

## AND YOU ALSO MUST TESTIFY

John 15:18-16:4

Key Verses: 15:26,27

“When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.”

The previous passage is about love. It is about the Father's love for Jesus and Jesus' love for his disciples and the command that the disciples love each other. This passage begins with hate. Jesus tells his disciples not to be surprised if they are hated by the world. It is a surprise. Why should people who love God and only try to love others be hated? It doesn't make sense. Jesus said, “Keep in mind that it hated me first.” When we think about Jesus, who came to love and give and serve, but who was cruelly rejected and finally crucified, we realize that something terrible is wrong in our world. Jesus told his disciples that they can expect to be hated because they do not belong to the world. If they belonged to the world, the world would love them. If our lives simply “go with the flow” then we are not challenging the world; we are simply drifting downstream with the current. People of the world seek peace and they seek joy or happiness. Jesus offers to give peace and joy. To swim against the current of the world is hard. The world finds its joy and pleasure in stimulating activities, in sports, dancing, dating, vacations, making and spending money, body building, etc. Many of these activities don't seem to be so bad. On the darker side, the world finds meaning in exercising power, feeding pride, following the natural feelings of the sinful nature, doing drugs and indulging in pornography. Sometimes people find pleasure in being cruel to others. Giving in to rage, allowing jealousy and/or pride to dictate actions are a part of the world's way. Jesus says that he has chosen his disciples out of the world. Jesus' disciples receive joy and peace as gifts. Jesus' disciples must obey Jesus' teachings. Jesus' disciples must grow in Jesus' likeness.

Why did the world hate Jesus? First, the world hated Jesus because the world did not know God who sent Jesus. The world was created by God, but the world did not recognize it's Creator. When people are cut off from God by their sins, they have no awareness of the spiritual world. Nicodemus was an example. He could not grasp Jesus' meaning when Jesus told him that he must be born again. Thomas could not understand that Jesus was going to the Father's house. Philip could not recognize God in Jesus. They had not received the Holy Spirit and so they had no spiritual understanding. These men wanted to know the spiritual world. But worldly people are afraid to discover that there is a heaven and there is a hell. They know that God created the world and all things, but they don't want to admit it because they don't want to be accountable. Second, the world hated Jesus because his life and teachings exposed sin and people do not like to feel guilty or to have their sins exposed. Third, they hated Jesus without a reason. This was to fulfill the prophecy in Psalm 35:19 and 69:4. Evil

hates good without a reason.

Jesus helps his disciples when they are hated by the world. When the man born blind was cast out of the Synagogue because he insisted on acknowledging that Jesus was a good man, a man sent from God. Jesus promised to send the Comforter, the Counselor to be with them. He is called the Spirit of truth. It is important for disciples to know that they are living according to the truth. The devil is the father of lies. When we are seduced by his lies we seem to be going the best and most beneficial way, but we are wandering into a morass. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life." He leads us in the true way and he leads us to life. The Holy Spirit testifies about Jesus. He tells us the truth. He does not lead us to seek benefit or to compromise with the world. He leads us to walk with Jesus. We may have trouble in the world, but Jesus gives us his peace and his joy.

What must we do when the world presses us hard? We must depend on the Spirit of Truth and we must testify to Jesus and to the truth. Jesus' disciples were chosen to be witnesses to Jesus and witnesses to truth. They are the ones who wrote the New Testament. They were the ones who knew Jesus and learned from him. They remembered his words. They had the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth. Today also, we have the Bible. We are chosen out of the world so that we can live the life and so that we can testify to the truth. If there is no witness to the truth in this world, how dark and hopeless is the world.

Jesus' disciples are called to play an important role. It is important that they remain faithful to him. He tells them the joys and sorrows, the dangers and the assurances of protection so that they may be faithful to him. Human faithfulness is good, but it is not enough. Human faithfulness runs out. How strange it is that the most difficult enemies of the gospel are religious people. Jesus told them that they would be persecuted and killed by people who thought they were serving God. This happened. The Apostles were thrown out of the synagogues; the Jews tried to kill Paul; Stephan was stoned by zealous Jews. The Muslims put countless Christians to the sword. Jesus would not be with them in the flesh. But he would be with them as the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth. Disciples must not waver from the truth, no matter what. The Holy spirit who reminds us of everything Jesus taught is with us. We have the Bible, the testimony of the apostles. He helps us be faithful. Persecution can build faith.