



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 15:18–16:4

“The Believer in the World”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are reading for the Scripture reading this morning John 15, verse 18 through chapter 16, verse 4. And for some of you who may not have been here two weeks ago when we looked at John 15:1-17, let me just give this simple reminder so that as we read you may follow with a little more consecutive sense of what is transpiring in our Lord’s teaching. He has, in the preceding verses, laid a bit of stress upon the fact that he is the vine, we are the branches, using a figure to refer to the union that exists between the Lord and the apostles and, of course, not only the apostles, but those who follow the apostles, the church of Jesus Christ. He’s laid stress upon the fact that out of this union and out of this union alone can come spiritual fruit. He has said that out of this union comes joy. He has said out of this union comes effectual prayer.

When I was going through theological seminary Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer used to like to refer to the results that come from the union with Christ—I hope I can remember this on the spur of the moment—but as being joy celestial, fruit perpetual and prayer effectual. I did remember it.

Now these are the things that result from the union that we enjoy with Jesus Christ.

Now the section that follows is a section that flows naturally out of that and our Lord speaks about what will happen when believers who are united with the Lord by his grace seek to live this kind of life in the midst of the world. And so in the 18th verse of chapter 15 Jesus continues his instruction of the eleven.

“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of 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 also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they 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 had not had sin: 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 none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.”

One might wonder how the Lord Jesus could say, “If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin.” Theologians like to speak of material sin and formal sin. So far as Judaism was concerned, a person who followed Judaism rather than Christianity was following a system that was false. And because they were following the system that was false, they did have sin. In other words, the system was a sinful system. Just as any kind of system which seeks to find justification by works is a sinful system. That's its material content. It is contrary to the will of God and therefore it is sinful. But theologians also have spoken of formal sin. That is, sin based upon that which has been communicated. And in the case of these, since the Lord Jesus had not come and since there had not been communicated to them the message concerning Christ they could be said to have no sin. That is, formal sin, understanding of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now that's one way of looking at that. There is another way of looking at it. And that is that when the Lord Jesus said, “They had not had sin,” and he says it twice in verse 22 and 24, he may have been speaking about the sin, the specific sin about which he will speak in the next chapter, the sin of unbelief in him. And so that may be what he has in mind particularly, so far as the fact

that all men are sinners is concerned. That has been specifically set out in Scripture from the beginning of the word of God. In the 26th verse we read,

“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 ye have been with me from the beginning. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.”

What he means by that simply is that the hatred of the world was directed toward him personally as long as he was there. It was not necessary for him to warn them at that point of what would happen when he would no longer be with him. But now is the time to do that. May the Lord bless this reading of his word and let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are thankful to Thee for the privilege of the ministry of the word of God. And we are grateful for the way in which Thou hast unfolded to us the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ that had reference to the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Lord, we are grateful to Thee for this magnificent unfolding of the truth that the Lord Jesus gave to the eleven. And we thank Thee for the way in which it anticipates so much of the teaching of the apostles that was given after the time of the day of Pentecost. And we rejoice in all of the provision that Thou hast made for us. Warning us of the things that would come in our pathway, seeking to support us in the midst of the testimony that Thou hast called us to give, enlightening us with regard to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, with regard to the purpose of God in

the present age, comforting us and consoling us with the knowledge of the presence of the Lord and the experiences of this present life, and giving us great hope when we think about the future and the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God and the eternal state. What a glorious thing it is to belong to the family of God. And today, Lord, we are grateful to Thee for that.

And we give Thee thanks on this beautiful day for all of the provisions of life. And we pray Lord that out of gratitude for that which Thou hast done for us we may return it through the Spirit in a measure of obedience to the word of God and in the testimony to the age in which Thou hast placed us. Give us, Lord, courage. And give us skill, spiritual skill. And give us perseverance in the preaching of the word of God through our lives and through our words to our friends and neighbors and members of the family. O God, when we reach Thy presence may we look back and be able to give Thee thanks for the way in which Thou hast used us to the glory of Thy name. We worship Thee today.

