

Get ready to be hated

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 February 2025

Preacher: Chris Lowe

[0 : 00] Thank you, Alistair. What do you make of that? I mean that changes the mood this morning, doesn't it? So Jesus is speaking here to people who are in Jesus, to people who are attached to the vine, to people who are loved by God the Father and loved by Jesus the Son. And the message of Jesus to people who are in him this morning is, let me just put it very clearly, the world hates you.

Did you notice that? So just look at this in the passage, verse 18, if the world hates you. Actually it's not just if, because down at the end of verse 19, that is why the world hates you.

So Jesus is talking here to disciples, to people who follow Jesus. And well, it's not everyone who's here this morning and not everyone who comes to church follows Jesus, we know that. But here's you or some of you. And do you see what Jesus is saying in these verses? He's saying that the world, the world hates you. So in John's Gospel here, the world, it's not talking about the rocks and the grass and all that kind of thing. It's talking about people, society in rebellion against God.

People who don't and won't follow Jesus, the world. And Jesus says here, the world hates you. The world hates is like detest or abhor. Hates. In fact, it's more than that that's going on here.

Because did you notice in verse 20, if they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. They will run after you and try and get you. Or even over the page in chapter 16, verse 2.

[1 : 54] In fact, the time is coming when anybody who kills you will think they're offering a service to God. Jesus is speaking here in the upper room. It's just the night before he dies. And he's teaching his disciples, his followers, and he's teaching them what life is going to be like after he's gone and returned to heaven and before he comes again in the future. He's speaking to the 12, the 11, Judas has just gone then. But these are also words for us today because we, who put our faith in Jesus, we are his disciples between the time when Jesus has returned to heaven and when he comes again. And the message here is very, very clear and straightforward. The world will hate you, persecute you, even kill you.

I don't know if that's news to you. I think when you're a child growing up, there is a moment where you suddenly realise, goodness, that could be the case. I was just chatting to someone the other day who said their children had been listening to Horrible Histories. I don't know if you ever watched that, Horrible Histories. And there's a song called The Evil Emperor's Song. And I think I've got it here.

Oh, you can't, I'm afraid you can't really see, but the Emperor Nero is there doing a fun song saying, I just burnt Christians for no reason. And the children were like, what? What's going on?

But what happened under Nero a long, long time ago is true. Because around the world today, there are people who are put behind bars because they follow Jesus. Not because they've been bad or naughty, but because they say they're Christians in Pakistan and Hong Kong and elsewhere. That can happen around the world. It doesn't really happen in the UK. But come closer, a bit closer to home, and understand that it is still the case that the world will hate Christians.

It can be true in public, where on the news and what's broadcast by the government, there's no little love at all for Christians. It can be true in your workplace. You might know that. The reason why you're tempted to be a little bit quiet about being a Christian is because you know that people hate what Christians stand for. It can be true in your school as well. It can be true amongst your friends. That when someone discovers you're a follower of Jesus, maybe they point, maybe they mock, maybe they hate. Something so very important to understand that this is what will happen. I think in the UK, probably about 100 years ago, broadly, Christians were all right, and it was a good thing.

[4 : 39] And this is just about me. But if you want to become a vicar, a minister 100 years ago, good, good profession. Probably in the 1990s, or maybe around then, it's a bit like, well, do what you want, you know, whatever. If you want to be a Christian by yourself. You want to be a vicar? All

right.

It's not good. Probably in the 2020s, to be a Christian or to be a minister is bad because you're on the wrong side of history, the wrong side of morality, the stuff you believe is nasty and against what the world says. Jesus says here to Christians, the world will hate you. Now, if that's the case, what do you need to know? Like you're an eight-year-old girl or you're a 60-year-old woman or a 50-year-old woman. What do you need to know? If following Jesus means that at some point the world will hate you, what do you need to know? Well, Jesus tells us. Okay, here we go. Let's dive into the passage and learn a few things from what's in here. If the world hates you, says Jesus, verse 18, keep in mind that it hated me first. The world hates you as it hates Jesus. So let me ask a question. This is a hands-up sort of shout-out question. How did the world hate Jesus? Let's say that together. I mean, what, how would you have known? How was it that the world hated Jesus? You know, put a hand up or shout-out,

I don't mind. Anyone say? They put him on the cross, that's right. So through his life, they hated him, tried to stone him, tried to get him, and then they put him on the cross, Jesus, because they hated him.

