

Does the World Hate You?

What could make a disciple lose heart and quit?

The disciples of Jesus anticipated being important people in the Kingdom. Just as their forbears did, they were looking forward to an Earthly kingdom that would bring them glory. They believed they had found the man to lead the uprising to overthrow the hated Roman government and restore the nation of Israel to the position of power and influence it enjoyed under King David and King Solomon. But Jesus' Kingdom was not of this world, and He sought to build a spiritual Kingdom for His followers.

Knowing how these men were seeking Earthly glory and recognition, Jesus realized it would be a difficult blow for them when they became social outcasts due to their allegiance to Him.

In John 15 and 16 Jesus told His disciples to be prepared for a long, hard struggle. John 15:18 – John 16:11 (RSV) reads as follows.

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 its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.*

20. *“Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. 21. But all this they will do to you on My account, because they do not know Him 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 seen and hated both Me and My Father. 25. It is to fulfill the word that is written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause.'*

26. *“But when the Counselor comes, Whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, Who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness to Me; 27. and you also are witnesses, because you have been with Me from the beginning.*

1. *“I have said all this to you to keep you from falling away. 2. They will put you out of the synagogues; indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. 3. And they will do this because they have not known the Father, nor Me. 4. But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you of them. I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you.*

5. *“But now I am going to Him Who sent Me; yet none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?’* 6. *But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts.*

7. *“Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.* 8. *And when He comes, He will convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:* 9. *concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;* 10. *concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see Me no more;* 11. *concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.*

Jesus begins this discourse by telling His disciples to not be surprised when the world hates them.

“If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before it hated you.”

Jesus now tells His disciples they should not expect better treatment than what Jesus Himself received.

20. *“Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.* 21. *But all this they will do to you on My account, because they do not know Him Who sent Me.*

Paul reminded Timothy of this years later when he wrote to Timothy, saying, *“Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted”* (2 Timothy 3:12 [RSV]). Peter tells us in 1 Peter 1:6-7 [RSV], 6. *In this you rejoice, though now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials,* 7. *so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold which though perishable is tested by fire, may redound to praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* Jesus said in Matthew 10:21-22 [RSV] and Matthew 10:34-39 [RSV], 21. *“Brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death;* 22. *and you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.*

34. *“Do not think that I have come to bring peace on Earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.* 35. *For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;* 36. *and a man's foes will be those of his own household.* 37. *He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me;* 38. *and he who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me.* 39. *He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.”*

Being a Christian is not a way to enhance one's social standing. It is easy to be loved by the world. If you want to be loved by the world, just become one of them. Blend in.

Jesus said. ***“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, therefore the world hates you.”*** (John 15:19 [RSV])

Christians noticeably are different from the world. The difference is sufficiently different to cause a negative reaction. Jesus said in John 17:14 [RSV], ***“I have given them Thy word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”*** Jesus had also said in John 3:20-21 [RSV], ***20. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21. But he who does what is true comes to the Light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God.***

People like to be told what they want to hear. Paul warned Timothy about this in 2 Timothy 4:3-4 [RSV]: ***3. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, 4. and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths.***

In Mark 6:17 and following we are told how John the Immerser was killed because he spoke the truth to Herod and Herodias about the sins they were committing by having their unlawful relationship. Herod's brother, Philip, was still living, and Herodias had been his wife prior to her leaving Philip and going to Herod. It was a violation of the Law of Moses for a man to take to wife the former wife of his living brother (Leviticus 18:16).

Although it is easy to get, the Christian is not to seek the approval of the world. The Christians must always seek the approval of God. Jesus demands that we must make a clear choice. ***“No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”*** (Luke 16:13 [RSV]) James, the Lord's brother, says in James 4:4-5 [RSV], ***4. Unfaithful creatures! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5. Or do you suppose it is in vain that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the Spirit Which He has made to dwell in us”?***

Listen to the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:19-24 [RSV]: ***19. “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on Earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, 20. but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.***

22. “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; 23. but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

24. “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

Even though the Christian is to expect persecution, he is not to go and seek confrontation, and neither does he deliberately cause animosity with the world. Christians are to be a peaceable people. The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 12:18 [RSV], **“f possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all.”** Jesus also encouraged peaceable living when He stated during His sermon on the mount, **“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God”** (Matthew 5:9 [RSV]). And the Apostle Paul added in his Epistle to the Romans, **“Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding”** (Romans 14:19 [RSV]).

