

# The Worlds Hatred

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Date: 01 February 2020

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[ 0 : 00 ] 15 verse 18. So if you've got one of the church Bibles, the black ones, which are on the back desk if you don't have one, it's page 902.

John 15 verse 18. If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you are of the world, the world would love you as its own. But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

Remember the word that I said to you, a servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.

If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.

[ 1 : 10 ] If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my father also.

If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen and hated both me and my father. But the word that is written in their law must be fulfilled.

They hated me without a cause. But when the helper comes, whom I will send to you from the father, the spirit of truth, who proceeds from the father, he will bear witness about me.

And you also will bear witness because you have been with me from the beginning. I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away.

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. And they will do these things because they have not known the father nor me.

[ 2 : 20 ] But I have said these things to you that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told them to you. Amen. Well, I'm often known around the traps here as Eeyore.

I reckon I see the miserable side of life. Well, the mantle today has been translated and shifted onto Rob. So I'm positively euphoric compared to Rob's introduction.

We all want to be accepted, don't we? We all want to be welcomed. We all want to be at ease in whatever context we find ourselves in. That's what it is to be relational beings, isn't it?

Nobody wants to be isolated, rejected, certainly not despised and hated. And I think one of the things I really appreciate about being Australian is that Australia gets that by and large.

So as Australians, we sense that racism and sexism is bad. And that a commitment to multiculturalism is good. But we're slowly as a nation recognizing past wrongs to indigenous people and working to get some real healing.

[ 3 : 55 ] We're developing disability support programs, valuing people for who they are rather than what they can or cannot do. And we rightly applaud people and programs designed to promote unity among Australians.

But mixed in among that, I need to tell you this morning, if you haven't already worked out, there are those who use the language of unity, but their design is altogether different.

Their design is actually to promote disharmony and exclusion and isolation. Two words dominate our culture at the moment.

The words inclusivity and the word tolerance. That is, these two words both are banded around as being open and accepting of all views.

Especially they're used in terms of being open and accepting of all gender expressions, all sexual expression.

[ 5 : 10 ] As I say, it's the language of inclusiveness. But behind that apparent language of unity is, dare I say, a ruthless agenda to silence any critique of moves to redefine personhood, to redefine

identity through this new thing called gender fluidity.

Unrestricted sexual expression. Unrestricted sexual expression. And Christians bear the brunt of this attack. And the attack aims to remove from our society, from our culture, any reference or influence from historic, the ethic of historic biblical Christianity.

And replace it with an ethic of, anything goes, driven by my imagination. A couple of examples. Two weeks ago, Monty Python team member Terry Jones died. The response to his death, a massive celebration of his life.

Focused in one line, his most famous, or as I would say, infamous line. He's not the Messiah. He's just a very naughty boy. From the Life of Brian movie.

[ 6 : 32 ] Now that whole movie is called a satire, but I think it's just hit. It just ridicules from beginning to end the life and death of Jesus. It was always and remains one of the most popular movies ever produced.

This week, John McEnroe published what can only be called a vitriolic YouTube directed at Margaret Court.

Begging her tennis fraternity not to acknowledge her Grand Slam victory 50 years ago. He called her, among other things, a despicable homophobe.

Inutterably offensive. Why? Because she spoke against homosexuality. And the irony for me was, you have this vitriolic outpouring from McEnroe, which I would call hate speech.

And it's applauded Margaret Court, demonized. And again this week, Israel Folau back in the news.

[ 7 : 46 ] He's been forced to sign a contract and promised that he would make no public comment as a Christian in order to play rugby league again. And the Catalan Dragons team that have signed him have been absolutely pilloried in the press this week.

While only two hours later, after the news broke of him being signed by the Catalan Dragons, the Wigan Warriors and another team in the same comp advertised that their next game was going to be dedicated to gay pride.

And everybody got on board and said, what a perfect response. One is silenced. One is encouraged to flaunt their position.

Why is it like this? Well, we have the answer direct from Jesus' own lips in these verses this morning. But before I jump into the passage, I need to do some revision because it's six weeks since we've been in John's biography of Jesus.

