

Sermon: Psalm 69:1-14 2 Corinthians 10:1-6 John 15:18-16:4

## Confrontation with the world

The message of this passage is simple. The world will hate you. Jesus has been answering questions the disciples are not yet asking because they do not understand that his path is death. The question in this passage addresses is:

### **How come the disciples will not be popular?**

It will surely be a surprise to the disciples that the world hates them. Jesus tells them that he is telling them now so that they will not go astray (Jn 16:1). Again, this information is for later when the disciples are encountering persecution and rejection. *I have told you this, so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you this at first because I was with you.* (Jn 16:4)

There are two reasons that it will be a surprise:

- 1) Christians are “nice” people wanting to share a message about spending eternity in God’s presence. They also love their neighbour (or should).
- 2) They are on the winning side. If Jesus is who he says he is, and he abides with them, then surely life should be comfortable at least.

Note:-Persecution is not unique to Christianity.

So, should Jesus’ disciples be surprised?

### **The world hates the disciples because it hated Jesus (John 15:18-21)**

#### **What is the “world”?**

The “world” in John is not used as a neutral description of humanity or creation as a whole. It is used to describe all that that is opposed and alien to God. See: *John 1:10, John 3:16, John 3:19; Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out John 12:31, John 17:15*

The world has a prince whose being is darkness not light, so it does not recognise Jesus. Jesus’ disciples have the same relationship to the world as Jesus does.

Jesus is not of this world (Jn 8:23,) The **disciples** are not of the world. (Jn 15:19; 17:16)

If Jesus or his disciples were of the world, the world would love them (Jn15:19).

If Jesus is hated by the world so will the disciples be hated (Jn 15:19-20)

Jesus loves the world (Jn 3:16) The disciples were to love the world too.

Those who are disciples of Jesus are NOT of the world, but they are IN the world and like Jesus they respond with love, not hate. There is more teaching on this in Jn 17:20-26

### **The ministry continues in the world after Jesus’ departure. It is empowered by the Spirit**

The counsellor testifies ABOUT Jesus. (Jn 15:26). The disciples must testify about Jesus – they have been with him for his whole ministry. When they testify, they will be thrown out of the synagogue, (Jn 16:2) and killed because the perpetrators think they are serving God. (Jn 16:4)

This may seem a bit strong to you. Disciples of Jesus seem to get along well with their neighbours in Australia. In some place persecution of Christians is very strong and unjustified. Whether we are comfortable or uncomfortable in our society, we are not the same as our non-Christian friends and neighbours. They do not know God.

## **“for they do not know the One who sent me.” Jn 15:21**

The “world” seems to be particularly applied to the Jews and their leaders. It is synagogues that the disciples will be thrown out of. The reason that Jesus gives for their hatred of him and, by extension, the disciples is that they do not know God – the one who sent Jesus (Jn 15:21,16:3)

This is not simply a mistake. It is not a sin. **It is sin.** The world’s sin is not simply breaking rules. It is failing to recognise their God, the bringer of a new covenant. Jesus was God made flesh – they looked at him and wanted him dead. They should have recognised him. They should have known him and loved him.

### **Knowing God**

Knowing is not knowing about. It is having a personal relationship with someone. To Philip Jesus said: *“Don’t you know me, Philip ? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. Jn 14:9*  
When Jesus prays to his Father on the night before his death he says: *“<sup>3</sup> Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. (John 17:3)*

Jesus is talking about people who profess faith in God but do not know him. Is the OT God the same as Jesus? – Yes! It is that God who sent Jesus and whose being is manifested in Jesus. (Jn 15:21)

The problem is knowing about God but making him into a god of our own construction. How are we to know that we have not done that? It is by acknowledging Jesus. Serving God is NOT a defence. It does not replace knowing because it allows the possibility of serving the wrong god. (eg Paul of Tarsus)

Surely the God talked about in the Old Testament is a vengeful, jealous, rule enforcing God? Having said that, it is easy to miss that what God does is to “keep on keeping on”. He is merciful, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. (Exodus34:6). God who does NOT abandon his creation but is always rescuing his people and providing a path of reconciliation.

## **If I had not done among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty**

**of sin.** *But now they have seen these miracles, & yet they have hated both me & my Father. (Jn 15:21)*

**The miracles are signs** – not to amaze (“this must be a god!”) but pointing and saying – isn’t he like his Father whom you should know

Water into wine (Chap 2) new life

The official’s son (Chap 4) Water of life

The sick man (Chap 5) Son, life giver

5000 fed (Chap 6) Bread of life/Spirit of Life

Blind man (Chap 9) Light of life

Lazarus (Chap 11) Shepherd/life giver

**To know the Father, we need to know his character, not just his power**

## **Why does our era object to Jesus and his disciples?**

- Thought of as superstitious/unenlightened; intolerant; against equality; attempting to impose views on private matters and freedom, legalists not gracious
- Advocating unpopular causes – forgiveness, refugees
- Child molesting or hiding child molesters.

How should we be testifying in the power of God’s Spirit?