

### Introduction

1. Yrs-ago man witnessed to made profession of faith. Afterwards told him Satan not happy.
  - a. Now that received Jesus, Satan do all he could to discourage him.
  - b. Went on to share how could grow as new believer. ***Do you have any questions?***
  - c. Worried look on face. ***Yes. What did you mean that Satan would try to discourage me?***
  - d. Surprised to hear he'd be target of Satan & would experience trouble and opposition.
2. That's one part being Christian none of us like, but we can't escape. Jesus never withheld.
  - a. Never painted rosy picture where following Him would be peace, love & joy only.
  - b. To be Christian means we will be opposed by Satan & the world he leads.
  - c. John 15 = relationships: 1-11 = w/Christ; 12-17 = w/believers; 18-27 = w/world. (**Show**)
  - d. More abide in Christ & love believers, more the world will persecute us.<sup>1</sup>
3. (**Show Title/Text**) Why does the world persecute us and how are we to respond?

## **I. Why The World Persecutes Christians, vv. 18-25.**

### **A. The Bloodiest Century in History**

1. V. 18 is Jesus' title for this last section of John 15. It seems remote from 1<sup>st</sup> Century.
2. We've heard about Nero persecuting Christians in Colosseum unleashing lions on them.
3. More followers of Jesus Christ have died during [the twentieth] century than in any other time in history. About 150,000 each year were martyred. About two million are actively persecuted. And millions more are living with their religious freedoms severely restricted.<sup>2</sup> (Makes 20<sup>th</sup> Century bloodiest in history.)

### **B. We No Longer Belong to This World-System, v. 19.**

1. This is the basic reason for the world's hostility to believers. What mean by world?
  - a. 3 senses: earth, people as people, world-system headed by Satan & opposed to God.<sup>3</sup>
  - b. 1 John 2:15-17 = best definition. World = rebellion against God; loves wrong things.
    - i. Pursues sinful & selfish desires; proud of itself; rejects God's truth and His will.
    - ii. ***3 times Jesus said Satan = ruler of this world, Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11.***
    - iii. ***Prince power of the air, the spirit now at work in sons of disobedience, Eph. 2:3.***
2. But Jesus tells us here that He has chosen believers out of the world. Quote Col.1:13-14.
3. No longer follow values, beliefs, lifestyle & loves that the world has. Creates hatred.
4. World claims be inclusive/tolerant. Truth? It expects conformity. Rejects those don't.
  - a. Didn't we find out very fast as kids? Wrong name on back of jeans, pointed out.
  - b. Car out of style, made fun. Dad fixed up old style bike for sister. Road around block.
  - c. She came back & said was laughed at. One ride around block on old-fashioned bike!
5. This is how world-system is. If don't conform; don't belong; don't belong; not accepted.
6. I illustrated this once to my youth group w/girl climbing mountain & boyfriend below.<sup>4</sup>
  - a. Let's suppose she represents Christian and boyfriend represents world. (**Show**)
  - b. Pretend mountain represents call of Jesus to higher life of following Him to heaven.

<sup>1</sup> Constable, T. (2003). *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Jn 15:18). Galaxie Software.

<sup>2</sup> The Bloodiest Century. [www.persecutedchurch.org](http://www.persecutedchurch.org). Accessed in 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 106). New York: United Bible Societies.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.hdwallpaperscool.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/girl-mountain-climbing-desktop-picture-wide-desktop-wallpaper-in-hd.jpg>. Accessed 2/6/16.

- c. In illustration girl said, *Come up here*. Boy said, *No, more comfortable down here*.
  - d. True. Easier be part of the world. Blend in. Conform. Be like others. No stand out.
  - e. More follows Jesus & goes diff. direction, more upset he get if wants her come down.
7. B. Graham: When became believer broke up w/girlfriend. **We were going diff. directions.**<sup>5</sup>
- C. **We Get What Our Master Jesus Got, v. 20.**
1. It is always true that what people think of a Master will be what they think of the servant.
    - a. Yrs-ago a U.S. V.P. visited a country that was angry at U.S.A. Attacked his motorcade.
    - b. Violently kicked car & shattered window because he represented a hated country.<sup>6</sup>
  2. 5xs in this passage Jesus said world **hated/persecuted** him, vv. 18, 20, 23, 24, 25.
    - a. Jesus came w/message of love, forgiveness & reconciliation to God.
    - b. But also said was only way to God & people must repent & turn from own way.
    - c. Look what got (quote Isaiah 53:3).<sup>7</sup> (**Show**) Still today. Comforts us. Reject Jesus.
  3. Not rejecting us. When it happens it's not something take personal, it's about Him.
  4. Last Sunday night = 2-of-best services at prison. Grt response. Had some leave in past.
    - a. I'm sensitive person & it hurts. Had one person walk out here at Bethel. Painful see.
    - b. When happens know wasn't really about me, didn't like what Jesus said.
- D. **The World Is Ignorant of God, v. 21.**
1. 3-stage process: people oppose disciples ← oppose Jesus ← don't know Father.
    - a. **World did not know God thru wisdom**, 1 Cor. 1:21. Gospel not sense natural man.
    - b. Crucified Jew claimed be God & rose again from grave is Savior of whole world.
    - c. World rejects that message as foolish/ignorant, but power of God unto salvation.
  2. 2 Roman historians, Tacitus/Suetonius, called Christianity **mischievous superstition**.<sup>8</sup>
  3. That mischievous superstition outlasted Roman Empire bringing untold good to world.
  4. Tacitus/Suetonius called Christianity mischievous superstition cause didn't know God.
  5. The only time I've ever been shouted at in my ministry was in Texas when student.
    - a. Pastor wanted go thru church neighborhood inviting people to church. Went with.
    - b. At edge of 1 driveway man saw us coming & shouted, **We don't want any!**
    - c. We waved. Fine. No interest in upsetting anyone. But think about that.
    - d. Bringing good news: forgiveness, et. life, home in heaven, peace w/God.
    - e. He didn't want any? That's ignorance. The world is ignorant of God's plan.
- E. **Jesus Exposes the World's Sin & Obstinacy, vv. 22-25.**
1. Twice Jesus says the world is *guilty of sin*, vv. 22, 24. What sin? Unbelief.
    - a. Sin of not believing in Him, see John 16:8-9. Why don't people believe?
    - b. Not because they don't have enough evidence. Plenty of evidence to believe.