And we express to Thee our love and gratitude for the forgiveness of our sins, for justification, for membership in the family of God through the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus that was shed so many hundreds of years ago on the cross at Golgotha. And Lord we would pray for our country.

We ask Thy blessing upon the president, upon those associated with him, upon government, our state and city governments. We thank Thee Lord for all of the saints of God and we especially remember the church of Jesus Christ today scattered over the four corners of this globe. Bless the ministers of the truth of God with fruit.

We pray for the sick. We remember especially those mentioned in our calendar of concern. We bring them to Thee. Some who are desperately ill. O God, encourage them and strengthening them and give healing in accordance with Thy will. And bless the families of those involved and supply the needs that exist. And we ask that the results of the daily vacation Bible school may continue in the lives of our children and young people. May the things that they have been taught

remain with them and bring forth fruit to the glory of Thy name. We commit the remainder of this service to Thee. We pray Thy blessing upon us. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today as we continue our exposition of the Gospel of John is “The Believer in the World.” The outflow of fruit bearing comes before us now. The Lord Jesus has laid great stress upon the fact that like a vine and the branches, he is the vine, we are the branches, and just as the result of the fruit of the vine is seen in the life of the vine, so the fruit of the relationship that we have to him is to be seen in our lives. He lays stress upon the fact that there should be joy, there should be effectual prayer, and especially he lays stress upon the fact that there should be fruit from this union consummated by the Holy Spirit when we are regenerated and believe in the Lord Jesus.

Now that is very important, of course. And we have sought two weeks ago in the preceding exposition of the gospel to lay stress upon that. But, of course, an individual who is in this present society of which we are a part and who seeks by the grace of God to be a branch in the vine, the Lord Jesus Christ, there is going to be a necessary relationship with the individuals about. And that's what he speaks about here. We are talking about the outflow of fruit bearing. The new relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ means a new relationship to the world. He has said in verse 1 of chapter 15, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.” But now he will say in verse 18, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before you.”

Union with him results then in fruit so far as the believer is concerned, but it results in hate so far as the world is concerned. That seems to be a rather hateful thing to say. But nevertheless it is our Lord's word. The result of our relationship to Jesus Christ will be that the world will exercise its hate toward us. And he furthermore links that with his own ministry, saying that the servant cannot be above his master. And if his master has been hated, we may expect to be hated. So, it's not without significance then that the disciples are to be known by their love for one another. That is what he stressed in chapter 13 when he gave the new commandment. “By this shall all men know

that ye are my disciples, if you have love one for another.” So, the disciples are to be known by their love for one another and the world is to be known by its hate.

Now those are interesting concepts. But they are nevertheless the concepts of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to be known by our love one for another, the world will be known by its hate. And the more closely a believer approximates the mind and will of God in his daily life, the more may he expect to be as our Lord, the object of the world’s hatred.

There is a great deal of an attempt in much of professing Christianity to avoid this. In fact, there are individuals who feel that it’s rather wrong for a believer to be the object of the world’s odium, or hatred. They rather think that something is wrong if the believer is hateful to the world. But we forget that it is our Lord who is responsible for this particular concept. And we forget that of all the individuals who have been truly hated by the world, our Lord stands at the top of the list. And following him come the apostles and the prophets. And so if one seeks to follow in the steps of the Lord and the apostles and the prophets, it is inevitable that the world shall hate us.

We, of course, are not talking about individuals who are hateful, not because they are Christians, though they may be, but because actually their Christian lives are not in accordance with the word of God. We do not countenance that kind of life at all. In other words, what we should be hated for is our likeness to Jesus Christ and also for the truth that is represented in our lives by our lives or by our words. Any kind of hatred that the world legitimately holds for us because we have departed from the word of God is naturally something that we should experience and we do not have any reward for suffering that kind of hatred.

