

Abiding in a Hostile World

John 15:18-27

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Introduction: A politician has a business partner that gets indicted for corruption....What does he do? Yes! He tries to distance himself from that person because he knows that everyone is angry with the other person and they will soon be with him as well.

Everyone in the office is cheating on their expense statements except for one guy who only tells the truth. Everyone else is very angry because his honesty actually reveals their dishonesty. If you eat lunch with and admire the honest person, how popular are you going to be with the rest of the office?

Paul records that....

Galatians 2:11-13 ¹¹ When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. ¹² Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. ¹³ The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

Jesus knew that on earth....those who loved, obeyed and acknowledge Him would face a similar back lash from the world. The world....Jesus explains.....hates Him without a cause so we should not be surprised by how they feel about us.

John 15:18-27 ¹⁸ "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it hated* you. ¹⁹ "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. ²⁰ "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. ²¹ "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me. ²² "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ "He who hates Me hates My Father also. ²⁴ "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. ²⁵ "But *they have done this* to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, 'THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.' ²⁶ "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, ²⁷ and you *will* testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

To be forewarned is to be forearmed, or so the popular saying goes. A good deal of what we do and say is driven by what others think of us. This is particularly true of the young. I am not criticizing them for this trait, but it is a settled reality that they struggle with it

the most. Older humans usually discover that the world does not revolve around what others think about us. That is a blessed liberation for people as they grow to maturity.

Jesus is taking these final hours...literally hours now...before He is arrested and murdered, to prepare His followers to live in this world. He is returning to the Father and we are now the foot soldiers on the ground. Jesus gives six vital things you need to know to live joyfully in the world while still follow Christ.

- The world hated Christ before it hated His followers. [18]
- You do not belong to the world [19]
- You do belong to Christ [20]
- All roads do not lead to God [21-23]
- Gospel preaching reveals the hearts of men toward God [24-25]
- The Holy Spirit will reveal Christ to men [26-27]

The World hated Christ before it hated His followers. [18]

If the world hates you: What is the world? Certainly not the land and oceans. It is the Greek word “kosmos” which describes the predictable and godless way in which men conduct their lives, which includes their politics, religion, education and relationships. *DA Carson* calls it “the created order [especially of human beings and human affairs] in rebellion against its maker.”

John 1:10 ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. **THE WORLD DOES NOT ACKNOWLEDGE GOD**

John 14:30 ³⁰ I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, **SATAN IS THE WORLD’S HIDDEN FORCE**

John 16:8 ⁸ When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: **ONLY GOD CAN CONVINCED THE WORLD OF GOD**

Carson goes on to say...”Therefore when John tells us that God loves the world [3:16], far from being an endorsement of the world, it is a testimony to the character of God. God’s love is to be admired not because the world is so big but because the world is so bad.”

The world causes men to conduct all their affairs apart from God and what He thinks or desires. If you are of the world your only concerns are for what the world does and how it does it.

Know that it has hated Me before it hated you: The prince of this world competes with God for your affection and thinking on every level and in every aspect of your life. The world [human pride, self importance and independence] hates Christ because He is the competition. Better that we should have come from slime than that God made us. Better that we should battle hatred and war than that we should submit to Christ who made us. Better that we should love our own accomplishments than to bask joyfully in the accomplishments of Christ on our behalf. In his first epistle John says....

1 John 2:15-17 ¹⁵ Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For everything in the world-- the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does-- comes not from the Father but from the world. ¹⁷ The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

John does not mean that you cannot have or enjoy any of the wonderful things in the world that God has graciously provided for us all. He says that we are not to imagine that they have nothing to do with the Creator. God Created the world and to love the creation and not the creator is frankly...idolatry in its most basic form. Men apart from God draw all pleasure, meaning and satisfaction from created objects. These things all pass away leaving them with nothing. They themselves all die...leaving them with nothing. Nothing of abiding satisfaction in this world and nothing at all in the world to come. DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD....LOVE CHRIST!

