

(18) “If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world --- but I chose you out of the world --- therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do you on account of My name, because they do not know Him who sent Me.

(22) “If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both Me and My Father. But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: ‘They hated Me without a cause.’

(26) “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father --- the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father --- He will bear witness about Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

(1) “I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor Me. But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you.”

Think on these things:

- 1) Why, if you choose to believe in Jesus, might you begin to have problems with people you have known for years (vs.18-19a)? What does Jesus say He did with us that causes us to be hated by others (v.19b)?

Why possible problems? **The world hated Jesus; Jesus said the world will hate us also. So when we become Christians and God begins reshaping our lives and habits, the people (and family) we have spent so much time with may not understand...! As we change, some relationships will drift apart, and a few may actually become hostile to the new differences.**

What has Jesus done with us? **He chose us, and, therefore, the world now hates us.**

- 2) Believing in Jesus and living obediently to Him, there are times you will be terribly uncomfortable thinking and acting differently than the people (and friends) around you. Can you share a situation like this that you’ve experienced?

Personal sharing moment. It would be helpful if the teacher arrives with a personal example. (There are many possible problem moments politically and socially between a conscientious, conservative Christian and the laws and customs of the United States.)

- 3) Jesus clarifies why people may support our (new) position in life or oppose and persecute us. What reason is given in vs.20-21?

First, Jesus came before us. His life and teaching were received by some, and rejected by many. He says it will be the same for us. And, as He was persecuted by religious leaders, He says here that some people may go after Christians believing it is the right thing to do before God. The real issue is that we generally embrace Biblical teachings that others don’t want to accept.

- 4) At what point do people become accountable for their sins (vs.22, 24)? See Romans 2:14-16.

This passage says that once people hear the Words of Christ and see His powerful works in our world, they become accountable. Romans adds that even Gentiles have a reasonable grasp of right and wrong within their consciences, and God will judge them by their own consciences.

- 5) Why were the Jews of Israel particularly condemned by Jesus on this night (vs.22-24)?

The Jews of Israel had heard the teachings of Jesus for three years and observed numerous miraculous works --- and they chose to reject Him. They will be judged even more harshly than the notoriously sinful leaders and peoples of the past. Hating Jesus, they hated the Father.

- 6) The Holy Spirit doesn't testify about Himself, but about Jesus (v.26). What should a Christian testimony be about, and why should believers share them (v.27)? See also John 3:27-30, 16:14a, Galatians 2:20, Colossians 1:27-28, and 1 Peter 3:15.

What should a testimony be about? **Rick Warren's Book, *Purpose Driven Life*, opens with these insightful words: "It's not about you." A Christian testimony has nothing to do with bragging about ourselves and how we manage life as Christians --- except in how we glorify God by showing His works in our lives. Testifying is our opportunity to praise and glorify God alone...because we have been with Jesus (v.27). As John the Baptist said in John 3, Jesus 'must increase and I must decrease.' John 16 says the H.S. will glorify Jesus; He is our divine example!**

Why bother sharing them? **Paul in Galatians 2 says it's no longer we believers who live, but Christ lives within us. We must tell this truth. Colossians 1 says God's mystery has been revealed: it is Christ within us, our real hope! Thus, we proclaim Him. 1 Peter 3 advises us to honor Christ the Lord as holy, always prepared to make a defense to anyone asking us about our 'hope' in Jesus.**

- 7) Does knowing in advance that something is going to be very hard for you make it any easier to face? Explain and/or share an example.

This is an opinion question. Knowing in advance may not make something easier to face, but it does allow us to make preparations. Jesus knew He was going to be crucified....

- 8) American Christians do not face deathly persecutions...at this time! Do you see any signs that the attitude towards Christians is changing in our culture, that we might be viewed as "enemies" to the state? If yes, can you cite a few examples please?

Again, an opinion question. From this author's perspective, declaring oneself to be Christian used to be regarded as an honorable, noble thing, a person who could be trusted and who was deemed honest (among many other positive qualities). Today, Christians are often viewed as narrow-minded or bigoted, exclusive, unamerican, deceptive and hypocritical, unsupportive of political hot potato topics such as gender identity, abortion, immigration policies, diversity, college admission quotas, and the environment, to name just a few. It does not help that some churches take unbiblical positions on these issues, thus causing divisions among the Church. If this church supports LBGTQ+ people and ministers, why doesn't this other church...?!

People and situations I want to pray for this week: