

Series: What Jesus Would Say

VBC

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John 15:18-16:4

November 16-17, 2013

“Love That Makes Enemies”

John Chrysostom was one of the great early church fathers

-he was smart, eloquent—and an incredible communicator, and soon the word got out

-he was invited to pastor the most prominent church in Constantinople—*the Paris, New York, London* of its day

-and there he preached—much to the eventual regret of the Emperor

-for John refused to play the role of court pastor

-he was appalled by the blatant sin that defined much of culture

-and so he began to address the moral laxity, preaching against vanity, sexual immorality, injustice, and oppression

-it all came to a head when, preaching before the King and Queen, he likened her to Jezebel, and on another occasion to the evil Herodias

-and it was only a matter of time before the elders convened a meeting and asked for John’s resignation, working out a nice severance package

-no—imperial guards seized and dragged Chrysostom away and banished him to the mountains and the harsh climate of Armenia (the “lost corner of the world”)

-where, after a long march he eventually collapsed and died

-what is it about following Christ that gets people so upset?

-Jesus answered this question in the upper room—John 16

Up till now—Jesus had been answering individual questions—

1. Peter—Why are You washing my feet?—13:6
2. Peter—Why can’t I go with You? —13:37
3. Thomas—How can we find the way?—14:5
4. Philip—Where can we find the Father?—14:8
5. Judas—Aren’t You going to reveal Yourself?—14:22

But now—with His arrest and death imminent—and dark forces set in motion—Jesus answers the question no one was verbalizing—but all were wondering

6. Why will people turn against us?

-why does this love You have just talked about (15:9-17) provoke so much hate?

-we might wonder the same—

-why in our own city are so many so vehemently opposed to Christianity?

- why is God seldom mentioned in culture—as if He does not exist?
- why do some pull back when they find out I am a Christian?
- why do I sometimes get mocked for my convictions?
- why is it today over 100 million Christians worldwide suffer violence, discrimination, incarceration on a regular basis?

-in this conversation, Jesus explains why the symbol of our faith is a cross—read 15:18-25

-why will we at times be hated? —here’s why—

A. THE WORLD WILL HATE YOU BECAUSE IT HATES JESUS

1. in other words—there is a hate by association—read verse 18
 - the tense implies—this hate towards God is no passing phenomenonⁱ
 - it continues to this day—this sinful world has a bent against God—it has little affection for God

2. what explains this?
 - in part—it is because Satan is determined to lead the cosmos away from God’s purposes—and we are caught in the midst of this struggle
 - but Jesus adds to the explanation—read 22-24
 - He declares to the world what it does not want to hear
 - that man is not as moral, as wise, as righteous as he thinks
 - and in making people aware of their sin—He makes the world culpable, responsible, guilty

 - He came into His hometown—and everyone was impressed—until He opened Scripture and exposed their ungodliness
 - and they tried to throw Him over a cliff—Luke 4:16

 - Jesus explained to His brothers why He was a wanted man—*“The world cannot hate you, but it does hate Me because I testify about it—that its deeds are evil” (7:7)*
 - and then told the world they will die in their sins—8:23-24
 - told them that sin makes one a slave—and then said—*“you are trying to kill Me because My word is not welcome among you”*

3. so if you are in union with God—abiding (Jn 15) such that you are powerfully transformed—becoming more and more like Jesus—don’t expect to be embraced
 - and history bears this out—
 - from Abel to Abraham to Moses to David to nearly every prophet who stood for God and lived out His character

-from the disciples to Stephen to Paul—who described his life as roughly treated, reviled, persecuted, “like the world’s garbage, like the filth of all things”— Corinthians 4:13

-there is a long history of the world turning against those who align with God

4. we don’t get a pass—like Master like servant—read verse 20

-we too will have to carry a cross—Luke 9:23

-when we go out to be like Jesus—we will be treated like Jesus

B. THE WORLD WILL HATE YOU BECAUSE IT LOVES ITS OWN

-verse 19—if you were of this world (and you are not), the world would love you as its own (which it does not)

-we have been “selected out of it” to live in another realm—a kingdom not of this world

-and so the world hates (tense implies an ongoing attitude)

-again—there are reasons for this—

1. the world is alienated towards those who have a different king

2. is not so willing to accept those who do not go along with its values

-refuse to go with the flow—is out of step with its passions

-the world will not embrace those who go against what is politically correct—take unpopular stances