As Rob introduced, chapter 14 to 16 is called Jesus' Farewell Discourse. For obvious reasons, he had told his disciples that he was going away.

[ 9 : 05 ] Meaning he was about to go to his death in order to achieve God's purpose in salvation. But we shouldn't think of the farewell discourse as a warm and fuzzy hug and kiss goodbye like you would dropping the kids off to school.

The right picture of the farewell discourse is that of the supreme commander briefing his troops before the decisive battle in a war.

That's the picture you need to have in mind. This is serious stuff. The stakes are high. The disciples, we're told, were confused and terrified about Jesus going away.

We can understand that. So Jesus walks them through what was about to happen in the immediate future, that is in the next 24, 48 hours, and in the longer term to them as disciples of Jesus.

And everything he says to them is framed by the opening and closing sentences of the unit.

Chapter 14, verse 1. Do not let your hearts be troubled.

[ 10 : 16 ] And chapter 16, verse 33. I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart.

I have overcome the world. There are the brackets that frame this. This is a sobering piece of literature.

This is a sobering speech. This is a very sobering farewell briefing. Now let's jump into the passage, beginning with what can only be described as unambiguous language of Jesus and ideas that confront us.

Jesus is calling his disciples here to battle stations. If I can follow through the military metaphor. Battle stations brace for an avalanche of hatred.

In these verses, six times in the first two verses, Jesus used the word hate or hatred. And that's not just an English translation.

[ 11 : 23 ] That is fair dingam to the Greek word. It's a strong word. There's no getting around it. And this is what the disciples should expect to experience.

And then added to that, as you read through the passage, references to totally unjust persecution. Irrational persecution.

Sanctions. Injury. And even death, says Jesus. That's what you guys, my followers, have to look forward to. That's going to be the new normal for you.

As it has been, will become the normal for me. And has been the normal. You can just hear Jesus, see Jesus looking around. Eyeballing all his disciples saying, hey guys, this is not a game.

This is not a dress rehearsal. This is the real thing. Listen up. And he goes on then to, as he briefs them, to talk about hostiles.

[ 12 : 26 ] Hostiles on the outside, beyond our ranks. And he calls them here the world. Which is, in John's gospel, humankind in rebellion against God.

And six times again, the world is mentioned in these first two verses. And it's how the world will deal with his disciples.

The world is humankind in rebellion against God's rule. And it includes, therefore, my friends, the majority of our fellow Australians.

And it includes, if you move around the world, the majority of most nations around the world. What does Jesus say?

That inevitably, not possibly, but inevitably, they will unleash hatred on Christians. The followers of Jesus.

[ 13 : 28 ] And I pick up three reasons in here. Why? Why will they do that? Well, it's because, first of all, we identify with Jesus, who is God's king. Verse 18. If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.

In verse 20 and 21. Remember the word that I said to you. A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.

If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of my name.

Because they do not know him who sent me. The master-servant relationship is one of close identification.

So every part of a servant's identity and daily existence was defined by the master's character and the master's business or master's affairs.

[ 14 : 25 ] Conversely, the master of the household thought of his servants almost as an extension of himself. If things were good for him, then they were good for the servants.

And vice versa. If things went badly for the master, they were going to go badly for the servants.

The other reason, another reason is because we reflect what the world hates.

God's sovereignty. Look at verse 19. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own.

But because you're not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore, the world hates you.

The fact that Christians exist is an ongoing testimony to rebellious humankind that God is alive.

That God is powerful and active in his world in spite of every attempt of rebellious humankind to exclude him from his world. And to claim this world for ourselves.

[ 15 : 37 ] Christians are a reflection of God's sovereignty. The reality of salvation is that each Christian has been plucked out of the world, renewed, grafted into Jesus the true vine, the first part of the verses of chapter 15, and then sent back into the world as branches now of the vine.

The totally new worldview, which at every point is at odds with the attitudes, desires, thinking of those around us, the world.

We now look to Jesus for identity, meaning and purpose in life. We look to Jesus for our standard of right and wrong and truth, not to one another. And friends, get this.