Not only are Christians to be at peace with those around them, Christians must also be non-confrontational and non-abrasive. Colossians 4:5-6 says, **5. Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. 6. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone.** This is a direct, empirical command. It is **NOT** a suggestion. Paul also told the church in Ephesus similarly, saying in Ephesians 4:15 [RSV], **“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him Who is the Head, into Christ....”** So how does one grow up into the likeness of Christ? One does so by speaking lovingly towards others.

“...whereas the aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith” writes Paul in 1 Timothy 1:5. How do we accomplish this goal of God? We accomplish it by replacing error with truth in love.

The Christian must not take rejection personally. I know this is a really tough one, but we are to persevere. Many Christians give up ever trying to share the gospel and convert the lost because people reject them. Some have encountered people who are mean, and so they stop trying. Some people give up when they started getting teased at work.

When people reject the messenger (you), they are really rejecting the message. That is what God had to remind Samuel of when the people clamored for a king. This is also what Jesus tells us in Luke 10:16 [RSV]. **“He who hears you hears Me, and he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him Who sent Me.”**

Those who reject the gospel demonstrate they do not have a relationship with God. They condemn themselves when they reject the only means of salvation. Jesus said in John 14:6 [RSV], **“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by Me.”** And Peter said in Acts 4:12 [RSV], **“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under Heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”**

Often we see Jesus teaching that to reject Him is to reject the Father.

“But all this they will do to you on My account, because they do not know Him Who sent Me.” (John 15:21 [RSV])

2. “They will put you out of the synagogues; indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. 3. And they will do this because they have not known the Father, nor Me.” (John 16:2-3 [RSV])

This message of rejecting Christ means one is rejecting the Father is reiterated by the beloved Apostle John: ***“See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.”***

By our sharing the gospel message of salvation souls are saved from eternal punishment because of their sins. When we share the gospel we offer them words that can save them eternally. When the Angel told Cornelius to send for a preacher it was so that Cornelius could hear the message of salvation. The Angels said to Cornelius, ***“he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household”*** (Acts 11:14 [RSV]).

We are commanded to share the word and let the hearer choose. In Mark 16:15-16 [RSV], Jesus says, ***15. “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. 16. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”***

Bringing others to salvation in Christ also brings to us a reward from God. In Ezekiel 3:16-21 [RSV] we find, ***16. And at the end of seven days, the word of the Lord came to me: 17. “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, you shall give them warning from Me. 18. If I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. 19. But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you will have saved your life.***

20. “Again, if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die; because you have not warned him, he shall die for his sin, and his righteous deeds which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. 21. Nevertheless if you warn the righteous man not to sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live, because he took warning; and you will have saved your life.”

And in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 [RSV], ***10. According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and another man is building upon***

it. Let each man take care how he builds upon it. 11. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw – 13. each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14. If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

Jesus makes it very clear that discipleship is not the easy road. That is why He tells us in Matthew 7:13-14 [RSV], **3. “Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”**

No, discipleship is not the easy road to take. Will persecutions arise? Maybe. Will we suffer rejections? Certainly. Will we face embarrassment? Many times. But the end of faithful discipleship is worth the struggle, for the end is a home in eternity with our Lord. Our Creator, our Savior! **“Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life”** {Revelation 2:10 [RSV]}. Peter tells us, **3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4. and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in Heaven for you, 5. who by God's power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials, 7. so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold which though perishable is tested by fire, may redound to praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8. Without having seen Him you love Him; though you do not now see Him you believe in Him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy. 9. As the outcome of your faith you obtain the salvation of your souls.**

Isn't this decision really a no-brainer? **“I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us”** (Romans 8:18 [RSV]). No matter what the world has to offer, is any of it even come close to what awaits those of us who have been immersed into Christ for the remission of sins? **“For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?”** (Mark 8:36 [RSV])