

Being Hated For Jesus Christ

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Preacher: Harry Robinson

[0 : 00] We turn to your word. We ask that you will speak to us through your word and accomplish in our hearts what your word claims of our hearts.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. One or two things that I want to tell you first is that some happy things happened to me in the course of a week hanging around this place.

One of the happy things that happened this week was somebody whom I heard of but not met before came to visit and I wanted you to meet him too.

So Jeff, will you come up and let me introduce you to people. Jeff is the rector of Lynnhurst, Ontario where I...

Scott, do you recognize me? Yep. Will you do it? Good. Well, Lynn, you won't be surprised. Tell us about how you first got to Vancouver and how you got back to Kingston, Ontario and what you're doing now.

[1 : 08] And you in sort of a brief summary. You asked the wrong person to give brief summaries. How I first got here? Well, no, no. Just to Vancouver. That is the city general.

Well, I came here to go to Regent College. I was going to do an MCS. I ended up doing an MDiv. Squeezed the three-year program into four years. So it was pretty good. And then I went off to a little community church in Lansdowne, which is about a half an hour drive from Kingston.

They found and I found that that wasn't where I belonged. And I soul-searched a lot and came back to my Anglican roots and was ordained in September into the Aconet.

And will be ordained as a priest here in another few weeks back in Kingston. So that's as short as I can get. Tell us about your family. Family? Yeah.

My wife, Beryl, is from Vancouver. Has never forgiven me for taking her away from it. These last four winters in Ontario are back on holiday. We have two small boys, Jonathan, two and a half, and Christopher, just a year old.

[2 : 14] And they were just too tired to come tonight. I would have brought them up. What are you doing in Vancouver? Holiday and going to the land pain conference this next week.

Which you'll see written up in the bulletin if you don't know about the Indian pain conference. And when are you being ordained? June 24th. That's more or less the same week that Steve Andrews is being ordained in Halifax and Drew McDonald is being ordained in Halifax.

So we must keep Jeff and Drew and Steve in mind, the security of others who are being ordained. But Jeff, I'm persuaded to come to the coffee hour afterwards so you can ask him some more questions.

Thanks, Jeff. Now, my job is to talk to you about John chapter 15, verses 18 to 25.

So if you will look in your Bibles at John chapter 15, verses 18 to 25, you'll see that it's a small treatise on hate.

[3 : 31] And so I am now going to expand to you on a small treatise on hate and how it works. And this is a kind of unusual thing, I think, if you look at it, because it raises, I think, some very disturbing problems.

And so I hope you will read it and be very disturbed with me about it and see where that leads us to. Chapter 15, verse 18, if the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.

So that this is, there's a very interesting thing about it that, you know where it says you will, in the Sermon on the Mount, it says you will hate the one and love the other.

Well, they say that that use of hate means, refers to a kind of, it's an exaggerated concept of hate. But this is real hate.

Real, deep down hate. And it's there, and not only is it deep down hate, but what it says here is that it's in a tense which suggests that it's an enduring hatred.

[4 : 57] And the concept of enduring hatred goes all the way through this passage. The world has an enduring hatred for Christ, basically.

And that's a wonderful contrast. If you look at the verses just before verse 18, which tell you, this I command you, to love one another.

Now, what it means, it looks like, is though love is here, and that's the command, and that's the experience of the Christian life in fellowship with the disciples and believers of Christ, there is love. That love is the will of God, it is the purpose of God, it is the command of God, it is the relationship we have to one another. It's love. And that's what the church is, the spirit of love poured into our hearts.

That's what the community is all about. That's how it's described. But you enjoy that in the midst of a world which has an enduring hatred for the one who hated you, who hated Christ.

[6 : 28] Sorry. The world has an enduring hatred for the one who hated you, who is Jesus Christ. So that it goes on to tell you that if you were a member of this world, this is where you really belong, and I can't help looking at this passage and wondering about how important it is to us in this part of the world to win the acknowledgement of the world around us.