Even though people will often say that they're angry at Christians because of our failings and inconsistencies, which are real, but that's not what this passage is saying to us. We are hated not because people do not see Jesus or God in us, but because they do.

Because they do see a fundamental difference in how we approach life. A fundamental difference in where we look to for the authority of life.

[ 17 : 07 ] And that difference is a reminder to them of the thing they hate, that their professed autonomy is just that, professed.

And they despise that. And the third reason Jesus gives in here, I think, is that because we're ambassadors of Jesus who exposes rebellion and sin.

So it's God's king, God's kingdom, God's sovereignty, and God's word. Perfect trifacta. Perfect hatred. For it.

Verses 21 to 25. All these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin.

But now, they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my father also. If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin.

[ 18 : 18 ] But now they have seen and hated both me and my father. But the word that is written in their law must be fulfilled.

They hated me without a cause. Jesus came into this rebellious world, calling it out at every point. Exposing sin and guilt. And leaving people without excuse for continued rebellion. No longer do people say, well, I didn't know that that's what God was like. Or I didn't know that's how God was operating.

They do now. And they refuse to accept it. Because it doesn't fit with what they think God would be like, or should be like, or should operate.

And all that Jesus taught, explained, and modeled has been recorded under God's hand in what we call the Bible.

[ 19 : 21 ] And therefore continues to challenge and expose people today as Christians. You and me proclaim the words and works of Jesus in our own generation.

So it's as if when we speak that, it again opens up this great chasm, this great divide. It challenges autonomy. People hate it.

Can't get to Jesus. Next best thing? They shoot the messenger. They can't rid themselves of the message. They shoot the messenger.

Or beat them. Or whatever else they can imagine to do to them. And rebellious humankind, and remember what I'm talking about here is really immediate.

It's around it. It might be your extended family. Some in your extended family. It might be your workmates. It might be your neighbors across the road from you. It might be the people you play sport with.

[ 20 : 27 ] Make no mistake. They actually hate their proud, self-interested, autonomous hearts and lifestyles being exposed.

And as I say, since they can't rid themselves of the message, they certainly do a good job of trying to rid themselves of the messengers. That's hostiles from without the ranks.

But then, more insidious, Jesus also warns about hostiles within the ranks. Those who love religion, but hate Jesus.

Chapter 16, verses 1 to 3. Now, at first read, this doesn't sound right. But what Jesus is saying here, if we just go on the face value of the words, what Jesus is saying here is that the worst treatment that his disciples will receive will come from those who claim to be doing God's work. Who are religious people. And particularly here, the religious people Jesus is referring to are the Jewish religious authorities. Jesus knew that within the next 24, 48 hours, he was about to experience their ruthless, senseless, violent, murderous hatred.

[ 21 : 54 ] Every bit of it done in the belief that they were God's agents protecting God's reputation. And his disciples should expect the same.

Talks here about excommunication, verse 2, from the synagogues. Now, that doesn't mean much to us in our culture. But what it meant in those days was a massive thing. Excommunication meant you were cut off from family privilege, from social privilege, from economic privilege, from religious privilege, from political privilege.

You were totally isolated. In your local town or village. But even then, says Jesus, sometimes that won't be enough.

Sometimes the hatred will burn so deep that nothing short of your death will satisfy. Man, that's a sort of hatred, isn't it?

Why would religious people be so capable of such deep hatred? Well, Jesus has been saying it right through in his ministry. For three years now, almost three years, Jesus has been saying the same thing.

[ 23 : 11 ] And he's been saying the same thing. Because Jesus has exposed their outside-in religious practices. Jesus has shown how they think that they can set the criterion for acceptance by God.

That what God will be pleased about is, one, that they're Jewish, as opposed to all the other races. Two, that they do their prayers, and they read their Bible, and they do all these religious acts, and they offer their sacrifices.

It's a self-salvation that they had concluded would meet with acceptance to God. And therefore, when they stood before God, God would actually reward them. Because, well, you're a good person.

And they thought that they were protectors of God, so Jesus had to go. But Jesus took away their control of their salvation.

They had reduced it to a relatively easy self-salvation, which rewarded their pride and their goodness. And was racially best.