The apostles remind us, however, that we do have reward for suffering unrighteously from the world. And so, we should remember that the apostles, they knew very much the hatred of the world and in fact, when Luke describes the experiences of the early church, he lay stress upon that fact in more than one place. In chapter 4 and verse 33 of the Book of Acts he writes, “And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon

them all.” But then in the next chapter he says when they were in prison and Gamaliel had given his counsel to the Jewish people we read in verse 40,

“And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”

So, we are talking about the kind of hatred that the world holds for those who seek to follow righteously the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. One might ask the reason why the Lord in this Upper Room Discourse spoke of these things to the apostles. Well, on the surface one of the things must have been the desire to warn them of what would happen to them when he was gone. And in that, secondly, they would be supported by the knowledge of the fact that the Lord Jesus knew exactly what was going to happen. He had made prediction of it so that when it comes to pass they may be encouraged in the midst of their persecution realizing that that was simply a testimony to the sovereign greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ, the one whom they were seeking to follow.

And I think it also should be a comfort and an encouragement to us. When we suffer for righteousness sake, that is, because of identification with the Lord Jesus in the giving of the gospel or whatever it may be, we should be encouraged. The Lord Jesus has said this is going to come to pass and when it comes to pass we should reflect upon the fact then, well evidently we are following the directions of the triune God in heaven. And there is nothing greater than to have the assurance that the Lord God is with us in our Christian life and testimony.

Now in the opening section of the passage that we have read for the Scripture reading this morning, verse 18 through verse 25, the Lord Jesus discusses the antagonism of the believer's foe, the world.

Now this is not the only time that the Lord Jesus spoke about these things. Remember in the Gospel of Matthew in one of the earlier chapters of that gospel, he had spoken similarly. He said, for example, these words in Matthew chapter 10 and verse 25, “It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?” Do you notice that? “If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, (That is what they called the Lord Jesus. They called him the prince of demons), how much more shall they call them of his household?” So, if we’re called little demons, well then, take comfort in that. We are the followers of the chief demon so far as the world is concerned and that is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. So this is nothing new.

But the Lord does give some reasons why we may expect the world to hate us. And I’d like for you to look at these reasons. There are three of them that he mentions here that I’d like to lay a little bit of stress on. “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.” Incidentally, this little conjunctive particle “if,” “If the world hates you,” does not introduce any question about that. The construction in the Greek text is such that this is assumed for the sake of argument. “If the world hates you.” And then again in verse 20, the same thing. He is not suggesting there is any question about it at all and the construction in the Greek text makes that quite plain.

“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 you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world (or I have elected you out of the world), therefore the world hateth you.”

So, the first reason for which the world hates the believer is that they have been elected.

Now one might as he looks at this lay stress upon the fact that we are not of the world. And that’s why we are hated. And that would be proper. We are not of the world. When he says in verse 19, “If you were of the world (He says this in such a way and this is in such a construction as to

suggest that we are not of the world), If you were of the world, the world would love his own (We might ask ourselves the question, “What does it mean when the Lord says, ‘If you were of the world?’” And then, “You are not of the world.” What does he mean by that? Well, after all we all live in the world. So in that sense it couldn’t be in our Lord’s mind when he says, “If you were of the world.” He doesn’t say, “If you were in the world.” He says, “If you were of the world.”

Now this is a construction that expresses the disposition of a believer. He is not of the world. It expresses also the source of his relationship to the Lord and in this case his relationship to the world. “If you were of the world.” That’s not the source of our relationship anymore as a believer. If we were of the world, the world would love its own. But because you are not of the world, we do not have the source of our being any longer in the world. The source of our being by virtue of regeneration by the new birth and faith is the Lord God himself. It is he who has brought life where there was darkness and death before. So no longer are we of the world. While we’re saving work of the Holy Spirit bringing us to the conviction of our sin and giving us the influence of the Holy Spirit enabling us to believe is the product of God. And as a result we have been translated out of the world and we have been now related by the grace of God to the Lord Jesus Christ joined to the vine of which we are the branches. So we are no longer of the world. We are actually of heaven. Our citizenship, Paul tells us later, is in heaven. So we are different as a result of the new birth. We have new life. We are distinguished from the world by faith and regeneration and the possession of membership in the family of God by justification, the forgiveness of our sins. All of these things make the believer different from the world. We are not of the world.