The world is to love and respect us because of our gifts, because of our ability, because of our dedication, because of our sincerity. The world is to respect and love us for those reasons.

But the difficulty seems to be that if you do that, it's because you have, your real membership is in the world. And if you're in the world, it says the world loves its own.

You'll be interested to know that the word which says love one another is the word agape. The love which the world has for you is the word phileo.

You know, the sort of friendship word, but not the giving love which is at the basis of Christ's love for us.

[7 : 57] So, that's what it's saying to us. And I, I don't know what you're going to do with this because somehow you have to come to terms with it.

I want to read to you a passage which, which has been helpful to me in thinking this through. You know, the part where it says, if you were of the world, the world would love its own because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world.

Therefore, the world hates you. The, the, the world's acknowledgement of the validity of the Christian faith is marked by a genuine and enduring hatred for it.

I don't think you can get around that. You can't ameliorate that statement on the basis of this passage. Now, some of us may be sick and enjoy hatred.

And I don't think that's what it's encouraging us to do. I think what it's saying is that, that there is something profoundly at fault.

[9 : 20] It's almost as though there are two ways that you could come experientially into faith. One is you could experience the love of those who belong to Jesus Christ.

Another powerful experiential reality would be experiencing the hatred of the world for Jesus Christ. Both those things could happen.

There is an eminent, I guess he's eminent, psychiatrist who was written up in Christianity Today magazine. And it's a, it's a wonderful story, the story of how he came quite by accident to discover something about Jesus Christ in a way that his nominal Episcopalian background would never have led him to.

And it was when he became involved with migrants and poor blacks and he started tape recording conversations with them, has written a lot of books on the basis of those tape recordings, has won a Pulitzer Prize, and is now a professor at Harvard University teaching English literature.

Partly because he makes such bold statements as all of you who are in the social sciences might enjoy this statement and learn a little bit of hatred on your own.

[11 : 07] He asks the question, what transformed a physician and social scientist into a devotee of literature? Cole answers, a man like Tolstoy knew more psychology than the whole 20th century social science scene will ever know.

Live it up, all you social scientists there. That was his statement. He goes on to say, all this stuff about the stages of dying coming out now, why not just go back and read the death of Ivan Ilyich? It said everything. And who has added any wisdom to the field of marital problems since Anna Karenina? I simply wandered from one place to the next teaching these novels and trying to, in a way, undo the devil in the medical school, law school, and business school.

Well, he's come to this in this peculiar way, and I think it has to do with experiencing hatred for Jesus Christ.

Now, notice that the hatred for Jesus Christ is very much attached to those who belong to him when it says, if the world hates you, know that it hated me before it hated you.

[12:36] In other words, if you have grounds to be hated that you have generated yourself, well, that's your problem. Live with it. On the other hand, if you are experiencing the hatred, the enduring hatred that is spoken of here because of your relationship to Jesus Christ, then you'll no doubt find this passage a very great comfort.

word. And, uh, what he, when he, when he goes on to describe this, he says, um, the reason that they hate you is because I chose you out of the world because Jesus has called us to belong to him.

and that's why they hate us so that it's really for Jesus Christ that they hate the disciples of Christ because this is addressed primarily to the disciples.

The difficulty with us in Vancouver, of course, is that people don't hate disciples of Christ. They're just totally indifferent. But, uh, Jesus goes on to say if they persecuted me, they will persecute you. If they kept my word, they will keep yours also. But all this they will do to you on my account because they do not know him who sent me.

[14:19] Remember when, when Paul was on the road to Damascus with his warrant for the arrest of those who were followers of the way? and as he traveled down the road, he was met.

You know, at noon I saw a light above the brightness of the sun. And he was stopped and he later testified that at that moment he was confronted by Jesus Christ.

And Jesus Christ said to him, Paul, Paul, why do you persecute the Christians? He didn't say that. He said, why do you persecute me? That total identity that Christ has with his followers so that he saw the persecution of the Christians as the persecution of Jesus Christ.

And that's, I think, what's behind what John means here when he writes if they are recording the words of Jesus. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you.