You do not belong to the world [19]

"If you were of the world, the world would love its own: There is no doubt in the grammar here. Believers are not of the world...period. They have come to trust in God for fulfillment, joy and love. They hope in Christ and not in systems of philosophy and religion to define their existence. They do not accept the world's explanation of who they are, how they got here or where they are going. These are foundational issues that have nothing to do with going to church. Millions of people go to church and accept none of **God's** explanations for their existence. They are "of the world" in every sense of the word.

But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you: Christians...or believers are the opposite of the world in all these areas. They have been born again into the life of Christ. God reached down from heaven and cause you to live. You can imagine something different if you want, but God says that He did exactly that.

1 Peter 1:3-4 ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

God literally stole you from the world into which you were hopelessly and helplessly born. It is a kidnapping from the world's perspective. For the present age, God has simply stolen our hearts and minds, but He has told us He will also steal our bodies out of this world as well.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be **caught up** together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

You DO belong to Christ [20-21]

"Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' [20A]: Translation...."I bought you! You belong to me! Furthermore....everyone knows that the slave does not receive better treatment than his owner and master. If a slave is treated like his master that would not be surprising.

If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also [20B]: Jesus says to expect to be treated like He was treated by the world unless you love the world and not Jesus. Those who love the world are peers with the world. They are not ridiculed or discriminated against by the world. That is reserved for those who openly think and act as if they are no longer children of the earth, but are children of God who are living on the earth for now.

"But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me. [21]: There is this very narrow sense in which men act this way toward believers out of ignorance. They do not know God, **but they don't want to know Him either.** They are actively opposed to knowledge of God by their corrupt nature.

1 Corinthians 2:14 ¹⁴ But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him;

God says that the world of men knows enough to decide that they do not want to know God. This makes men guilty before God when they defy and hate Him and persecute His children.

Romans 1:18-20 ¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, **so that they are without excuse.**

All roads do not lead to God [22-23]

"If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. [22]: This guilt is further compounded by the incarnation and the cross. The God that men had come to hate now appears to them and makes it crystal clear that He is the God of creation. That means He owns them, because He is The Creator. It means He can tell them how to live because....again....Christ created and owns all things. Jesus was constantly confronting men with the reality of who owned and sustained the world. On one occasion....

Mark 12:1-12 He began to speak to them in parables: "A man PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT, AND DUG A VAT UNDER THE WINE PRESS AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey. ² "At the *harvest* time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, in order to receive

some of the produce of the vineyard from the vine-growers. ³ "They took him, and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ⁴ "Again he sent them another slave, and they wounded him in the head, and treated him shamefully. ⁵ "And he sent another, and that one they killed; and *so with* many others, beating some and killing others. ⁶ "He had one more *to send*, a beloved son; he sent him last *of all* to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ⁷ "But those vine-growers said to one another, "this is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours!" ⁸ "They took him, and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. ⁹ "What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vine-growers, and will give the vineyard to others. ¹⁰ "Have you not even read this Scripture: 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER *stone*;' ¹¹ THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES ?" ¹² And they were seeking to seize Him, and *yet* they feared the people, for they understood that He spoke the parable against them. And *so* they left Him and went away.

"He who hates Me hates My Father also. [23]: This parable really drives home this point. All religions do not lead to God. The way back to God runs precisely and unswervingly through the Cross and the Savior who died there for our sins. When men spurn Christ's divinity and Substitutionary payment for their sins they hate God, His provision for their salvation and the Son who willingly gave up His life for them on the Cross.... no matter what else they may say.

Gospel preaching reveals the hearts of men toward God [24-25]:

If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. [24]: Men don't mind religion as long as it has nothing to do with the Gospel. Islam is esteemed in our country today even though vast numbers of Muslims are trying to kill us and our children. No problem! They can have their religious holidays in our schools and universities and publicly pray and dress as followers of Allah. At the same time Christmas is banned in favor of Winter Solstice and believers may not pray in school or anywhere else for that matter. WHY? No other religion in the world preaches that all men are hopelessly lost and cannot save themselves. Only the Gospel declares Christ to be the one and only Son of God and the Only...ABSOLUTELY THE ONLY...way back to God. The next time a Muslim or a Mormon or a Jehovah's Witness tells you they believe in Christ you need to ask them if they believe Christ is the one and only Son of God and that He provided the one and only way to get to heaven. DO NOT LEAVE OUT THE **"ONE AND ONLY"** PART.