Now, of course, the Lord could’ve laid stress on that and that would have been perfectly all right. But the things that happen to us now are the product of things that happened in ages past. The fact that we are regenerated and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and are brought into the family of God and given forgiveness of sins and justification and all of the other blessings of life these things are the product of the eternal counsels of the triune God. And the Lord Jesus moves beyond the more incidental temporal things to the eternal things when he says, “If ye were of the world, the

world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have elected you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”

And that, of course, is proper because if you ask why is it that God has set his love and affection and grace upon some and has not set his love and affection and grace in the same sense upon others, what’s the reason for that. And the reason that the Scriptures give is the distinguishing grace of God. And there is nothing that we can say beyond that. All attempts to explain the distinguishing grace of God founder theologically and so consequently our Lord’s words—and isn’t it interesting, as we’ve gone through the Gospel of John there is probably no part of the Bible that is stronger in its teaching concerning divine sovereign election than this particular Gospel of Jesus Christ through the Apostle John. He says then, “Because you have been chosen out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”

Now I know that occasionally people will say at this point just as they said above in verse 16, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit,” that our Lord is speaking only of the apostles at this point.

Now that is foolish. In the first place, it is true. He is speaking of the apostles. But it is clear that the same principle that pertained in the selection of the apostles is the principle that pertains in the selection of any individual. And if our Lord chose eleven apostles, we may lodge the same accusation against him of unfairness in the choice of the eleven. I might say to the Lord God around the throne of judgment, “Well, you chose Peter to be an apostle, but you did not choose me.” Or. “You chose Paul, but you did not choose me.” So distinguishing grace is seen in the selection of the eleven apostles. But as is clear from the remainder of the New Testament, this great principle is expressed in the election of the people of God. And the very fact that the things that flow out of the election of the apostles are the things that flow out to all believers as evidence of the fact that our Lord has not simply the apostles in mind, but the apostles and their followers who follow in their steps. And the New Testament makes that very plain. So, it is not correct biblically, exegetically or theologically to affirm this is only true of the apostles. It is not.

Bishop Ryle has said something in this connection that I think is rather significant. He has said, “It is not the weaknesses and inconsistencies of Christians that the world hates, but their grace.” And that, it seems to me, hits right at the point of this. “If you were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have elected you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”

Occasionally, the world likes to speak about the *odium theologicum*, or the theological hatred. And by that they refer to the fact that the church hates the world and the church has always had an attitude of antipathy toward the world. But while it is true that it may be in individual cases that some have in the church of Jesus Christ hated the world, the hatred of the world for the church is so far greater than any manifestations of the hatred of the church for the world, that there is no comparison between the two. The antagonism of the world for believers when not caused by the sins of believers is simply a continuation of its quarrel with Jesus Christ.

So, when a Christian believer goes out, for example, and walks into his office and engages in conversation with his friend across the desk from him and the subject of spiritual things comes up and the Christian says, “Well, I believe that salvation comes through Jesus Christ and through Jesus Christ alone.” And the person across the way says, “I don’t understand how you can possibly say something like that. Are we not all the objects of the love of God and is it not true that we do the best that we can and if we do the best that we can we will all ultimately wind up in heaven?” And some with a little more sophistication might say, “Well, we know that there are different teachings of the different churches, but do they not all wind up ultimately in the possession of eternal life?” And the Christian says, “No. That is not the teaching of the word of God. The Lord Jesus said, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.’ I don’t understand how you can be so narrow minded as to say that salvation is only through Christ,” the Christian believer is told.

