

St. John 17:14-19

Dear Friends in Christ,

Here are some of the thoughts that are being verbally expressed in this church - and others taking a Biblical position: "I don't like this world." You have to be careful how and to whom you express that thought for fear of finding yourself in a psych ward. "I wish Jesus would come back." I would hope we all do. "The church is shrinking." It is. Everywhere. "Why is the church shrinking?" - Read Matthew 24, Luke 18:8, Luke 21:10-36, Revelation 11 - for starts. "We need to get people in the church." - We need to invite, encourage and bring others to Bible Investigation Classes. "I feel sad and frightened by what's going on in this world." We all do. But we should become familiar and comfortable with and accepting of Luke 21:25-28 with emphasis on the 28<sup>th</sup> verse. "Where is everything going?" Read - and study - Scriptures. Everyone here needs to be in study! And with the questions should be the awareness of dislike, distrust and disrespect toward Biblical Christians.

So . . .

## WHAT WAS IT JESUS SAID?

### I. This Is What Has Been Given Us.

Our text is part of Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. Preceding our text, Jesus said, "For I have given them the words that you gave me...and they have believed that you sent me." (v. 8) Here, He is speaking about those first disciples. However, we must understand that everything Jesus said in His prayer included us. In fact, a little later in this prayer He prayed, "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through your word...". (v. 20) Us!

With this in mind, our text for this morning begins with these words of Jesus: "I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world." (v. 14) If we go back to the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of John's Gospel, we're told that Jesus said to the disciples - then and now, "The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that **its works are evil.**" (Jn. 7:7)

So, you're thinking, "In one place He said the 'world cannot hate you' (His people), but in another place He said that the world hates his people. Now what?" Well, the reality is that whatever hatred the world spews out against Christ's people is really against Him. The world doesn't hate us because it wants to hate us. It hates Jesus. If we're faithful witnesses to Him, the world will hate us. R.C.H. Lenski writes, "Through their contact with Jesus (the Christians' contact with Jesus) this has become so manifest that the world considers them traitors and renegades to itself (that is, to the world), hating them (Christians) accordingly." (Lenski, *Interpretation of St. John's Gospel*, p. 1144)

And here's the remarkable part of this: Most of the church today grinds itself away by compromising the Word or ignoring what are considered the socially unacceptable and politically incorrect parts, such as "the world's works are evil" or "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" - just for starts! How about this: Read Romans 1:18-32. Become familiar with it.

And look at us! We were once enemies of God, unworthy and undeserving of God's love. He called us to stand before Him and hear the verdict: "Guilty of sin (lawlessness) as charged. Worthy and deserving of death and hell!" But, as Scriptures say, "God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive with Christ - by grace (we) have been saved." (Eph. 2:4-5) And though still battling with sin, in Christ now the daily verdict is "Not Guilty!"

Well, **What Was It Jesus Said?** He said, of His people, "I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world." Well...we're not of this world! This world is not, cannot be, never will be our goal! It has to be, "whoever believes has eternal life."

## II. This Is Where We Are.

Jesus goes on to say, “I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.” (v. 15) The reason we’re still here, on this earth, is because we have been given the Word and we are to do something with it. P.E. Kretzmann writes:

Christians....are identified more fully with Christ (in this world). Purposely, therefore, Jesus does not ask that the believers be taken out of the world, that they be removed from the proximity of harm and danger and hatred, but only that the Father would keep them, shield them against the wiles of the devil...by not permitting these enemies (the enemies of this world, the demons and the devil) to seduce them, nor lead them into misbelief and despair, or other great shame and vice. (P.E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible*, New Testament, Vol. I, CPH, St. Louis, 1921, pl. 505.)

**This is where we are.** We have been entrusted with the Word and called upon to witness to it; the fact that, as Jesus said, “God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.” (Jn. 3:17) At the same time, we understand that we are engaged in a fierce war. That war is not simply with the world. It’s with “the evil one”. Satan. I would cite Lenski here:

All the hatred of the world against the disciples is inspired by Satan. The work of the disciples is to war not merely against flesh and blood but against demon spirits with “the evil one” as their head...and our protection is to be directed against his fiery darts.” (Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John’s Gospel*, p. 1145)

My friends, we **must hear and understand the words of Jesus:** “They (His people - you and me) are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.” (v. 16) The fact that most churches have and are succumbing to this world’s thinking and demands reveals that most don’t want to hear what Jesus said! It is as Paul prophesied. “For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions.” (2 Tim. 4:3)

## III. The Word Is Truth.

Jesus goes on to pray:

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. (vv. 17-19)

“Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.” To Sanctify. Set apart. And to do so through the Word because it is the truth. Recall these words of Jesus spoken well before the words of our text: “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (Jn. 8:31-32) And these words of Jesus: “I am the way, and truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (Jn. 14:6)

So, what do you want of this world that you think will make you happy and content? If you obtain it, what will be the cost? And if you obtain it, how long will it last before it loses its luster or takes you away from Jesus? Or, maybe, the real question is, “How long will you last and what will you sacrifice, but still have to face that gut wrenching moment of your appointment with the grave?”

The words of the Psalmist are a must! "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." (Ps. 119:105) And this: "The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple." (Ps. 119:130) And this:

"O Lord, according to your justice give me life....give me life according to your promise...give me life according to your rules...give me life according to your steadfast love...give me life according to your Word! (Psalm 119:149b, 154b,156b,159b,169b)

I know, some will argue. It will be the old "Yes, but..." debate. It always is. But there is no debate. The Word is clear: "Seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth...When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." (Col. 3:1-2)

**And what else did Jesus say?** "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it." (Lk. 9:23-24) I'm including myself in the what I'm going to say. I can't do otherwise. We have a lot of stuff...you and I. Maybe, in some ways, too much. A lot of waste. And a lot of wasted time! Maybe this world has been more our goal than we want to confess. With His blood, Jesus earned an unending Kingdom for us. If we believe that, then what He says about this world and us (including all our "Whys?") - what He says isn't all that difficult. Is it?

Amen.

Pastor Bill Abbott

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*St. John 17:14:19:* ***“What Was It Jesus Said?”***

*I. This is What Has Been Given Us.*

*II. This Is Where We Are.*

*III. The Word Is Truth.*

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