

Persecuted for His Name Sake

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[0 : 00] You're listening to the online sermon podcast ministry of the First Baptist Church of Jackson, Kentucky. Hi, my name is Jonathan Clemens and I'm the pastor of the First Baptist Church.

We've put this sermon archive together and we pray that it will be a blessing to the saints and edifying to those who follow the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as that it would be a light to those in our community who have questions about the gospel.

One of the wonderful benefits of the internet is that it can give us so much access to good quality Bible teaching materials.

But I want to encourage you not to use the internet as a crutch or a substitute for obedience to Jesus. It's so important that each and every one of you are trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for your salvation and growing in spiritual maturity and in fruitfulness before the Lord.

And that requires obedience to His command to assemble and be a part of a local congregation. God calls each of us to go to church, but not just go to church, be a part of a church.

[1 : 05] And I want to encourage you, if you're not a member of a church, to find that biblical church. One that preaches and teaches the Lord Jesus Christ and one that will embrace you as an important part of the congregation.

And be active and involved. You can never use online materials to substitute obedience. Well, our sermon will follow shortly.

I pray that this ministry will be a blessing to you. And we would love to hear from you. Feel free to reach out to us over our Facebook page. You can contact us on our church website.

And of course, you're always welcome to join us on a Sunday morning. You'll find us at 1105 Main Street in Jackson, Kentucky. That's at the corner of Main Street and Broadway down by the police station and City Hall.

We gather at 1045 in the morning and we would love to see you. Have a wonderful day. God bless. God bless. God bless.

[2 : 43] Of course, Jesus would be resurrected. He would organize them, prepare them for what was to come on the day of Pentecost before He ascended into heaven. But persecution was going to follow them for the rest of their lives.

It was going to follow the apostles for the rest of their ministry. It was a reality for their living. It's the reality for believers today. It's a reality for us too. If you're going to be a faithful Christian, if you're going to speak that which God calls you to speak, believe that which God calls you to believe, it will bring conflict into your life.

Now, our culture has traditionally been more friendly towards Christianity, hasn't it? We have benefited from that and been blessed by that.

Nevertheless, there have always been antagonists to the Christian faith. Any Christian who follows Jesus, no matter how friendly society might be, will face antagonism, will face persecution.

If they don't, they're not living a Christian testimony outwardly. If the world loves you, if people denying Christ love you, if people living in open immorality love you, and don't have a problem with the fact that you serve Jesus, they probably don't know who Jesus is, or they don't know that you serve Jesus.

[4 : 02] When people understand that Jesus is Lord, when people understand the Word of God or the law of God, and they reject the truth of God, they reject the people of God along with it.

What is persecution? Well, persecution by definition, and if you know me, you know I enjoy Webster's 1828 Dictionary. It's very lengthy and even includes Bible verses.

This is the definition of persecution given there. Persecution is the act or practice of persecuting, the infliction of pain, punishment, or death upon others unjustly, particularly for adhering to a religious creed or mode of worship.

So persecution is where someone is singled out and they're treated in an unjust, unfair, or ungodly way because of what they believe. So as we look at today's passage of Scripture, the persecution in context is persecution against who?

Against God's people. It's persecution against those who follow Jesus. And what we're going to see is that those who follow Jesus are treated in an unkind, unjust, or ungodly way by those opposed to Jesus.

[5 : 18] And this has been a truth of Christianity throughout the ages. And even times there will be those who will profess to be Christians who will persecute and punish gospel-following, gospel-believing Christians just like the Pharisees professing to be faithful Jews and God's children persecuted Christ, the Messiah who came.

We can realistically expect persecution in this life. Why is that? Well, the Bible tells us so. That should be enough.

But it's understandable why Christians would experience persecution and there's a few broad reasons. The first, let's just say that you're going to be a mere Christian.

A mere Christian is someone who has believed the gospel of Jesus Christ and in believing the gospel of Jesus Christ, they have opted out of believing or adhering to any other system of righteousness.

You see, everyone, whether they know it or not, have some sort of moral system in their life or some sort of system of righteousness in their life. And God has a system of righteousness with the standard for salvation being absolute perfection.

[6 : 32] So if you want to be a person saved apart from Jesus, the standard then is what? Perfection. A perfect person can walk right into heaven. That's justice.