[15:30] If they keep my word, they will keep yours also. And that's generally, though that may look like a very positive statement to you, it's generally regarded by the commentators to be, if I would give you an expanded translation of it, if they kept my word and they didn't, they will keep your word and they won't.

I mean, that it has that meaning behind it. And the reason is because they do not know who sent me, the one who sent me.

Then he said, if I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sinned. sinned. But now they have no excuse for their sin.

And if you move quickly to verse 24, you'll see a parallel verse which says, if I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sinned.

And so it is the words and works of Jesus Christ that have precipitated the hatred for Jesus Christ. that's why they hate him because of his words and because of his works.

[16:59] And this is where I want to read you this passage which I found very helpful when defining what Christian faith is and how it's to be understood in our world.

If you the Christian faith is grounded in the belief that there is a God who dwells in eternity and who has revealed himself to men within the space time framework.

It is therefore primarily metaphysical that is Christian faith and regards this natural world as the creature of supernatural forces who are at liberty to use it as they might choose.

With this outlook miracles and the like were not only possible but actually to be expected a notion which the rationalistic mind could not contemplate.

Now I think basically that's the reason for the rejection of the words and works of Jesus. It's based on the fact that the rational mind cannot contemplate the possibility of Jesus being who he claimed to be and of not being able to see in the words and works of Jesus the reality of the father because you notice how it says about this hatred which it is that it extends to the father as well.

[18:56] He who hates me hates my father also. And it's almost as though you put together a beautiful design.

you had the working drawings done. You had the concept all worked out. You had everything laid out and you were all ready to go ahead with it.

And somebody came along and said you know that won't work. You're going to have to start over again. You know what you do to it. That happened.

We experienced that over and over again in our lives. Somebody who comes along and does that. And Jesus is by definition an interferer who comes to our lives and takes all the dreams and all the proposals and all the ideas and all the self-centeredness and all the magnificent lies and delusions with which we surround ourselves and say that won't work to them.

He says it very simply in a parable perhaps. or in demonstration of a reality which transcends the reality that you carefully guarded yourself with.

[20 : 17] He bursts your little balloon and you genuinely hate him for it because he interferes with your life and with mine.

and that's how he does it. And what the world experiences of Jesus Christ is not hard for us to understand simply because I think we know where hatred comes from.

We know how it works in our lives. We know how terrible it is to have someone come along and with a word tell you that all your plans and all your proposals and all your high flown self centered concepts don't really count then you hate him.

I take in a lot of university missions in my day and some of them were very hard work and particularly if you're not very clever at doing things like that it becomes extremely hard work trying to deal with it and confronting people of very high intellectual talent but I quietly rejoice only in one fact and that is that very often you experience the reality of a hatred for Jesus Christ which I couldn't have stirred up because I wasn't smart enough to but they understood the threat of the person of Christ his words and his words and so that they you know you experience I mean it was I suppose it's a kind of backwards comfort to take that that kind of thing happened at

Lakehead University we had meetings in the sort of main auditorium the main hallway where all the students gathered at noon hour and they had a whole bunch of they were very strong on Maoists then and they had a lot of students at Lakehead University who were devoted Maoists and they came out and chewed me up and spat me out every noon hour which was as I say great fun if you recognize the reality of what was happening that they are persecuting the person of Jesus Christ they reject his word and his works the interesting thing about this that I just want you to see is the thing that concerns me most about it is that is our world which is so tolerant and so broad minded and so accommodating and so reassuring that this kind of hatred is virtually unknown as I say they're concerned only with sort of maintaining they're concerned they're concerned only with maintaining the general sort of upbeat nature of things and the concept of enduring hatred for Jesus [23 : 50] Christ doesn't occur to them I want just to read you part of this article about Robert Coles and how he discovered this reality he says his books are filled with verbal snapshots of people who somehow rise above the misery of their lives towards grace they talked to him about God so often Coles began going to church with the poor at first the heavy emotionalism troubled him he sat in the services listened to the singing watched the minister in the congregation with a cool and dispassionate eye I've seen those in church he was looking for telltale signs of the psychosocial forces at work in the religion of the poor but again and again he saw migrants poor blacks rednecks profoundly changed by what happened within their churches something of the great of great power was set loose in those services he had to admit to himself something not easily explained by the jargon he had learned in medical school tired people came away renewed oppressive pain seemed to lessen and hatred melted a little the poor had no answers for the unfairness of life was it just an accident of birth that had condemned them to a cycle of suffering and poverty they had little chance to contemplate such questions but when asked about the source of strength in their lives they often pointed to Jesus