And then at the coffee break when different conversations ensue among other people, “Did you know that so and so believes that there is only one way of salvation and it is through Jesus

Christ? Do you think that it is true that salvation is only through Christ and that if a person is a good church member and believes that salvation comes to pass by being baptized that he's going straight to hell to suffer the flames of eternal perdition?" That usually is said with a great deal of stress you know to make it sound as bad as possible. And pretty soon the Christian finds that he has experienced the *odium saeculare*, or the secular hatred of the world for the doctrine that he holds. For that is what Jesus Christ proclaimed. He said that he was the Son of God and that salvation only was through him and the world crucified him. And given an opportunity, the world would do the same today.

So the hatred of the world is the hatred of the sinful man for the truth of the Lord God. The wrath of God has been revealed from heaven upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who are repressing the truth in unrighteousness. And so the Christian should not feel strange when he is opposed by his friends, by his family members, by his mother or by his father, or by his sister or his brother, or by his children. He is opposed by them for the simple reason that the world's spirit is different from the Christian spirit. We have been by the grace of God and only by the grace of God introduced into a new relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. And we are no longer of the world. And because we are no longer of the world, the world desires to continue its quarrel with Jesus Christ.

Has the world ever called together a universal counsel and out of all the nations of the world the leaders gather together and say, "We would like to confess our sin of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and from now on we are the friends of Christianity"? There has never been such and there never will be such according to the prophecies of the word of God. The world continues its argument with Jesus Christ, but it does it in the form of its hatred of believers in Jesus Christ.

It's an interesting thing that Plato wrote many hundreds of years before the coming of our Lord and the apostles said, and I think he said this with a flash of insight into the understanding of human nature, he said that if a truly righteous man ever appeared on earth he would be scourged, imprisoned and hanged. Well, so far as we know, Plato incidentally said one or two other things that

suggested that he was given some special insight illumination by the Lord God into the nature of things. But so far as we know, he gathered that just from the perception of the nature of human nature. And if a righteous man he said appeared on the earth he would be scourged, imprisoned and hanged. Well, I'm inclined to think that he was given some divine illumination along those lines and he did understand the fact that the world is not a world of righteous individuals; the world is a world of unrighteous enemies of the Lord God.

Now the Lord Jesus says the first reason is, “You have been elected.” The second reason is related to it naturally, but it's the product of the first. It's our relationship to him. In the 20th verse he says, “Remember the word that I 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.” Since we share in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, that involves sharing in his fate.

There is a Bible teacher who once made this comment. How good it would be for us sometimes when we are worrying about our feelings and about our prayer life if an angel were to appear to us and say, “Don't waste time worrying about these things. What you need is to get on with the business of being persecuted.” Well, there is a sense in which that is true. It's the Christian who is really giving a testimony for Jesus Christ who is the persecuted Christian. It's the one who is really saying something for Christ, who is really doing something for him, who is enjoying, and I use that word carefully, who is enjoying the world's persecution. We can never enter more closely into relationship with our Lord than when we live the things that he taught us in the midst of the world. And we can expect the world to vent its displeasure and its hatred toward us. So Jesus said, “Because of your relationship to me you will share my fate.”

And thirdly, he said, “The world does not know the Father.” “But all these things,” verse 21, “will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.” “There is a relationship between the Father who sent me and me. And they do not know the Father and consequently, they will respond in that way.”

Now why does the world not know the Lord Jesus who was sent by the Father and why is the world fundamentally at odds with us? Well, first of all, we differ with the world. If we're genuine believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we differ with the world.

Now we differ with the world about all of the important things in life and frequently when you look around at believers and it's occasionally been said of Believers Chapel that this is so because there are many people in Believers Chapel the world would regard as affluent who get along very well in the world and occasionally Believers Chapel is criticized because it does have some people in its congregation who seem not to be worrying about the end of the month when they're getting their check. But it is also true that the important things in life are not the material things. The world is interested in the material things. They're interested in building up a nice estate. They're interested in being successful in their business. They're interested in their family and seeing that the family gets along in the world, often socially rather than spiritually. They're interested in the material things of life. And those are the things with which you can have some fellowship with the world. Because those are the things the world are interested in. They are interested in money. They are interested in property. They're interested in social status and position. All of those things the world is immensely interested in because they have absolutely no interest in the things that really matter. But when it comes to the questions that really matter, that really matter with reference to the future and the future well-being of an eternal soul, ah, there the Christian is distinguished.