Right? The problem is, we've all sinned. The problem is, we've all fallen short of God's glory. And the system of righteousness that has the standard of perfection alone has no provision in it for salvation.

Yet the scripture says, righteousness has been revealed to us apart from the law. And if you're trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ today for your salvation, you have received righteousness apart from the law.

You see, Jesus kept the law perfectly. Jesus adhered to the standard that God set forth perfectly. Something we could not do. Jesus earned heaven.

Something we could not do. And the gospel is, that if we repent of our sins and we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, He will forgive our sins and impute, that is, give us His righteousness.

[7 : 39] His righteousness will be accounted to us. So if you hold to the system of righteousness in God's Word, you understand the standard is absolute perfection. You understand Jesus met the standard of absolute perfection.

And you have received the free gift of His righteousness. You automatically opt out of all the other false systems of righteousness in the world. You're opted out.

Those who are holding to false systems of righteousness, those who have some doctrine, some set of beliefs, or even some cultural hand-me-downs, of, well, you know, as long as you don't hurt anybody, you're a good person and God will accept you.

That's a cultural hand-me-down. You know, if you hold to the righteousness of Christ, you reject that system. And if you're a mere Christian, if you just exist believing the gospel, it's like someone plunks a sign down in their life saying, this person disagrees with you.

Your mere existence bears testimony that there is an ultimate standard. Your mere existence bears testimony that there is a God.

[8 : 57] That His standard is high, that it is perfect righteousness, and that you have opted out of all these other systems and received your righteousness fully and freely from Jesus Christ.

If you believe the gospel, if you're a mere Christian, people won't like that. If you're merely Christian in worshiping God, if you're merely Christian in loving the Lord, and of course we understand that to love God and to worship God is to obey God.

And we understand we're not saved by worshiping God. We worship God, why? Because we are saved. We worship God because we're saved. So if you're merely a Christian saved by the gospel worshiping God, then you're going to be serving Him.

And again, if you have that godly righteousness on display in your life, if you're seeking to serve God, honor God, worship God, that is enough to draw you into conflict with others.

Why is that? Because, take a co-worker for example, where they're willing to cut a corner, you're not. For a brief time, right out of high school, I was trying to save up some money before going to college.

[10 : 20] I worked at a chicken slaughterhouse. It's a good job. It builds character. That's what my grandpa would say. And there's two sides of it.

There's the side where they actually slaughter the chickens. I never went on that side. There's the other side of it. If you ever open a can of chicken, that's what it smelled like. It was a refrigerator.

It was 40 degrees. That's where they processed the poultry. And I remember there were people that would say, you know, sometimes it gets a little slow around here.

Just look busy. Just look busy. And for the Christians, I remember there was another fellow, he was an older gentleman, as a believer, you know what, instead of just looking busy, you know what we did?

We stayed busy. And guess who became unpopular with the people that like to look busy? It was no, it was meant to be no offense to them.

[11 : 18] It wasn't about them, was it? It was about me and Jesus, and it's stealing, right? To deceive your employer in that way. And what they, they said, well just look busy.

And they didn't like that people wouldn't go along with that. Why is that? Why didn't they just mind their own business? Why did it bother them?

Because there was a witness there. Because there was a testimony there. Because it reminded them of what their conscience they had tried to suppress had been telling them.

They weren't there to look busy. They were there to be busy. They were doing wrong. And if you're going to be a faithful Christian in life, if you're going to be a faithful Christian and serve God, people are going to see that testimony.

They're going to see that they're not doing that and they're going to be bothered by that. And that's just existing as a mere Christian. believing what you believe and doing what God calls you to do kind of passively.

[12 : 26] Just being a mere Christian is enough to upset and bother people. It is. Yet God doesn't just call us to be mere Christians, does He?

You know, He looked at His disciples and He said, all authority... How much authority does Jesus have? All authority has been given unto Me in heaven and on earth.

Go therefore and do what? Make disciples. We're to go out to the nations making disciples. The old kings in Europe, they got in trouble because they would say that they ruled by divine right.

They got in trouble because they said they ruled by divine right. And they didn't believe they were accountable to the law. Even God's law. Because they were God's king.