Now, the connection between Jesus and us is this, that we over here, we who are disciples, we belong to Jesus. So just as the world hates Christians, the world hates Jesus. Now look at what it says here.

If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. And that's true. Say that, well, let's say you play football or you're a supporter. You play football for Everton. It's a club in Liverpool. Boo, exactly, says Mark. He's already joining in. And the Everton supporters, when they see the Everton man come out on the pitch and play, they sing loudly at the top of their voices, he's one of our own. He's one of our own. Oh, player for Everton, he's one of our own. He's one of our own. We love him. But when the Everton player gets sold to Liverpool, well, things change then.

[7 : 28] They did love him because he was one of their own. But now he's moved to play for Liverpool and they hate him. They hate him. It says here, if you belong to the world, people who follow Jesus, it would love you as its own.

As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. Do you see that? This is what it's like for people who follow Jesus. So just over here, there's all the master field and so on. I've actually got a few little people hidden in here.

It's going to be a bit of a shock for those people who are. But just over here, you're not going to see, is Sam Horton. There you are, Sam. And just over here, actually stuck here, is Zoe.

And when you turn to Jesus Christ, you are chosen out of the world. There you go, Sam. I'm putting you on top of you on the picture. And I chose you because you were the full bodies that I could see on the front here. And here's you, Zoe. You've been chosen out of the world.

You play for another team now. You're not their own. In fact, Jesus says you are my own. And that is why the world will hate you.

[8 : 44] Remember what I told you, verse 20, a servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. The world hates you as it hates Jesus. But there's another reason as well.

Look at verse 21. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. The world will hate Christians because the world hates Jesus and the world hates his father.

They didn't know my father. Whoops.

That's what Jesus is saying here. Do you see in the verses? They will treat you this way because of my name, because they don't know the one who sent me. See, Jesus came into the world and he spoke words from God.

And as he did, how did people treat Jesus? They hated him. Jesus said to them, if God were your father, you would love me. For I came from the father and now I'm here.

[9 : 59] But Jesus spoke so clearly from the father that they hated him. But they've got no excuse for that. And in verse 23, whoever hates me hates my father as well.

In fact, Jesus came into the world and did the works of God. the father. And yet they saw and they hated both me and my father, says Jesus.

But this was to fulfill what is written in the law. They hated me without reason. If you've ever heard a talk on this kind of thing before, but do you see what Jesus is saying here? Just taking us through

the verses.

If the world hates you, people who follow Jesus, and it will, it is because the world hates Jesus and the world hates the father.

What are we meant to do with that? Here's the first thing I want to say this morning. Do not be surprised.

[10:57] Do not be surprised if the world hates you. If you stand up and say, I'm a Christian and I follow Jesus, it can be such a shock if people don't love you and like you.

We like people to love us and like us, but Jesus is telling them here because he wants them to not be surprised. Don't be surprised. Say you're a young child in primary school or maybe you're coming up to secondary.

You go to secondary school and people ask you what you did at the weekend and you say, I went to church. And they say, are you a Christian? And they say, yes. They're not going to throw their arms around you and kiss you and love you at your workplace.

Don't be surprised if the world hates you. But secondly, know that it's not personal. Like none of us like to be hated.

We all like to be liked. Sometimes Christians can be a real pain in the neck and the reason people don't like you is because you're not a very nice person. I mean, that does happen. But if people don't like you because you follow Jesus and you speak about him, you've got to know that it's not personal.

[12:08] It's not about you. It's because you've been chosen out of the world and you belong to Jesus Christ. There's a verse in 1 Peter that says, if you're insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed for the spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

Well, this is where we've got to. This first side of the page we'll turn over in a minute. Do you see what we're talking about this morning? Jesus is teaching his disciples. It's very striking this. The people over here, this is a world of love.

The Father who loves the Son, the Son who loves those who are his own and the Father loves you and Father and Son come and make their home in you.

That's what John 14 is all about. I'd love to stick this on here but I can't. This is a community of love. But this community of love will be hated by the world.

Don't be surprised but it's not personal. Now here's the question as we draw things to a close. What are you going to do? What are you going to do if in your life you discover that the world hates Christians?

[13:22] Okay, here's some options I think. If you know that around the world Christians get put in prison. If you know that people will point and hate what will you do?