Now unfortunately for us often we are so interested in the things of the world that it's very difficult to see the difference. But we are interested in God first of all. The Christian is interested in God, the triune God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We're very fundamentally interested in God. And the things that are interesting to God, the world is not. We are interested also in men. We know what Scriptures say about man. That man is a sinner. That man is under divine guilt and condemnation. That man is headed for a Christless eternity. Christians are interested in this. The world is not interested in that at all, pushes it from its mind if at all possible. We are interested in life. We're not interested in physical life, in so far as it is ultimate life. Everybody wants to be

healthy, of course, but we are interested ultimately in eternal life. For that is the important thing. The world's not interested in eternal life; they are interested in this physical life. But we are interested in eternal life. We're interested in God. We're interested in a true view of ourselves. We're interested in eternal life. The world is interested in duty insofar as it enables them to accomplish in this life the things that they're interested in. That is a good status in life. As I say, a nice portfolio of securities on which you can depend. It can be your hope, your foundation for well-being in the future. But the Christian is not interested in that duty; he is interested in duty to God. What is the significant thing with reference to God?

And let me say incidentally that this is something that should concern every one of us in Believers Chapel. What is my duty to God? And I am in this society in which I am in, in order to serve him and what are specifically my duties to him. They are set out in Holy Scripture. One of the saddest things in the world is to see a Christian go through life and never really understand what his duty to God is, most important duty of all. The Christian is interested in the future. The worldling would blot the future out of his mind. He lives for the present. “Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die,” the apostle put it. But we are interested in the future. We're interested in the present to a certain extent, but we are primarily interested in the future. And therefore, the things of the word of God, in so far as they have to do with the great future that God has planned for the saints of God. These are the things that are significant for us.

And we are interested also in death. Death is the pathway to the life with God. And as we draw nearer to death, the more exciting it becomes for a Christian. He doesn't look forward to the experience of pain and suffering. But a Christian relying upon the words of our Lord Jesus Christ which are immutable words that will surely come to pass, heaven and earth may pass away, his words will never pass away, and he has given us the promise that as we approach death and pass through death, we pass into the presence of the eternal God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for ever and ever. What a glorious future we have. What a tremendous group of promises guard and garrison the

Christian in this world. But the world is not interested in that. They want to look away from that if at all possible.

That’s what distinguishes the Christian from the world. That’s why he’s different. He’s different in his thoughts of God. He’s different in his thoughts about himself. He’s different in his thoughts about life. He’s different in the duty that he sees stands before him as a Christian. He’s different in his concepts of death. He’s different in his concepts of the future. He is not of the world by the saving and transforming distinguishing grace of an eternal God.

What a magnificent thing it is to be a Christian. Are you one? Are these the things that move you? You know when you stand by the bedside of someone who’s dying, then you learn what are the really important things in life. And what a barren situation it is when you stand by the bed of someone who is dying and they don’t know the hope that we have in Christ. And what a difference it is when the individual has a hope, even amidst the pain and suffering, the pain of departure from loved ones, the pain of suffering, the pain of the thought, “I may not see my grandchildren,” “I may not see my great grandchildren.” But amid the pain, the joy of the presence of God. It makes a difference. And the Lord Jesus said we’re not of the world. We’re of God.