Of course, we know that that's not true. Everyone's accountable to a holy God. Everyone's accountable to God's righteous standards. Even the kings. But you know who rules by divine right who's also in complete agreement with God's law?

[13 : 42] There's one king that rules by divine right. Jesus Christ. He has a divine right to this world, to the fullness thereof. Everything belongs to Him.

He has a right to our homes, our cars. Jesus has a right to our savings accounts. Jesus has rights to our thoughts, our time. Everything belongs to Jesus.

And it's not just Christians. the whole world belongs to Jesus. Including your neighbor's front porch.

Including your neighbor's phone line. And He tells you, I have all authority and what are you supposed to do? Go out and tell them about me.

That's not the way a lot of us were raised. Mind your own business, don't talk about religion, don't talk about politics.

[14 : 43] What's Jesus say? I have all authority, go. Go. Share the gospel. Go. Make disciples.

So that when you show up to lovingly share the love of Christ with others, you don't need to be worrying so much about infringing upon them as you do need to be concerned about infringing upon Christ.

How is it that the prophets of old stood up and preached their messages knowing everybody was going to get angry? It's because of the divine rights of God.

The people are His. The public square is His. And He doesn't say just go dwell on the margins of society in awkward silence.

He said no, go to the public square and you tell them this message that I have for you. Bear witness of me. And of course what is God's message?

[15 : 49] It's the gospel of Jesus Christ. It's a message of love. It's a message of forgiveness. God has called us to take this message to people some who want to hear it and some who don't.

Now we're warned in scripture not to cast our pearls before a swine. We're warned in scripture there are times to shake the dust off of our feet. But until then we ought to be sharing the gospel with them.

Because it's the will of God. He calls us to go out and do this. We're not to be just mere Christians. but to go out and actively, proactively share. Now, in raising kids, you know, I've noticed there are some things I say to my kids that I never imagined saying to them.

I remember there was a time we were in just, I forgot exactly where we were parked. But there was horrific traffic all around. And I've got, it was when the kids were younger, I've got these young kids, I've got arms full, and I've got to unlock the car.

Right? And I told one of my children, I said, stand against the car and lay your hands on the hood, kind of like a police officer would. And I unlocked the car and put them in there where they would be safe.

[17 : 06] And I looked at my wife and I said, you know, I never imagined that I would ever say that to my child. You know? But then sometimes in parenting there's like the stump speech.

Right? There's the thing that they hear a lot. One of the things I say to my kids is it's important to make wise and godly decisions because it honors the Lord, but you also need to understand there are consequences for when you don't.

And we'll never escape pain, hardship, or suffering in this life. Right? Godly saints, God-fearing men and women will suffer hardship. But you know what you can do that's a bad idea?

You can throw the door wide open to it. And how do you throw the door wide open to hardship, suffering, misery, by making sinful and ungodly decisions.

You can invite more and more and more into your life the more you rebel. And the reason is because God cursed this earth. It's called the curse of sin.

[18 : 10] God cursed the earth because of Adam's sin so there's suffering, pain, and death. And the more you live in sin, what do you invite into your life more? the curse of sin.

And we rightly seek to honor God and we notice that when we follow God and live in God's world in order our lives as God has called us, things tend to go better with that regard.

Less of the curse of sin is invited in, although it's always present. But do you know what Jesus is telling us happens with regard to persecution? persecution. He's saying that when we follow Him, we're opening the door, not to the curse of sin, not to hardship brought upon ourselves because of our own foolishness.

When we follow Jesus, we're opening the door to hardship brought upon ourselves by other people. And this is why Jesus says, count the cost.

cost. This is why Jesus says, take up your cross and follow me daily. Because when you decide to follow Jesus, you're blowing the doors wide open to persecution and hardship.

[19 : 35] Consider that. Count the cost. Christianity is not for the faint of heart. And the Christian attitude needs to be of course in wisdom because we can annoy people in an ungodly way and bring persecution.

Or call it persecution when it's not. But the Christian attitude ought to be with regard to following Jesus. If you are going to persecute me because I follow Jesus, then bring it on.

We are not to fear man. Jesus makes this clear. He said, do not fear those who can kill the body. Do not fear those who can kill the body.

Rather fear him who after he's killed the body can cast your very souls into hell. Fear God. We are called to fear God.