<sup>5</sup> Heard Billy say this in a sermon. Said hardest thing ever had to do up to that time. Knew had to cause following Jesus.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/vice-president-richard-m-nixons-car-being-attacked-by-news-photo/50401594>. Accessed 2/6/16.

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.craigavadgospelhall.com/wp-content/gallery/sunday-school-memory-verse-2012-2013/Isaiah\\_53-03.jpg](http://www.craigavadgospelhall.com/wp-content/gallery/sunday-school-memory-verse-2012-2013/Isaiah_53-03.jpg).

<sup>8</sup> Köstenberger, A. J. (2004). *John* (pp. 463–464). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

- i. Jesus has brought us God's message, v. 22. **No man spoke like this man.**
- ii. Jesus has done God's works, v. 24. Kind of miracles, number, magnitude
- iii. Jesus fulfilled O.T. prophecy, v. 25. Just one instance of many prophecies.
  - 1) Even Pilate admitted this. No reason. Crucified Jesus for jealousy, Mk15:10.
2. Why then do people not want to believe? V. 24b. Don't want submit to God. Change.
3. In seminary had classmate was excellent defender of truth of Christianity, Bill Watkins.
  - a. Told about friend who said could not believe cause too many unanswered questions.
  - b. Bill asked for questions. One by one answered them all. Man impressed w/answers.
  - c. Bill asked if now like to believe. **No. I just answered all your questions. Why not?**
  - d. **I'm just not ready. Oh I see, said Bill, it's not that you can't believe, don't want to.**
  - e. Man had enough integrity to admit he didn't want Jesus taking over his life.
4. Read John 3:19-21. That's the reason people will not believe.

## **II. How Christians Should Respond, vv. 19-20, 26-27.**

### **A. Be Humble, v. 19.**

1. In the previous verses Jesus brought up our election to be His followers.
2. Now he brings it up again. We are not better than anyone in the world.
  - a. Not wiser, more insightful, more spiritually minded or responsive.
  - b. It's only God's grace that has saved us. Eph. 2:8-9. Question in ABF.
  - c. **How much of your salvation do you give credit to God for? All of it.**
3. So we should be meek and humble with the world, not proud & condescending.
4. When world treats us wrong pray for them; return good for evil; make peace when can.
5. **Many people who think being persecuted for righteousness sake are actually being persecuted for stupidity's sake.<sup>9</sup> May that never be true of us.**

### **B. Keep Witnessing, vv. 20, 26-27.**

1. Notice some will respond, v. 20. Not all rejected Jesus. Some come to him.
2. Why? 3<sup>rd</sup> time now Jesus mentioned H.S. He will bear witness to the truth.
3. And He will convince some to believe in Jesus. And so we must witness.
4. In Everyday Evangelism we illustrate it like this. (**Show**)
  - a. Evangelism is a 3-way conversation. We witness to the world.
  - b. Holy Spirit works in & thru the believer to draw people to Jesus.
5. **When Christiana told her family of her conversion to Christ, they reacted with fury and horror, persecuting her. They snatched her Bible, tore it to pieces, and threw it in her face. Yet some time later, her "Eighth Brother" assembled the family.<sup>10</sup> (**Show**)**
6. **He then told them: "I have been to see Christiana many times and wondered how she could endure all this suffering. Now I can see that she has been given some sustaining power and can only explain it as coming from God. So, I have decided there must be a God after all. I have read the Bible and realize that I am a sinner. So here and now I want to tell you that I have accepted Christ as my Savior, asked Him to forgive my sins, and promised to follow Him." 55 family members became believers.<sup>11</sup>**

<sup>9</sup> Prof. Howard Hendricks said that in one of his lectures to us.

<sup>10</sup> Morgan, R. J. (2000). *Nelson's complete book of stories, illustrations, and quotes* (electronic ed., p. 407). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

<sup>11</sup> Green, M. P. (Ed.). (1989). *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*: Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.