[ 24 : 20 ] Jesus said, no, you're totally wrong. Totally wrong. They said, no, you must be wrong, Jesus. And they backed their own thinking.

So Jesus, his message, and all who promoted his message, would have to be silenced. We talk about people being intransigent, people being unwilling to change a position.

Doesn't come much clearer than that. And the one who shows himself to be God, repeatedly by what he does and by what he says, is rejected in favor of their own opinion about how to get to heaven.

Friends, a very simple conclusion out of all of that is don't ever expect it. Don't ever expect to be welcomed and at ease in the world.

The sad thing is we still hold out hope for that, don't we? And that's part of being relational. But we mustn't hold out so much hope that then prizes away from the truth of Jesus.

[ 25 : 51 ] Inseparably joined into Jesus, chapter 15, verses 1, following, the vine and the branches. Inseparably joined into Jesus means inevitably linked to hatred directed at him.

Now this is where we sometimes bring ourselves unstuck. Because I think we genuinely think if only people knew more about God. It's an information problem.

If only Christians could be more consistent. And less sort of public scandals. It's a perception problem. If only, if only, if only then people would believe.

More people would come to Jesus. But in fact, the opposite is the case. The more people realize what God is really like, the more they see a reflection of God in those who are the followers of Jesus, the more their hatred rises.

And they back themselves. Battle stations means being prepared.

[ 27 : 15 ] But battle stations also means weapons ready. That's actually a command in the army. Weapons ready. A good commander ensures that his troops have all the firepower they need for the incoming battle.

That means the right weapons and the proper supply of ammunition to feed those weapons. Jesus provides both defensive and offensive weapons that are never exhausted in terms of ammunition. The Holy Spirit, verses 26 and 27. But the helper, but when the helper comes, and the word there in the Greek is advocate, it's a legal term, but when the advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness. The word paraclete is like having a personal QC at your beck and call.

Whose job is to work in and through each of the followers of Jesus to assist them advocate Christ's lordship and Christ's message of salvation in this hostile world while Jesus isn't here.

[ 28 : 48 ] In Acts chapter 1, verse 8, the Holy Spirit is described there as dunamis, that is dynamite. The Holy Spirit is the power of God in salvation.

So, he is not just the perfect defense weapon who's there to assist us, he is the perfect offensive weapon. He is God's dynamite to blast through unbelief.

His witness through us as Christ's followers will achieve that which we could never achieve on our own.

Arrest and renew unbelieving, rebellious hearts, convicting them of truth, as we see next week in chapter 16, convicting them of truth in respect to sin and righteousness and judgment.

Weapons ready, the Holy Spirit. He comes from the Father so knows every part of the battle and every one of Jesus' troops personally.

[ 29 : 55 ] What a great assurance, what a great reassurance to keep us from giving up and that's exactly why these words are spoken by Jesus. To keep us from stumbling and giving up.

Hear this. With this weapon, this Holy Spirit, our Holy Spirit within us, it means this, that we are never alone in the battle.

And we are never powerless in the face of this avalanche of hatred. loving one another.

Verse 17. So it can be argued whether you put verse 17 in one passage or the other. I'm going with Don Carson. I think it's a transition verse. So it does apply to this. Jesus has said repeatedly in this section of the farewell discourse, is repeatedly said, look, you must love one another as I have loved you.

Loving one another is a key function for God's people. Loving one another. we are, in this battle, we are to be as committed to one another, to one another's safety and well-being as Christ is to us.

[ 31 : 24 ] As I say, you can read back through chapter 13 and 15 and you'll see that. Love one another as I have loved you. Friends, here's where it comes to us in this battle. We have a responsibility to support and help one another stay faithful in the face of persecution and attack.

We are to remind one another of the truth of the gospel and the certainty of Christ's victory when we're in danger of being overwhelmed by hatred.

Now this is such a big weapon in scripture, but my friends, it's a weapon we obviously just don't value that much. We are to lovingly rescue and rehabilitate those who do stumble or go astray or get battle weary.