So if following Jesus means people are going to hate us, we must come to a point where we are willing to say, so be it.

[20 : 42] And if you are not going to follow Jesus, if you are just going to refuse to follow Jesus, what are you doing? Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow you shall die.

This life is all you are going to know. And then you go into eternity without Christ. Make a choice. It's Jesus and the hardship for following Jesus or not.

Don't be lukewarm. We are called to follow Jesus. So today we are going to look at this passage of Scripture. We are going to see that persecution and hardship is a reality for the church.

It is something that Christians will experience to one degree or another. If we are going to follow Jesus, if we are going to obey Him, if we are going to love our neighbor, if we are going to testify to them of the love of Christ, that is going to put them at a crossroads to either follow Jesus or to fight against Jesus.

And often times they choose the latter. So if you would please look with me at the Gospel of John chapter 15 18, and we'll start in verse 18.

[22 : 05] These things I command you that you love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own.

But because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember that the word that I have said unto you.

The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they have kept my saying, they will also keep yours.

But all these things they will do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they would have not sinned, but now they have no cloak for their sin.

He that hateth me hateth my father also. If I had not done among them the works which I had done, had no other man did, they would have not sinned.

[23 : 13] But now have they both seen and hated both me and my father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law. They hated me without cause.

But when the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the father, even the spirit of truth which proceedeth from the father, he shall testify of me, and ye also shall bear witness because you have seen me from the beginning.

This is the word of the Lord. So why are Christians hated? Why do Christians experience persecution?

And I think it's important to note that, and we'll look at this more in detail a little bit later, that in the scripture, love and hatred, they're not emotional states necessarily.

We tend to think of love and hatred as emotional states. Love and hatred are patterns of behavior. behavior. They're patterns of behavior. So someone could persecute Christians without extreme hatred for them in emotions, simply by denying them justice.

[24 : 33] And a cruel indifference could be hatred. So, why does the world hate Christians? Well, Jesus says this in verse 18.

If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. Now, in the scripture, when God refers to the world, He's referring to the system of the world.

He's referring to the religious ideologies, the political ideologies, the nations. That is the world system. I've read through the Pilgrim's Progress.

Again, I recommend it. It's a great book to you. It's a Christian allegory written by John Bunyan, an early Baptist preacher. He told this story though of the main character, Christian, walking along the road that leads to heaven.

It's a picture of the Christian life. And he comes across this city called Vanity Fair. And it's a fair or a festival, like we would call it today. And there are vendors with booths, they're selling their wares, there are barkers calling out at people, people handing things out, there are items for entertainment and distraction all along the way.

[25 : 50] And as Christian and his companion are passing through this city, they are being called out by the people to come participate and they're refusing to participate in the world system.

And as they walk through the city, you can see the ire of the people building. As they pass booth after booth after booth, and it becomes more apparent that they're not going to buy the wares of this world.

It's a picture of the world. And the world has many wares that it wants to sell. It'll sell fear, it'll sell covetousness, it'll sell discontent, many things the world wants us to engage in.

And the world, it hates Jesus. This world system hates Jesus. Of course, we understand that this world system is influenced, none other, by Satan himself.

Satan, the devil, he is real, he is evil, and he is at work influencing this fallen world. Now the scripture is clear, Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

[27 : 03] The scripture is clear, he has dominion over this earth. Yet when referring to the devil and his relationship over this fallen world system, the scriptures refer to him as the God, lowercase g, of this world.

When Paul was talking about the idolatry that would take place in the world system, he said that the people worshipping the false gods weren't really worshipping gods at all, they were worshipping demons.

The false righteousnesses of the world, the major ideologies of the world, they flow from a dark and evil origin, and their Satan's attempt and work to influence people, to lead those made in God's image astray, to assure their destruction and condemnation, to do all that he can to blind them to the truth of the gospel and destroy them.

And those who are of the world, those people who owe their allegiance to their father, the devil, as Jesus told the Pharisees, referring to him as their father, it hated Jesus, well before it hated any of us.

It hated Jesus first. Now the world hates Christians specifically, and Jesus says this because Christians are of God.