Cole reflected on the peculiar circumstances of life God God had chosen in coming to earth as man to them the people who appeared in this book migrants sharecroppers mountaineers God's suffering required no complicated explanation nor does Christ's pain and humiliation his harassment and his exile his final disgrace at the hands of his persecutors all of whom were avowedly high-minded powerful practical and full of pieties Christ's suffering is any suffering is her parents suffering what they had to face each day he had faced before them he too was acquainted with grief well it's an interesting interesting story but what it suggests and what I suggest to you in trying to think through and pray through this passage of scripture is that if you feel at any time something of the reality of what

Jesus Christ suffered in your life when you feel it in your life what he suffered in his life he who was reproached and he who was hated and he whose words and works were despised by his contemporaries if you experience that it's probable at that point that you draw closer to Jesus Christ than at any other point in your life you may by God's grace experience something of the love of the community of the Holy Spirit which is a Christian fellowship but there is as well ample opportunity for you to experience the hatred men have for Jesus Christ and this passage ends with one line which I want just to point out to you which says and they quote the scripture they hated me without a cause that is they had cause in their own hearts to hate him but they could find no cause in him to hate him and so the world's whole relationship to Jesus

Christ is summed up with that one sentence of scripture they hated him without a cause and there's a strange and wonderful paradox I mean I think of it as a paradox in scripture because as they hated him without a cause so the other side of the story which is based on exactly the same Greek word says something else happened in the world without a cause and it's this they are justified by his grace without a cause you see what happens that at the very heart of human experience there is man who hates God without a cause and

God who justifies man without a cause and that's the point at which we discover the reality of the person of Jesus Christ when those two things come together the hate without a cause meets the justifying love and grace of God God which is without a cause the hate that we have for him comes from our hearts the justifying saving love of God comes from his heart and finds no cause in us as our hate finds no cause in him the human

[31 : 02] Will you kneel?

Let's take a moment to reflect on the word that has been shared with us.

To reflect on our own pride and self-sufficiency. Our hatred of God.

And on his immense and measurable grace and love for us.

It is to this same God that we draw near in faith.

[32 : 41] and we share with him our burdens, the concerns that weigh us down.

And it is in an attitude of prayer and recognition of God's desire to relieve us of those burdens, of those cares, and to equip us to deal with all that goes on in our lives with his strength upholding us.

And so we come to him and and pray in the words of the general intercession.

Remember, Lord, your people bowed before you and those who are absent through age, sickness, or any other cause.

Care for the infants. Guide the young. Support the aged. Inspire the faint-hearted.

[34 : 15] And bring the wandering to your fold. Journey with the travelers. Encourage the oppressed.

Defend the widows. Deliver the captives. Heal the sick. Strengthen all who are in tribulation, necessity, or distress.

Remember for good those who love us and those who hate us and those who have asked us unworthy as we are to pray for them.

Remember especially, Lord, those whom we have forgotten. For you are the helper of the helpless, the savior of the lost, the refuge of the wanderer, and the healer of the sick.

You know the need of all and have heard each prayer. Save us in your merciful, loving kindness and eternal love through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

[35 : 35] Amen. As we consider that today is the birthday of the church, the day of Pentecost, when many years ago the Holy Spirit was imparted to the believers in Jerusalem, let us think of the mission that God has given to us as his children.

This desire that all men might come into a living and loving relationship with him through his son Jesus.

And as we reflect on that mission, as we pray for the part that we may play in that, we pray together.