-define things like marriage and life differently

-see wealth and position differently

ILLUSTRATION—Dan Sered-has no relationship with an unbelieving father who disregards his son as a failure

-could have been something—instead—he follows Jesus—he is not welcome to the table

3. the world will hate those who believe that the life to come matters more than the life that is now

4. hate those who view their faith as ultimately and exclusively true

-declare that there is no other god but One—who tolerates no rivals

-and threaten the popular pluralism of our day

5. the world will hate those whose way of life passes implicit judgment on society

-who refuse to take the same bribes

-chase after the same ungodly entertainment

-listen to the same godless chatter—share the same prejudice

-it will hate those who critique it—speak against many of its activities—expose the darkness

6. it will despise those who declare that its gods are false gods—that what they idolize is worthless

POINT—some will be drawn to God by our lives and our convictions—some will become hostile

-we will be a fragrance of life to some—a scent of death to others—2 Corinthians 2:15

C. THE WORLD WILL HATE YOU BECAUSE IT IS MINDLESS

-we might ask—how is it that Jesus came to His own—and His own did not receive Him?

-how can men reject the lover of their souls? Kill the One who came to give life?

-why do some single out a godly community that espouses love and peace and serves the common good and prays for its leaders and becomes the very best citizens?

-it all lacks a reasonable foundation—read verse 25

-Jesus is referring to others in the OT who found the same illogical, unreasoned behavior

-“Numerous are those who hate me without cause”—Psalm 69:4

POINT—it will not make sense—but then—this is the nature of sin—it never makes any sense

ILLUSTRATION—Sabbath Elevator

-reminds me—Jesus did not come to speak against the law

-He came to speak to man’s absurdity—GET PAST THE OUTWARD LAYERS TO THE HEART—and it got Him killed

-and it may get us killed!! This is the point—in a sinful world—SENSELESSNESS IS AT WORK!!

-but we are not alone—read verses 26-27

-the Spirit Who will be our Witness—assist us in the fight

-give us needed strength, needed words—Matthew 10:19-20

WHY IS JESUS TELLING THEM—TELLING US ALL OF THIS?

1. Jesus did not want them (want us) to be surprised

-it will cost us something to follow Christ

-when we live a countercultural life, standing by our convictions, and sharing our faith—there will be challenges

-the danger of your life increases in proportion to the depth of your relationship with Christ—David Platt

-tradition says Matthew was killed by a sword, Peter was crucified upside down, Andrew and Nathanael were crucified, James was beheaded, John was exiled,

Philip was stoned, Thomas was stabbed with a spear, and Judas was clubbed to death

-still today—Christians are statistically the most persecuted group in the world—this is to be expected

-we may not lose our lives—at least here in America

-*“Our culture doesn’t lock us up; it simply and nicely castrates us, neuters us, and replaces our vital parts with a nice face.”—Peterson*

-we are simply dismissed as fanatics or buffoons or hypocrites

-shamed if we choose to be biblically correct verse politically correct

-and that can sometimes be a worse sort of persecution

-Jesus is saying—don’t be surprised

-don’t be astonished if you are despised you because you took a stand for what is right

-Peter gave the same warning—

“When the fiery ordeal arises...don’t be surprised by it, as if something unusual were happening to you”—1 Peter 4:12

-Paul did the same—

-after he was stoned and left for dead—he told these new believers—we *must endure many hardships to enter the kingdom of God—Acts 14:22*

-told Timothy—*everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted—2 Tim 3:12*

-Jesus gives a second, more explicit reason—

2. Jesus did not want them (nor us) to stumble, cave in, give up our faith—read 16:1-4

-before he came to Christ, Paul was certain he was pleasing God when he first ravaged the early Christians—Acts 8

-when the Archbishop Cranmer was burned at the stake in England—a sermon was preached

-sometimes our greatest threat comes from established Protestant or Catholic churches

-ask Evangelicals in Lebanon—attacked by Maronite Catholics

-Syrian followers persecuted by the Presbyterians

CONCLUSION

In his Not a Fan, Kyle Idleman makes the point that in most relationships, there comes a time to define it

-determine the level of commitment

-is it casual—or something more?
-infatuation—or devotion?
-all in or half in?

-this is what was going on in the upper room
-it's also going on here
-are we a fan or a follower?

-fans want to be close enough to Jesus to get all the benefits—but not so close that it requires anything from them
-followers come to realize that following Jesus may cost everything—and that's okay
-for the gain outweighs the cost

-fan or follower?

ⁱ Morris, 678