[28 : 27] We are of God. He said, if you were in the world, the world would love his own. But because you're not in the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will have persecuted you. If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

So Jesus simply identifies this pattern. If they're going to persecute your Lord, if they're going to persecute your leader, they're going to persecute you. They rejected him.

And of course, we're not of this world. Now we can all say, now hold on. There was a time when we were in this world, wasn't there? If you're a Christian, there was a time before you knew Jesus. But when you become a Christian, you receive a new heart, a heart with God's word written upon it, you receive a new identity, a new nature.

You're no longer the same person. So that when the apostles of old were to look at the saints in the church with them like Peter, he would say, you're strangers and pilgrims in this land.

[29 : 46] You're not of this world. Scripture's clear from before the very foundation of the world, we have a divine origin where God not only chose us, but appointed that we should do good works.

We're not of this world. And when someone trusts in Christ, this is evident and revealed to all. The Scripture speaks of us as being in Christ, in a relationship, in unison with Him, of being of Christ, of His work and ministry, and all the blessings we receive are through Christ and His righteousness, and not only that, we understand that Jesus works through us.

Christians have a divine origin. We're not of this world any longer. We're no longer the worldlings, those under the sway of Satan that we used to be.

When we trust in Jesus, we have new life. We are born again. We die to the old way and we are renewed to live in the new way.

That is the Christian. Now he says this in verse 21. He said, but all these things they will do unto you for my name sake.

[31 : 03] Because they do not know Him that sent me. So important for us to grasp this. Often times, and we all struggle with this, myself included, if someone's having a bad day, we automatically assume, what have I done to them?

Or, what don't they like about me? need. It can be an automatic assumption. It's actually a fairly self-centered assumption to assume that everyone on the street, in your workplace, in the church, in your family, is actually going through life thinking about you all the time to have problems with you.

Sometimes they do. But often times, perhaps most times, if somebody is unkind or has a problem, it's actually their problem. And what Jesus says, is when this persecution comes into your life, now listen, it's entirely possible for Christians to be obnoxious people, to fail to love our neighbors as Scripture says.

And people won't like us if we're obnoxious people. That's entirely possible. But if, that aside, if you're seeking to be a faithful Christian, if you love the Lord and what you do is done out of a motive to glorify Him in obedience, you will be persecuted.

And guess what? It's not about you. It's about Jesus. They have a problem with Jesus. They wouldn't have a problem with you if you were just like them.

[32 : 48] They have a problem with you because you're seeking to be like Jesus. He says, you will be persecuted for my name's sake.

He's saying, people are going to treat you badly because of me. People are going to treat you badly because of who I am. People are going to treat you badly because of their ignorance.

They don't know where I've come from. He said, people are going to treat you badly because of the good works that I have done. That's why the persecution will come.

It is for His name's sake that we are persecuted. Of course, what is the name of Jesus? Well, in the Hebrew, the name of Jesus is Yeshua.

It means Yahweh is my salvation. God is my salvation. In the Greek, it is Iesus. And when you look at that written down, it looks like Jesus except it's Greek.

[33 : 47] that's where we get our English word for Jesus from. It can also be translated Joshua. Yahweh saves.

It is for His name's sake, the name of Jesus who saves, that we are persecuted. The prophet Isaiah said of the name of Jesus this in Isaiah 9, 6-7.

He said, for unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is given. And the government shall be upon His shoulder. And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end upon the throne of David and upon His kingdom to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever.

the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Jesus, His name is the reason that we're persecuted. We're persecuted because He is the Wonderful Counselor, because He is Mighty God, because He is the Everlasting Father, because He is the Prince of Peace.

[35 : 07] That is why we are persecuted. when the angel came to announce to Joseph who was in deep concern about Mary and her pregnancy, and the angel was announcing to him about Jesus, this is what the angel said in Matthew 1.20, But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost, and she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus.

Why? For he shall save his people from their sins. It is for his name's sake that we are persecuted. Paul said this in Philippians 2.9, Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every other name.

We are persecuted because of who Jesus is, because he is Lord, because he is the firstborn of all creation, because he has a name above every other name, and Satan and his children cannot abide it, and they cannot tolerate it.

That is why we are persecuted. We are persecuted Philippians 2.10-11, because that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Friend, if Jesus is just your personal Lord, you're missing it. If Jesus is just Lord of the church, you're missing it. Jesus is Lord of heaven and earth, and every tongue one day will confess it.

