

Jesus Warns His Disciples of the World's Hatred John 15:18-16:4

by David Servant

David Servant emphasizes the inevitability of persecution for Christians and the importance of responding with love and faithfulness to Jesus' teachings.

Scripture: Luke 6:26-27, John 16:2, 2 Timothy 3:12, 1 John 4:20

Topics: "Persecution", "Christian Love"

Description

David Servant preaches about Jesus' warning to His disciples regarding the persecution they would face for their faith, emphasizing that believers should not be surprised by persecution but rather expect it as a part of following Christ. He highlights the reason for the world's hatred towards Christians, explaining that it is ultimately directed at God Himself. Servant also addresses the importance of responding to persecution with love and prayers for those who mistreat us, reflecting the love of Christ even to our enemies.

Transcript

Keep in mind that Jesus would be gone in less than twenty-four hours. This was the final opportunity He would have to speak with His disciples before His crucifixion.

Jesus knew that unsaved people would hate His disciples just like they had hated Him, and He wanted to prepare them for what lay ahead. The hatred they would experience would tempt them to fall away from their faith in Him. They would wonder, as all persecuted Christians are tempted to wonder, why God would allow them to suffer at the hands of evil people. But because Jesus has forewarned all of us, we shouldn't doubt God when we're persecuted. He told us it was coming. Jesus even told us that some of us would be killed for our faith in Him, but that doesn't change His love for us.

The apostle Paul wrote, "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12). Rather than be concerned when we do suffer persecution, we should be concerned if we aren't suffering some persecution. Although we aren't persecuted nearly as much in our country as Christians are in other places in the world, anyone who takes a stand for Christ anywhere will be talked about and hated by others. We should expect that. Jesus said, "Woe to you when all men speak well of you" (Luke 6:26, NASB).

Pre-teens and teenagers, perhaps even more so than older adults, want to be accepted by others. But if you are going to be a true follower of Christ, you'll have to be willing to face some rejection. The place to receive love and acceptance is from your family and other fellow believers in Christ. Their love for you should more than counterbalance the hatred of the world.

Jesus also explained the reason the world hates us. It is because they hate Him and His Father whom we serve and represent. We are not the main target of the world's hatred. It is actually God Himself. We are just being caught in the crossfire.

The amazing thing is that it is often people who claim to be Christians who persecute those who are born again. Jesus said, "The time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing God a service" (John 16:2). These kinds of "Christians," however, aren't really saved, as proven by their hatred for true believers. John wrote, "If someone says, 'I love God,' but hates another Christian, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we have not seen?" (1 John 4:20).

Q. When non-Christians express their hatred for us, what should be our response?

A. We should show them love in return. Jesus said, "Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Pray for the happiness of those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you" (Luke 6:27-28). The love we show our persecutors can have a profound influence upon them, softening their hearts toward Jesus.

Q. Can you think of a reason why God rarely seems to stop persecution against His own people?

A. One reason is because He's so merciful to His enemies. He is acting toward them the same way He expects us to act, loving them in spite of their hatred. He's hoping that during the time He's showing them mercy, they'll come to their senses and repent. He knows that if they die without repenting, they'll suffer eternally. That is only one reason, among others, that God allows persecution against His people.

Application: Do you know of anyone who doesn't like you, or who has said something derogatory about you because you are a follower of Christ? If so, what has been your response?

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