20 says that we can expect persecution. In fact Jesus says they world WILL persecute us. By definition “persecution” means to attack some person or group with the intent of harm. This could mean slander, physical abuse, imprisonment or even death. Persecution can take any number of forms. By and large the world rejected Jesus. They hated Him and ultimately they killed Him. And Jesus tells His disciples and us that we can expect the same treatment He got. Just read the book of Acts. Soon after Pentecost the disciples are arrested and beaten and told not to preach in the name of Jesus any more. Stephen preaches with boldness and is stoned to death. And, starting with James, all 11 of these disciples (except for John) are martyred. But even John doesn’t escape persecution. He’s exiled to the remote island of Patmos for about a year or two. And the persecution of Christians continued throughout church history, all the way until today. And often the worst perpetrators are religious people. A survey in 2015 estimated that 100 million people are being persecuted in the world today. So although we don’t see a whole of persecution today in America it is going on around the world. And don’t be surprised if it ramps up in our country.

The third reason the world hates us, v 21 and 23, because the world does not know God. They think they do. As Paul says in 2 Timothy 3:5 they have the appearance of godliness, but deny its power. They don’t know God at all. They’ve invented a god who will accept their behavior and won’t send anyone to hell. V 21 “they do not know Him who sent Me.” V 23 “Whoever hates me hates my Father also.” And we’ve already established that the world hated Jesus. Back in John Ch 8, v 47 Jesus told the Jewish religious leaders, “Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.” Oh, they thought they knew God, but they didn’t. They thought they were in good with Him, but they weren’t.

The fourth reason why the world hates us is given in v 25 “But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: ‘They hated me without a cause.’” The world hated Jesus first and now they hate us and that fulfills biblical prophecy.

Well this promise of persecution must have been rather discouraging to the already troubled disciples. They were about to lose Jesus, and now this! Persecution! So how will the disciples be able to handle all this hatred and persecution? The answer to that is found in v 26-27 – the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is going to come at Pentecost and fill them with power and boldness. The message of the gospel goes from Jerusalem and Judea to Samaria and then to the remotest parts of the world. We have the Holy Spirit and that’s a big deal. We also have the truth of God’s word at our disposal. But do you know what else we have? We have each other! We need each other. We Christians need to love each other (what Jesus has been emphasizing) because the world out there hates us. They hate us because we’re different, because they hated Jesus first, and because they don’t know God.

What’s our response to the world’s hate? To love them like Jesus loved them. To tell them the good news of Jesus – His death, burial and resurrection, their sin debt has been paid, all they have to do is trust Jesus to save them. So let’s sing “I Love to Tell the Story”