[36 : 57] The only question is whether we'll confess it in faith now, and believe it, or whether we'll wait until there's no denying it any longer. That's the only option.

And it is for this reason that the saints are persecuted. Because the wicked deep down in their hearts, they know, they know they're going to stand before this God. They know they're going to give an account.

They know that God hates their sin and that they will be found guilty. They know that they are enemies of God. They know that they are opposed to God deep down in their conscience. And they do not have the blessings of the divine security, or confidence to stand before this God.

Acts 4, 11-12 This is the stone that was at naught of you builders, which has become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Christians are persecuted because Jesus is the only way. Which means all other ways are wrong. My way is wrong.

[38 : 11] Your way is wrong. The culture's way is wrong. Jesus is the way. It's His way or no way. And that is why Christians are persecuted.

We're persecuted for His name sake. So what does Jesus say? He says, well, all these things will be done to you for My name's sake.

What are all these things? Persecution. Well, why me? It's not about you. It's about Jesus.

They don't like Jesus. They don't love Jesus. They don't love the things of God. He said, they will do these things to you. What's he talking about? Well, verse 18.

They will hate you. They will hate you. And again, this isn't about frothy emotions. Some people get that way. I remember I encountered a young man once and we were talking and, well, what do you do?

[39 : 16] Well, I'm a coach of this or that. Well, what do you do? I'm a pastor. Instant red-faced rage walked off. Now, we think of that as hatred. That's a form of it.

But hatred, like I said, can be cruel indifference. Hatred can be, alright, well, I'll talk about you behind your back. Hatred can be, well, okay, see what I do to your food in the kitchen when nobody's looking.

It doesn't have to be a wild rage, Christians. Christians. It's a way people treat others. They will hate you.

Verse 19. They won't love us. Of course, that's the opposite. He says in verse 19, the world would love their own. And we have such a sick craving in the evangelical churches of wanting to be popular.

I remember there was this movement to reform the church because the generation back in the 80s and 90s was wanting to be popular by becoming very theologically liberal.

[40 : 29] Denying the miracles of Christ and things of that nature. And people said, no, we're not going to do that. And then the churches grew and you know what we're seeing now?

The same thing again. There's such an unhealthy craving in churches to be popular, to be loved, to be respected by broader society.

So much so that they're willing to make almost any compromise to get the attention. It's unhealthy. It's like the desperate child at school that will do anything people will ask of them just to have friends.

They know that they're not well liked, so they're going to remedy that by being like everyone else. And of course that only works if you actually are like everyone else.

they will hate Christians. They will not like Christians. Rather than trying to fear man and please and impress, we should love with a genuine Christian love and share the gospel with people and care enough to talk to them.

[41 : 48] Talk to them about the important things so that they can be saved. And no, we won't be popular, but isn't it better we see people come to know Christ?

Christ. They will hate us, Jesus goes on to say, they will persecute us.

So, not love us, they'll hate us and they'll persecute us. I don't know about you, now there's not a prescribed pattern laid out here, but I kind of think, and you can take it or leave it.

I kind of think in our culture, there was an indifference. Well, we don't really love Christians, but we don't really have a deal with them. Now, well, we're really angry at Christians.

You're a bad person if you're a vocal Christian. It's almost like there's this progression and now we start to see acts of violence increasing against Christians.

[42 : 53] I wonder about that. You can take that or leave it. we're persecuted for His name's sake. Of course, people can't go up to heaven and throw Jesus off of His throne.

They can't spit in His face. They can't give Him a hard time up there, can they? He's safe in heaven. But who can people express their rage against here on earth?

The people of God. Those who follow Jesus. Revelation 12, 5 through 6 speaks of Satan. And of course, His persecution of Jesus and later the church.

And this is what it says, Revelation 12, 5 through 6. And she brought forth a man child, speaking of the people of God. And she brought forth a man child, of course Jesus came out of Israel, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron.

And her child was caught up to God and to His throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her a thousand, two hundred, and three score days.

[44 : 04] And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto earth, that's Satan, he persecuted the woman, which brought forth the man child. And to the woman there were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, times and a half and a half time, from the face of the serpent.

