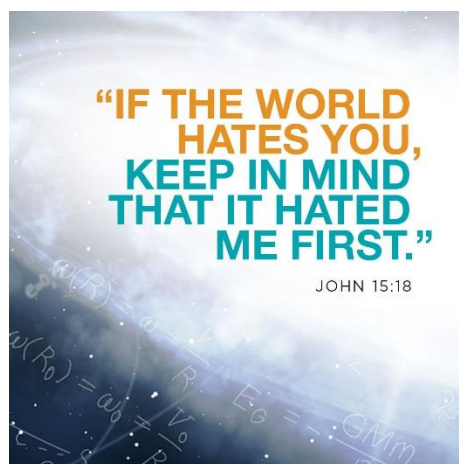




Message 4

IF THE WORLD HATES YOU...THEN...

John 15:18-25

This series has been about the practical and logical way that Jesus shares the deep truths of the kingdom with us. He often uses an **IF/THEN** statement to make things clear and concise for His disciples. So far we've covered these awesome truths from the gospel of John, chapters 14 and 15:

- **IF** you know Jesus, **THEN** you know His father.
- **IF** you love Jesus, **THEN** you will obey His commands.
- **IF** remain in Jesus, **THEN** you will bear much fruit.

And today we've got a whopper of a truth to share from John 15 about the reality of adversity and hardship. Today's passage is especially relevant for those of us in the "western world" where we've experienced relative ease and safety in our faith, but things are getting progressively more difficult. That's not to say that you haven't experienced very real persecution, loss, and harassment for your faith. It's just to say that there are places in the world where it is downright dangerous to publicly exercise your faith, to gather together in worship, or even to own a bible...And we're seeing that more and more here in the "west" as well.

IF THE WORLD _____ YOU, KEEP IN MIND IT _____ ME FIRST. 15:18

When Jesus warns this, we are not shocked or saddened. We know the truth and we know that the message of the gospel is offensive to the powers and principalities of the world. We know that things are probably going to get worse before they get better. We also know that Jesus has already won, and that he will return for the faithful. *Luke 9:21-26; 10:8-16; 12:4-9; 12:49-53*

IF YOU BELONG TO THE WORLD.....BUT YOU _____! 15:19

Belonging to Jesus also means that we are part of a greater purpose and mission. As His followers, we are called to share in His work of proclaiming the good news of salvation and extending His love and grace to others. (Matthew 28:18-20) This mission is not without its challenges, but it's a **privilege** to be used by God to bring hope and healing to a broken world. As we face opposition and persecution, we can take heart in the knowledge that we are not alone but are part of a larger community of believers who are also striving to live out their faith in the midst of a hostile world.

IF THEY _____ ME, THEN YOU, TOO. 15:20-21

As followers of Jesus, we can expect to face rejection and persecution from the world just like He experienced. But we can find joy and peace in the knowledge that we belong to Him and are chosen by Him even in the midst of

difficulty. We identify with Christ in the midst of rejection and adversity, knowing that we have an Advocate who's experienced all the harshness of life, and prevailed.

IF JESUS HAD NOT TAUGHT THE GOSPEL, THEN NO _____. 15:22

"God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" John 3:17. But Satan has deluded the world to ignore the "saved" part and only see or feel the condemnation. Condemnation, guilt, and judgment that they bring on themselves as they reject Christ and His truth.

JESUS DID COME, THEREFORE THEY HATE _____, _____, AND _____. 15:23-25

Despite the pain and difficulty that rejection can bring, we must remember in the case of Jesus that it was ultimately a fulfillment of Scripture and part of God's redemptive plan. In verse 25, Jesus said, *"But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: 'They hated me without reason.'"* Jesus' rejection was not a surprise to Him or to the Father; it was a necessary part of His mission to save the world. The prophets of the Old Testament had foretold the suffering and rejection of the Messiah, and Jesus' experience of these things confirmed that He was indeed the One sent by God to redeem humanity.