Now the results of this he speaks about in verse 22 through 24 and I’ve talked about that in the reading of the Scripture. He doesn’t mean that the Jews would be sinless if he hadn’t come. But he means that they would be guiltless of the sin of rejecting God as he really is in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, or perhaps of the particular sin of unbelief, about which he speaks in the next chapter. And, of course, if we turn that around positively from what he says here they had not had sin. That’s true of us who by his grace have been brought to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I love this expression, “He that hateth me hateth my Father also.” And then in verse 25 he follows up by saying, “They hated me without a cause.” That little expression “without a cause” is the one that the Apostle Paul uses in Romans chapter 3 and verse 24 where he says that we are “justified freely.” “They hated me without a cause. They hated me freely.” He refers to Psalm 69 in the Old Testament and there, of course, the text has to do with David, the great poet of Israel.

David said, “They hated me without a cause.” But that text is brought over into the New Testament, Psalm 69, and is one of the great psalms that is applied to the Lord Jesus Christ, typically, because David, the son of David, is a picture of the greater son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ. And the experiences of David anticipate the experiences of the Lord Jesus. And David was often hated without a cause. That is, the only cause was David’s relationship to the God whom he served. And our Lord applies that to himself. He said, “Just like David was hated without a cause, except the spiritual things that lie back of it and the antipathy of the world toward the cause of God, so they have hated me without a cause.”

And then the apostle goes on to speak about believers and he says, “Now, believers who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, they are justified without a cause.” Oh, but wait a minute. They are justified with a cause, are they not, because the cause is the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ when the blood was shed on the cross at Calvary. That’s the cause of our salvation. Is it not? Well, yes it is the cause of our salvation in the sense that our salvation flows out of what Christ did for sinners on that cross. But it is justification without a cause so far as we are concerned. For it is through the grace of God that we are brought to faith in Christ. So that the salvation we possess is not because of something that we have done, we believe, but it is God who has given us that faith by which we receive the free gift of God and therefore we can say we’re justified without a cause. In us, the cause lies wholly in God.

Now in verse 26 and 27 he says – and I’m not going to say much about this because we will be talking about this in the next couple of weeks – he says, “Now 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.” In other words, the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, will vindicate the Lord Jesus Christ. The world may have its antipathy, but ultimately the world shall be brought to submission to the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is the work of the Holy Spirit to vindicate the Lord Jesus. But further, the apostles themselves are to testify. “And ye also shall bear witness because ye have been with me from the beginning.”

Really, one witness, because our witness is dependent upon his witness through us we shall learn in a few verses later on in the next chapter. So the antidote to the foe, the world, is the testimony of the Holy Spirit through us. And we can be assured that in the midst of the world’s hatred, the Father does not neglect his sheep. The vine does not neglect its branches. And we can be sure if we do suffer from the world it is his will. And if we find deliverance, it is because of the power of God. He cares for his saints.

And finally, our Lord describes in some detail some of the things that are going to happen. “These things have I spoken unto you, that you should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues.” Oh my, to think, “I’m going to be put out of the synagogue, excommunicated.”

Now remember this was a serious thing because when a Jewish man was put out of the synagogue it was not simply religious excommunication, it was social excommunication as well. It transpires today incidentally, still transpires. When a Christian comes to faith in Christ not only among the Gentiles, but also still among the Jews, they are frequently socially excommunicated. “They shall put you out of their synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.”

Ah, one can only think of the reformation days and how so many thought that they were doing God service when they burned the Christians. And Tyndale and Huss and Cranmer and Bilney and Latimer and all of that great line of Christian martyrs who stand with crowns on their heads in heaven at this very moment are in the noble army of those who have suffered for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you know that all—so far as tradition is concerned, we cannot be absolutely sure of these facts of course. But do you know that all but the Apostle John were martyred in death. And John had to spend his life in exile on the little Isle of Patmos. Steven was stoned to death. James, the brother of John, was beheaded by Herod Agrippa. Phillip suffered martyrdom in Phrygia being scourged, imprisoned and crucified. Matthew was slain with a halberd in Nadabah. James the Less was beaten and stoned at the age of ninety-four and finally had his brains dashed out with a fuller’s