So what is that? Well it's a picture of the people of God. And when Satan can't get to Jesus anymore, because he's glorified, he's won that victory on the cross, he's at the right hand of the Father, who does he turn to go after?

Who requires the divine protection? God's people. That evil attitude is still there. If people could but jerk Jesus off of his throne, they would do that, but they can't.

So they can silence those who follow him. So we will experience persecution for his name's sake. And this hatred that they have for Jesus, obviously it's a sinful hatred.

It's obvious that it is a sinful hatred. Jesus said this in verse 24, if I had not done among them the works which no other man did, they would have not had sin. But now they have both seen and hated me and my father.

[45 : 23] But this cometh to pass that the word might be fulfilled in what is written in their law. They hated me without cause. They hated me without cause.

Now remember, love is a pattern of behavior towards someone and so is hate. They hated Jesus without cause.

love is a If someone hates their neighbor, what would that look like? Well, if you hate your neighbor, you might steal from them. Or if you're willing to steal from your neighbor, it reveals that you hate them.

If you're willing to commit adultery, if you're willing to gossip or lie about them, those are hateful acts. That is, hating your neighbor. If you love your neighbor, you'll honor their rights, you'll honor their property, even if they're the most ornery, mean, cruel, difficult person you've ever met.

Some people say as mean as a snake. You treat them right, you're loving them. You could not particularly enjoy their company, they could even be dangerous, and you keep your distance as much as you can, but when it comes to it, if you treat them right, you're loving your neighbor.

[46 : 39] That's what we're called to. But treating people wrongly, that is expressions of hatred towards them. If you'll stop a rumor about yourself or a friend or a family member, but you have some enemy out there, and you'll let lies go around about them, even if you didn't have anything to do with it, and you would never lift a finger to stop that, that is a way to express hatred towards another.

You say, but they're bad. We're called to love, just as Christ loved, who even loved bad people. The showing of partiality. The showing of partiality.

James deals with this. Partiality towards the rich and ignoring the poor. He said, well, they didn't hate poor people. They showed partiality towards them.

They ignored them. That's hateful according to Scripture. Scripture. And Christians will be hated. And Jesus was hated.

And He was hated without cause. In other words, He didn't give them an excuse to hate. You know, we can be difficult people and give people excuses to hate us.

[47 : 58] For example, there's some great Proverbs. It's written for a younger person. You know, ideally teenagers would read this. Some of the greatest advice I got from my grandfather.

I was in need of wisdom. He saw it. I didn't. He said, read through Proverbs, one proverb a day, every day of the month, and just do it every month.

Read Proverbs. It has wisdom in it. And some of this wisdom for the young people is this. Proverbs 27, 13. He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted to him as a curse.

I particularly enjoy that, right? You chipper morning people. You chipper morning people. If you rise in the morning, blessing with a loud voice to the person who's awoken, it will be counted as a curse.

We can be obnoxious people, right? But you see, Jesus was hated, why? Without cause.

[49 : 10] He wasn't an obnoxious person. He didn't wrong anyone. He didn't harm anyone. Now, he did things they didn't like. That is true.

Jesus did things they didn't like. But it was because they didn't like obeying God that they didn't like what Jesus did. You know, they didn't particularly like it when he pointed out their sins. They didn't particularly like it when he showed up at the temple and they had this neat little money making fair set up in the courtyard.

And he came in and trashed the place. They didn't like that because they didn't like the things of God. Yet, Jesus came and he came doing what God called him to do and the people of God would respond in faith and repentance.

Yet, they hated him without what we would call a just cause. He had done no wrong against them. Everything he did was according to God's will, it was according to God's word, and it was to help them out.

They didn't always like it. They didn't always understand it. But he did the right thing for them. Christians do the right thing.

[50 : 28] You say, what's the right thing? It's what God says is the right thing. Our neighbors might or might not agree with the right thing. But if you do the right thing and you love your neighbor, even if they don't understand, even if they don't agree, friend, it's still the right thing.

And at the end of the day, if you do the right thing, and they hate you, they will be hating you without a just cause. You'll have done nothing wrong against them to harm them.

So what types of works was Jesus doing? Well, Luke 8, 1 talks about some of the works he was doing. Soon afterward, Jesus began going around from one village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God.

