

# Keynotes from Pastor Tim's am Sermon on 1/03/2020

## Following Jesus into suffering

**John 15:17-20** <sup>17</sup> These things I command you, so that you will love one another. <sup>18</sup> If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> 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.

We are called to follow a Saviour who displayed both meekness and majesty. A person who has truly been confronted with the risen Lord Jesus, and has the life of God in their soul, won't look the same as they did before they met him. The call to follow Jesus is a call to suffer for the sake of the kingdom of God - being a Christian isn't for wimps. To follow Jesus means following a suffering Saviour who was hated and killed by the world.

- 1) **We are to expect hostility from the world. John 15:18, 20b** <sup>18</sup> If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.
  - a) We can see evidence of this throughout history and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century in countries like North Korea, Iran, and Nepal. Even in our own country, believers are losing their jobs when they refuse to compromise on issues like creation, same-sex marriage or gender identity.
  - b) Real Christianity will always bring with it a cross. Don't allow the liberty that Christians have had in the UK to lull you into a false sense of security – this is not normal Christianity. We are to expect hostility from the world.
- 2) **Jesus' expectation is that his people will be hated by the world but loved within the church.**

**John 15:17** These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

- a) The church is meant to be a safe place for us in a hostile world. When that hostility increases, love within the church should increase even more.
- b) Jesus only did good things yet in **John 15:25** he tells us that 'They hated me without a cause.' Meekness submits to the hostility of the world with the majesty of God's love – so Jesus submitted to this hostility without a word. He loved those who were hostile to him, and even when they were nailing him to the cross, he could ask his Father to forgive them.

**How can we follow this way of relating to the hostility of the world?**

- 1) **Hostility from the world is an evidence that we belong to Jesus** When we truly follow Jesus, we will love the people God brings to us, and seek to do them good not harm, especially looking out for their souls. If we then find ourselves being persecuted or experiencing hostility without cause, Jesus says it's because we belong to God, not the world.
- 2) **Hostility from the world is to be met with Jesus' love.** Jesus loved his enemies and so must we. It is counter cultural to love those who hurt or hate us, when the world tells us to get our own back on them.

**Romans 12:1-2** is a call to live out the gospel:

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Then Paul shows what that looks like:

- a) Loving one another -**Romans 12:9-10** <sup>9</sup> Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honour.
- b) Loving those who persecute us - **Romans 12: 14,17a,19-21** <sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. <sup>17</sup> Repay no one

evil for evil. <sup>19</sup> Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." <sup>20</sup> To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." <sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

- c) We can only meet hostility from the world with love because Christ dwells in us by his Spirit, as we abide in him and he in us.

### 3) Hostility from the world isn't a hindrance to witnessing to Jesus

- a) It might be tempting to think I will keep silent about Jesus, or even stop following him, if people are going to be hostile to me. **John 15:26 – 16:1** shows us that this is not an option. <sup>26</sup> "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. <sup>27</sup> And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning. Ch 16:1 I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away.'
- b) Jesus doesn't intend his people to stop following him, or to stop witnessing. To help us he has given us the Holy Spirit. Jesus' disciples kept following Jesus and witnessing about him because they were spirit filled people.
- c) We can't do it in our own strength, but we're not expected to. We too have the Holy Spirit within us to empower us to live as Jesus did in the face of the world's hostility.

Being a Christian isn't for wimps and neither is it for the self-reliant – it is for those indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God.