In chapter 15, the first part of it, talks about evidence of the vine and the branches working right is abiding in Jesus. Well, I would say on the basis of that then, that failing to love one another is failing to abide in Jesus.

Even worse, I think it's equivalent to discarding the weapon issued by Jesus and actually assist the enemy in their attack.

[ 32 : 52 ] How does that assist the enemy? because before the enemy can even get to us, we have wounded one another within. Within. How awful is that?

that? But again, as I said earlier, it's so common in our local churches. Battle stations.

Weapons ready. Friends, with those two commands, we can be encouraged because everything is as King Jesus said it would be.

He knows precisely what we are going through. He's been there before us. He's not some uncaring, dispassionate commander who just sees his people as cannon fodder.

He knew what was coming. He's provided for every assurance and comfort and reassurance. But more than that, everything is going exactly to plan.

[ 34 : 11 ] Jesus said this before it all happened so that we'd know when it happened that he was in control, that he could see ahead, that he is the Lord and God that he claimed to be.

He knows the end of the battle before we even join it. He knows his troops by name.

Person by person across this universe, God's salvation purpose is being achieved in spite of all the hatred and God's glory is being displayed.

God's salvation will be achieved. Do we take collateral damage? Absolutely. But that's a battle. The battle is as Jesus said it would be.

The outcome is as Jesus promised it will be. God will be glorified. Not one of his people will be lost. God's salvation purpose will be achieved.

[ 35 : 20 ] Friends, our weapons are more than adequate for the task God calls us to. Repeated attacks have been repulsed and Christ's cause is alive as has always been.

We should be encouraged but I want to pose one question as I close. Just very briefly, just more or less to throw it into your mind to think about. Given all the above that Jesus said, what if I've not experienced that attack?

What if the attack hasn't come? Well, let me just throw a couple of things into your mind to think about. A couple of perhaps. Perhaps what it means is that what the world hears from you is no challenge.

There's a big movement among Christians today that argues that the best way we can get along Christians and see them saved is to move towards them and to find as many common points as we can so that the gap between our gospel message and their lifestyle at the moment is as small as

possible.

So we emphasize the positives of Christianity and the gospel, the things that are likely to like, and we downplay the negatives. We don't talk so much about sin and judgment and giving up autonomy and new obedience.

[ 36 : 42 ] But my friends, the divide is so great, it can't be crossed without compromise. It can't be brought together without compromise.

What the world needs is not identification with it, but a real alternative. What the world needs is counter cultural people who are prepared to stand up and say, look, this empty way of life handed down from our forefathers is just that, it's empty.

And here I offer the alternative in the Lord Jesus. Perhaps what the world sees in you is no threat. Perhaps you've thought over the years, well, okay, yes, I'm certainly wanting to be a Christian, I certainly want to and need to identify a bit with Jesus, but I'm pretty sure I can also indulge and identify a fair bit with the world and its pleasures.

The Bible warns us about that and perhaps, perhaps, lack of attack is actually evidence to you that, well, you cannot serve two masters and that one has captured your heart and it's not Jesus.

[ 38 : 02 ] Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. And finally, the most drastic one, perhaps you're still in the world and not yet in Jesus.

That's a real possibility for some here this morning. In other words, if you're in the world, then the world loves you as its own. That's what Jesus says here. Maybe that explains any lack of attack that you might perceive in your life, your circumstance.

And just to keep the military theme going to the very end. When challenged by the word of Jesus, you only have two options to answer.

Friend or foe. Let me pray. Lord, we pray that your word might not be stolen away from us this morning, either because of the heat or because of circumstances happening among us right at this moment.

We pray, Lord, that the evil one might not be able to do that. Pray, Lord, that we might be confronted by it and rightly encouraged by it, Lord, as your people. But, Lord, I pray also that any here this morning who are not your people might be rightly challenged by it and confronted by it, Lord, as a decision that is yet to be made.

[ 39 : 37 ] Will they stand with Jesus? Or will they stand with the world, even though there is no excuse left for sin, no excuse left for rebellion, no ability to plead ignorance, only the fearsome prospect of having to give account to you for having ignored the truth of Jesus.

Help us, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.