Keep in mind that the pain you may experience now is nothing compared to the glory you will feel in eternity. There is encouragement in knowing that you are His, and that He ***will never leave you nor forsake you.***

The Rejection of Jesus

The Rejection of Jesus is a central theme in the passage we just read, and this is a reality that every believer must come to terms with as they follow Christ. Jesus Himself experienced rejection from the very people He came to save, and He warned His followers that they would face the same opposition... But WHY would anyone want to reject someone who had come to save them?

The world's hatred for Jesus is rooted in its opposition to God and His ways. Jesus came as the embodiment of God's love, truth, and righteousness, and His very presence exposed the darkness and sinfulness of the world. As a result, those who were unwilling to repent and turn to God found it easier to reject Jesus and His message than to confront their own sin and need for a Savior. This rejection was not only directed at Jesus but also at His Father. In verse 23, Jesus said, *"Whoever hates me hates my Father as well."* The rejection of Jesus is ultimately a rejection of God Himself, as it is a refusal to submit to His authority and accept His offer of salvation.

In addition to this, Jesus was rejected because He did not fit the expectations of the people of His time. Many were looking for a political Messiah who would overthrow the Roman oppressors and establish an earthly kingdom. Jesus, however, came as a humble servant, offering a spiritual kingdom that transcended earthly power and politics. His message of love, forgiveness, and self-sacrifice was not what the people wanted to hear, and so they rejected Him as their Messiah. They wanted something different than what God, the Father, had given.

Belonging to Jesus

There is a profound encouragement found in belonging to Jesus. This encouragement is rooted in the reality that Jesus Himself has chosen us out of the world to be His own. This is where the idea of being "NOTW" comes from. Our identity is not found in the world's acceptance or approval, but in the love and acceptance of our Savior.

We trust that God has chosen us and that He is working through our lives. As **C.S. Lewis** wrote, "The more we let God take us over, the more truly we become ourselves - because He made us. He invented us. It is when I turn to Christ, when I give up myself to His personality, that I first begin to have a real personality of my own" (Mere Christianity).

Our Persecution

As we reflect on the rejection of Jesus, it is essential to remember that our own experiences of rejection are not without purpose or meaning. They are an opportunity for us to identify with our Savior, to grow in our faith, and to bear witness to the truth of the gospel. We can take comfort in the fact that Jesus understands our pain and has promised to be with us in the midst of our trials. In John 16:33, He said, *"In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*

Our faith in Jesus will often lead to rejection and persecution from the world. This is a reality that Jesus Himself warned His disciples about, as seen in John 15:18-25. Jesus tells His disciples that the world will hate them because they have been chosen out of the world and no longer belong to it. This rejection is not only a consequence of following Jesus but also a **confirmation of our identity as His disciples**.

It is because we identify with Jesus that we can also expect to be treated like Him.

So, on some level, we rejoice in the rejection we experience because of what it says about our position and relationship to Christ. Not to mention, but Jesus even says that those who experience rejection for His name's sake are *"blessed."* **Read Matthew 5:11-12**

Conclusion

The question isn't, "Will I have trouble?" The question is, "When will I have trouble, and what am I going to do about it?"

Read 1 Peter 4:12-19

We can expect adversity, rejection, and even persecution because He told us, "***IF the world hates you, (THEN) keep in mind that it hated me first...***" It's not about you and me, it's about Him. It's about your **position and proximity to Him**. It's because you belong to Him.

In John 14:18, Jesus promises His disciples, "*I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.*" This promise is not only for the original disciples but extends to all who put their trust in Jesus. We are not alone... YOU are not alone.

We can be confident that Jesus is with us, providing the strength, wisdom, and encouragement we need to persevere. Not only that, but He is also preparing a "room" for you and I in eternity. John 14:2-3.

This promise of an eternal home with Jesus is a source of great comfort and encouragement, especially when we face rejection and persecution in this world. Our hope is not in the fleeting pleasures and accolades of this world but in the eternal joy and peace that await us in the presence of our Savior.

And so we have hope.