"But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, 'THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.' [25]: This hatred of the world is not unforeseen. Jesus is particularly shines the light on the Pharisees and other religiously self-righteous. They could absolutely not abide the idea that their religion, ritual and righteousness were all dismissed as worthless by God. Jesus points out that their own Scripture which they profess to believe says that they would hate the Messiah for no reason when He appeared.

Were they particularly wicked people? No....they were particularly self righteous and worldly. They trusted in the world....The righteousness they prescribed and not that of

Christ.....The behavior and treatment of other men that they thought just [like hating the poor and the blind and the uneducated] and what God prescribed. The world is all about men and what they think and want and do. It is opposed to what God thinks [scorn for the Scripture] what God wants [His commandments] and what God does [Give His only Son as the only way to heaven]

The world has not changed much since then. Most denominations and all cults do not believe that Christ is the Eternal God who created the universe. They scoff at the idea that Jesus was the one and only Son of God who became a man. They DO think that their own righteous works will be sufficient to get them to heaven. They do not think that Jesus paid for their sins on the Cross and that He is the only way, the only truth and the only life.

The Holy Spirit will reveal Christ to men [26-27]

Now if you are one of the 11 listening to this you are thinking....So you are leaving us in this world that hates us and we are supposed to ask men who hate us to give their lives to you....whom they also hate. Does that about cover it? YES....that pretty much covers it.

"When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me [26]:* But here is the promise that changes everything. The Holy Spirit whom He has previously mentioned as the one who will be with them forever [14:16] and would also guide them into all truth [14:26] is also going to testify about Him.

This is huge. You need to embrace this. **THE SPIRIT WILL TESTIFY!** This is divine testimony. What do you think? Is God able to persuade someone of the truth of a matter? He is Sovereign after all. I am amazed that people will argue about this. If God wants to convince someone of the truth of something are we seriously going to say that they can resist His ability to do that? In just a few minutes Jesus is going to take this even further, saying.....

John 16:8-11 ⁸ "....And He, [The Holy Spirit] when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; ⁹ concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰ and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; ¹¹ and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

Convict means convince. A criminal is convicted when the Judge, the law and the jury are all convinced of his guilt. A sinner is convicted when he is totally convinced of his hopeless condition and that Jesus is the only way back to God. God does not force people to believe. He reveals Himself so clearly that they are convinced....and believe!

And you *will* testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.[27]: Jesus explains the tool that the Holy Spirit will use to accomplish exactly what God purposes to do. And who will He convince? THE WORLD! Those who hate Him and hate the ones who love Him.

In theology we call this **irresistible grace!** Why? Because there is no resistance when one is convinced and totally embraces the grace of God poured out into their lives at the Cross. The world does resist God, hate God and shun God.....right up until the time that they are convinced they are wrong and God is right and this happens when the Holy Spirit testifies about Jesus and convinces the sinner that every word is true. This is why you believe. IT is the only reason you believe.

CONCLUSION: So Jesus tells the disciples to expect opposition to the Gospel. He does not.....as the much of the church is doing today....tell them to change the gospel so that men will not hate God, Jesus or they themselves. He explains to them and us that;

- The world has always hated God. [18]
- They do not belong to the world but to Him [19, 20]
- The only way to God runs through the Cross [21-23]
- Gospel preaching exposes the hatred of men for God [24-25]
- The Holy Spirit is the sole reason the world will ever believe [26-27]

Be at peace. Everything is normal. The world's double standard toward Christians??? Normal! The constant attempts to silence the gospel, creation and even prayer to the one true God???? NORMAL! You are okay! Christ is with you! The Holy Spirit indwells you and is changing you! The Spirit is the source of what you seek in this world!

Galatians 5:22-23 ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Jesus begins this section with some simple words. This is my prayer for you today...

John 14:1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.

Peter tells us why we should put our trust in God and be at peace...

1 Peter 1:17-25 ¹⁷ Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. ¹⁸ For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ²⁰ He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. ²¹ Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God. ²² Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. ²³ For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ²⁵ but the word of the Lord stands forever." And this is the word that was preached to you.