Draw your church together, O Lord, into one great company of disciples, following our Lord Jesus Christ into every walk of life, serving him in his mission to the world and witnessing to his love on every continent and island.

we ask this in his name and for his sake. Amen. And this evening, as we reflect on those who have gone out from our midst, the names that were mentioned earlier, Brian and Brian Telfer and his wife and family, Kathy Nickel and others, we take the opportunity to pray for another person who has

been with us for the last year, Matthew Evans, and I ask Matthew to come forward so that we can pray for him as he leaves us this week to travel to England and then to return to Australia.

[37 : 57] We were very thankful for his ministry in our midst. And if you would join with me on the prayer book, the maroon book in your pew, on page 733.

Matthew has been very much a part of our family here at St. John's, and particularly in evening service and amongst the work with the young people. And we really have appreciated very much God sending him to us to challenge us.

He undertook the come and see service that went on during the mission this spring. And it was a great outreach in the parish. And we really thank God for the gifts that he's given Matthew.

And so as he has been a part of our family for this past year, we send him off as a member of our family and hope that we see him again someday. And we say together, let us say together the prayer at the bottom of page 733.

Prayer for one who is leaving home. O God, the refuge and strength of all who put their trust in thee, unto thy gracious care and keeping, we commit thy servant Matthew, now going forth from us.

[39 : 37] Give him courage, prudence, and self-control. raise up for him good friends, preserve him from loneliness, keep him, we beseech you, under the protection of your good province, and make him have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. Amen. I just want to say a couple of brief words.

Last July, I left Australia to come to Vancouver, and I didn't know anybody in Vancouver, and I'd never travelled in the northern hemisphere before, so it was just me and a couple of suitcases, and that was about it.

But I had a feeling when I left Sydney that God would like after me, and I had a number of goals that I wanted to achieve in the time I was away, and one of the important goals, one of those more important goals was to be open to God's spirit leading.

And I had some sense of a pilgrimage, so I was leaving some difficult circumstances in Sydney, and I felt that it would be a productive time for me somehow.

[41 : 12] It was sort of a step in faith. I stepped out, I was taking a risk, I suppose, by leaving my job, and I sold my car, and family and friends. I can sell my family and friends, I just sold the car.

And I left family and friends to come to a strange land. But I felt that for some reason, I don't know why, God had his hand on me and was sort of, I felt like he was telling me to do that.

I don't want to make it sound too sort of airy-fairy, but that was my experience, that it seemed to be that God was telling me to do it, in the circumstances of my life.

So I did. I suppose I like taking risks, because I think sometimes when you take risks, a lot can be gained.

of my life. So anyway, I landed up here at St. John's, and a great blessing it's been for me.

[42 : 21] I had no idea that this church was here. I just sort of found myself here after a couple of nights in Vancouver. And I remember the first Sunday morning when I came to the 10 o'clock service with Wayne, I think it was with me that day and I sort of walked in and I just felt the spirit in the church and everyone started singing and the choir processed in.

And I really felt the spirit even stronger then. I just sort of knew then that I would make St. John's my home more or less, my spiritual home more or less for the time that I was in Vancouver.

I just felt the hand of the Lord upon me that morning when I was here. And it's been a very blessed time. I can't go into all the circumstances of the things that I've been through or worked through for the last 10 months or so.

But they've been significant and it's been a very blessed time. And I want to thank you all for your very warm welcome to me and your prayer support and your encouragement and friendship over the last 10 months.

And I will miss you all very much. You'll be in my thoughts and my prayers. And I know that this is sort of the first half of my pilgrimage, the second half to be in England where I'm hoping that God will once again bless me somehow.

[43 : 57] I don't know how but I'm sure that he will somehow. And I think that I will be able to treasure my experiences here in St.

John's for some time to come and to put them to good use when I go back to Australia. So thank you very much.

And thank you Harry. Let's join together and sing hymn number 310.

Let's join together and sing hymn number 310. ailing that up in Ga Your mother and raj