There's the first thing you could do. Can you see that? You could fight back. Like I'm not sure any of us are particularly those kind of people. But it's not the case that when the world hates you you go and bomb them.

We don't do that. We don't fight back. That's not the way to respond when the world hates you. I guess there's another option for what you can do. You can hide away. Imagine you're a family and because you know that the world hates Christians you're very strong about following Jesus in your head and around your breakfast table but you basically lock your doors and you won't go outside. That's not the way to respond. You can fight back. You can hide away so that people will never know you and never hate you. Here's what a lot of Christians do I think.

You can blend in. Let me just not mention who I am. Let me try and look and be as much as possible like the people around like a chameleon against the background.

[14:38] I'll blend in and then maybe people won't hate me as Jesus says. But Jesus says here those are not the options to go down. Don't fight back.

Don't hide away. Don't blend in. Just turn over the page and see this as we draw things to a close. What should we do? Jesus says testify. Testify about Jesus.

Verse 26. When the advocate comes whom I will send you from the Father the Spirit of truth he will testify about me and you also must testify for you've been with me from the beginning.

Jesus is speaking firstly to the 12 in the upper room the 11 but this command to testify not just for them but for every believer down the ages.

Testify. I don't know what you think that sounds like. Testify simply means bear witness. Talk about Jesus. Speak about Jesus. If the world hates you speak about Jesus.

[15:47] There are different ways of doing that. I'm not sure many people do this but you could be someone who goes around with a megaphone. Sophie and I were in Peterborough city centre a few Saturdays ago and there was someone standing there not being unkind saying talking about Jesus.

That is a way of testifying about him but it's not the only way. If any of us can remember back to John chapter 4 which we looked at ages ago and there was a Samaritan woman.

She was just a woman by herself and she met Jesus and then having met Jesus and encountered him she came back to the town where she lived and she said to the people come see a man who told me all that I ever did.

Could this be the Christ? testifying. And it says later in that chapter many of the Samaritans believed in Jesus because of the woman's testimony. This is testifying.

You say to people around you I've discovered something about Jesus and I follow him. Come and see. Come and see this man who knows me through and through and has saved me.

[17:00] Come and see this man who is the saviour of the world. Testify. That's what the Samaritan woman did. That's what just a person can do to say to your friend come and see.

You could we're going to talk about this in a few weeks you could use a little booklet called the word one to one. You can't see Jesus today but you can listen to his words. Can I tell you about him?

Would you like to hear about Jesus and what he means to me and who he is?

You can do that as an adult you can do that as a child. Come and see. Can I tell you about Jesus? Testify about me.

Now here's the thing when you speak about Jesus what will happen? the world will hate you and yet at the same time as you speak about Jesus Christ God will be at work and he will draw people to Jesus Christ.

That is as you speak and as you testify even though the world may hate you there will be those who hear and as they do they are chosen out of the world there's no blue tack on that they're chosen out of the world and they come and join this community of love.

[18:28] The Samaritan woman shared her testimony and the whole town or many from the town believed and that is what the Lord God calls us to do. This is what we're talking about this morning living as a Christian in a world that hates Jesus and hates Christians don't hide away testify and here's a last thing a very last thing from these verses testify about Jesus and don't fall away.

As Jesus arrives at the start of chapter 16 he says all this I have told you so that you will not fall away. In fact they will put you out of the synagogue and the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they're offering a service to God and they'll do such things because they've not known the Father or me I've told you this so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them.

Jesus speaks here for our warning and for our encouragement. Do you belong to Jesus? Are you a part of this community of love in the vine loved by the Father and Jesus for all eternity?

The Father loves you the world will hate you so don't be surprised but testify and speak about Jesus Christ and in fact I guess many of us will have come to the Lord Jesus Christ because someone testified to us they spoke to us about Jesus and as they did with us so we will do with others and the world may hate but the Lord will work so be warned be encouraged testify about Jesus and don't fall away well I'm going to pray and then we are going to sing together let's pray Almighty God thank you for this in a sense shocking yet realistic teaching from our Lord Jesus thank you that you have chosen so many of us out of the world to belong to you and your son for all eternity thank you that though the world may hate the message of the gospel is true and thank you that as with the help of the Holy

Spirit we testify and speak about Jesus thank you that you in your mercy will draw hundreds thousands millions to Jesus Christ to know him for all eternity please make us a church who will testify and make us a group of people who will never fall away in Jesus name Amen who will who will