club. Matthias was stoned and beheaded at Jerusalem. Andrew was crucified at Edessa on a cross with the two ends fixed transversely in the ground. Hence, the derivation of the term St. Andrew's Cross. Mark was dragged to pieces in Alexandria. Peter, according to Jerome, was crucified at Rome under Nero with his head down thinking himself unworthy to be crucified as master. Jude was crucified at Edessa. Bartholomew was crucified in India. Thomas was thrust through in India with a spear. And Simon Zelotes was crucified in Britain. These are traditional things. But so far as we know, the apostles and those that followed them often gave their lives for the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And what do we have to suffer today? Oh, we really have to suffer. We have to suffer because somebody ridicules us and says, “He's a Fundamentalist. He's a Fundi. Think of it. He's a Fundi.” Oh, I'm hurt to my heart. [Laughter]

Do you know that there was a lady with whom I visited just about four years ago, we sat around, she was very much upset, she said, “Since I've been going to Believers Chapel, I have been so upset. My sister who is a member of a ‘mainline’ denomination has been constantly speaking of me.”

Now this believer was not very well taught in the word, but she had become and sat out in your midst. And so far as I know she does not now. But she explained to me that she was very much upset because her sister kept calling her a Jesus freak. And in fact, she broke out in tears and explained to me. Now that is really suffering for Jesus' sake. To be called a Jesus freak.

Now I sympathize with her and I sympathize with others who have not yet come to realize perhaps what happens when you receive Christ as your savior. You may expect that people will say strange things about you. But remember they're only continuing their quarrel with Christ. They don't know why they say those things really. They say them because they hate what you stand for, but they don't understand why they hate it often.

The world is not angry today often. In fact, surprisingly, you know you'll find many Christians who will say the church ought to get along with the world. It's wrong to not get along

with the world. That’s foolish. That’s contrary to the word of God. The church can never get along with the world; can never hope to get along with the world. And the authority for that is the Lord himself. The world’s not angry today, however, with the church often because the church is an innocuous group of people. They do not really give their testimony to the grace of God in Christ.

Have you ever noticed this about the world? When they want to attack the church they attack the purest form of Christian doctrine. Have you ever noticed that? They attack the purest form of Christian doctrine and do you know what it comes out as? Attack upon the distinguishing grace of God in Christ. The world senses that to attack the church we attack the purest expression of it. And the purest expression of it is the distinguishing grace of God in Jesus Christ. And so the reason the church today often is not attacked is because the church is no longer a testimony to the distinguishing grace of God in Christ.

May God help us to realize that we’re going to face hostility, but let us face this hostility as our Lord did, with the love of Jesus Christ, love for one another, love for the world and love for the sinners in the world, and also with a confidence of the Spirit’s support of our testimony, but at the same time fully expecting that we shall receive the same kind of hostility that our master received. We cannot expect to receive anything other than that which our Lord received. May God give us the courage and the grace to be willing to give testimony to him.

And I hope that one of the results of our thinking about this is that we will not be afraid to speak to the person who sits next to us in the office or our employer or our employee or our neighbor or our relatives, our fathers, our mothers, our sisters, our brothers, our friends, those with whom we come in contact. May God help us to remember who we are. We’re not of the world. And may God enable us to be bold as Jesus was bold, and then, we will like the apostles, we will rejoice that we were allowed in God’s wonderful mercy to be accounted as those who suffer shame for the sake of his name. May God give you young people and you who are older the courage to stand by Jesus Christ.

If you are here today and you have never believed in Christ, of course, that is your responsibility first of all, to believe in him who offered the atoning sacrifice for sinners. Come to Christ, believe in him. That salvation is available for you. If you will simply come acknowledging your sinfulness, receiving as a free gift the benefits of that which Jesus has won by his blood on the cross. May God in his grace bring you to Christ.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for these words of admonition. They remind us so often of the fact that we are cowardly in our testimony for Christ, like Peter. In moments that are important moments, we deny him...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]