He had a ministry of preaching, the same one he's called us to have. We're to share the gospel with our friends, with our family members, with our enemies, we're to share the gospel with everyone.

It's a ministry of the word. And Jesus had a special ministry too. One very impressive, wasn't it? He was healing the sick, cleansing lepers, raising the dead.

[51 : 45] You know, for all the people that claim to have these abilities, abilities, that's one they can't ever seem to pull off, isn't it? Can't raise the dead. Jesus raised the dead.

Hebrews 2.4 said that God was bearing witness with signs, wonders, diverse miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to His own will. Of course, the apostles similarly bore The apostles but they hated Him.

They hated Him without cause. When the prophet John the Baptist was in prison, deeply discouraged, this is what Matthew says in Matthew 11.2, Now when John had heard in prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said unto him, Art thou the Christ?

I'm sorry, I skipped a line there. And he said unto them, Art thou him that should come or should we expect another? And Jesus answered and said unto him, Go and show John those things again which ye hear and see.

The blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

[53 : 10] And blessed is he who whosoever shall not be offended in me. Here's Jesus sharing the gospel.

Here's Jesus ministering to the poor. Here's Jesus healing the sick. And he follows it up with, blessed is he who shall not be offended in me.

Why is that? the ministry of Christ brings offense to the worldly man. He said, If I had done none of the works among them, which no other man did, they had not sinned.

But now have they both seen and hated me, both me and my father. They saw it. They were accountable to the truth.

They rejected God. They hated him. They hated the father. This was an unjust hatred. It was an unprovoked hatred. People shouldn't be hateful people anyway, right?

[54 : 16] But it was unprovoked, unjust. They hated him because he was good. Of course, at the end of this passage, Jesus makes clear there is going to be two witnesses left behind after his ascension.

Verse 26, he says this, but when the comforter is come, I will send unto you from the father, even the spirit of truth which proceedeth from the father.

He shall testify of me, and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning. the holy spirit was coming, and the holy spirit was to testify as well as these disciples.

To testify is to be a witness, it is to bear witness, it is to affirm what someone has seen, heard, or experienced, to make a solemn declaration, verbal or written, to establish some fact, to give testimony, with the purpose of communicating first hand knowledge.

they were to bear witness, to testify, and of course the spirit came to testify. He's called here the comforter, a parakletos, four times it's translated comforter, one times it's translated advocate, and it is right to translate it comforter, because it means he's comforting us, but the idea is that it is one who comes alongside.

[55 : 46] We have, for example, para-church ministries, they aren't the church, they come alongside the church. That's an idea. The Holy Spirit is one who comes alongside of the believers.

Why is that important to these disciples about to face persecution? They're not going to go through it alone. The Spirit of God will be with them, and He will be bearing witness of the same things the disciples are called to.

to. This is the ministry of the Spirit according to John 16. And when He has come, He will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. Friends, it's not about us.

It's not about us. There is a divine ministry where God has come and He has come to reprove the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. It's bigger than us.

So when persecution comes upon the church, when people just can't stand having the church exist, when they're so bothered by that Christian in the workplace, it's not about us.

[56 : 56] There's something bigger at work here. It's about Jesus and the fact that they reject Him. John 14. 26, But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring all things into your remembrance whatsoever I have said to you.

Of course, those disciples were going to go into difficult circumstances, but they had the assurance that the Spirit of God was with them. So when in the midst of persecution they were to testify of Christ, they would do so faithfully.

The Spirit is with them. Romans 8. 26, Likewise, the Spirit also help with our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray as we ought, but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Isaiah 41.10 says this, Fear thou not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee, and I will help thee, and I will uphold thee by the right hand of my righteousness.

God will be with us in the midst of hardship. God will be with us in the midst of turmoil. God will be with us in the midst of persecution.

[58 : 18] But there's another group called to testify. There's another group called to speak up. The church. We are called to bear witness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yes, we are called to bear witness and we are called to bear witness even in the midst of persecution and hardship.

Even when people would reject us, we are called to testify of Jesus. We must count the cost in following Christ.

We must count the cost and consider what it means to follow Him. because to follow Jesus is to invite the same reproach that was upon Him into our lives.

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