Olivet, Apr 10/22 Pastor Bob Popma

*'Seeing the Heart of Jesus'*

# “From Shout so Joy to Shouts of Hate”

## John 15:18-16:4

 One of the more frustrating new phrases that has made its way into our 21st century cultural vocabulary is ‘hate crime’. Officially the criminal code of Canada states that hate crime is

***an offence to communicate statements in a public place which incite hatred against an identifiable group*** [based on colour, race, religion, ethnic origin or sexual orientation] ***, where it is likely to lead to a breach of the peace****.*

 ‘Where it is likely to lead to a breach of the peace’ means it doesn’t have to; only that somehow thinks it could. And sadly someone shouts hate speech simply when you peacefully disagree with someone about ethical issues.

 Jesus talked about hate speech long before it became a political hot potato. Hours before He is to be arrested, Jesus warns His closest companions that some people hate Jesus and as a result some will hate us, which may even result in our deaths. As it did Jesus.

 If you only had a few hours left to live and you knew something bad might happen to those closest to you, would you not warn them? This is what Jesus was doing here in John 15:18-16:4. And He tells us why people hate His followers and why its important Jesus’ followers know this up front. Then we’ll look at how Jesus and the apostles said we should respond to hate.

**Why Do Some People Hate Jesus’ Followers?**

**(15:18-27)**

 Jesus clearly tells us why we’re hated:

*“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.*

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 Jesus assures us, it’s not really us, it’s Him.

***They hate Jesus (v.18)***

 “If the world hates you’ is what’s called a 1st class conditional statement. In a 1st class conditional statement the ‘if’ means since. ‘Since the world hates you keep in mind it hated Me first.’ People may hate us because of who we speak for and believe in – Jesus. People don’t hate God as much as Jesus only because they have an abstract understanding of God. In many minds God can be anyone or anything you want Him to be. But Jesus is a specific person, who walked this earth and made very clear statements about Himself and His Father.

 You may remember the TV show ‘Touched by An Angel’. It was very popular. Why? Because they mentioned God and angels but they didn’t mention Jesus. Even the Veggie Tales animated videos rarely contain Jesus. A few episodes but not many.

 Why else might the world reject and hate us?

*19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.*

***We don’t adopt their lifestyles (v.19)***

 There are the things the world does that we don’t participate in because its sinful, it doesn’t glorify God and it goes against the teachings of Jesus. Peter writes in 1 Peter 4,

*Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. 2 As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for*

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*evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. 3 For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. 4 They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. 5 But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.*

 ‘They think it strange’ that we don’t follow their destructive lifestyle choices and they ‘heap abuse on us’. We don’t like that. And sometimes we give in. Why? To avoid the abuse. To feel like we belong. It’s one of our biggest problems as believers.

 As if we need more reasons, Jesus gives us another one:

*20 Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. 21 They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me.*

 They don’t like Jesus, therefore they don’t know God.

***They reject the Word of God (vv.20-21)***

 God’s Word reveals God, His Son and their plan to save the world. They reject Jesus because they disbelieve or doubt God’s Word. It’s just a religious book written by men with some very unbelievable stories. If you don’t believe the Word, you won’t believe in Jesus and His love for you to save you.

 Jesus links the vine/branches analogy here. Abiding in Jesus means believing and showing by your lifestyle and words, Jesus is in you. If the Master is hated and mistreated,

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and the students are not greater than the master, then expect to be treated the same way. If we remain in Jesus and produce fruit that shows Jesus is living in us and through us, we too will be mistreated and unaccepted.

 And the real reason they reject Jesus and His Word is because

***They don’t want to admit they sin (vv.22-27)***

*22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin. 23 He who hates me hates my Father as well. 24 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, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. 25 But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’*

*26 “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. 27 And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.*

 Jesus words confront sin in people’s lives. The miracles affirmed Jesus was who he claimed to be; God’s sinless Son, who died for our sins and rose from the dead. Part of the message of the gospel is that all have sinned and Jesus died for our sins. To accept Jesus is to confess we are sinners in need of forgiveness. If we reject that we end up hating Jesus and those who share Hs Words.

 Jesus continues talking about this in 16:1 but now He gives two reasons why His followers need to know this.

**Why Does Jesus Warn us About This?**

**(16:1-4)**

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Whether we want to hear it or not, it’s better that we’re prepared for the difficult things in life than be surprised.

*All this I have told you so that you will not go astray. 2 They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. 3 They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me.*

 Jesus forewarns and prepares His followers to know what a sacrifice it is to follow Him. Yes, many blessings and an eternal home in glory, but possibly temporal suffering. But no different than Him. If Jesus suffered, we who follow Him will also suffer. So Jesus wants us to know it before it happens

***So we won’t abandon Jesus (vv.1-3)***

 Jesus doesn’t want us to go astray. He wants us to remain in Him. In the parable of the soils He states clearly that some people who are thinking of following Him will renege the first sign of hardship. Judas left because Jesus didn’t make His life more comfortable, more materially rich and less problem free. Hang in there even if they throw you out of the synagogue or even if they threaten your life. Sadly, many Muslims are brainwashed into thinking they are serving the God of Abraham when they kill Abraham’s spiritual descendants. But ‘Allah’ is not the God of Abraham because Allah doesn’t have a Son named Jesus, equally divine.

 Jesus is upfront with His followers. Choosing Jesus does not guarantee a problem free life. Does not guarantee a hassle free life. It actually means this life may become more difficult because we stand up for Jesus. We live in a world that doesn’t want a Jesus who points they need saving from their sins. They would rather live a life devoid of God and believe that there is no afterlife and we are not accountable for the

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things we do wrong.

 Jesus wants us to know these things ahead of time so we’re not surprised if and when it happens. But there’s also another reason why He wants us to know before it happens. Because many of us are surprised when hardship happens to us or persecution. Our initial response is often ‘Where is God?’ which is bad theology. God is everywhere. He is with us. He never forsakes us. So Jesus also says in 16:4

*4 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.*

 In other words, I’m not going to be physically with you and you will be hated because of Me.

***So don’t feel Jesus has abandoned you (v.4)***

 These 11 disciples might very well have concluded after Jesus left was as soon as bad things happened its because Jesus was no longer with them. ‘No, I am still with you through the presence of the Spirit’, Jesus was saying. ‘It’s actually because I am with You – you believed in Me and My presence dwells with You – that you are being harassed and persecuted.’

 So to say ‘Where is God/Jesus?’ when we suffer for Him is the wrong thing to think or say? The reason why we suffer is because He is living in us and we’re living for Him and the world hates that.

**So How Do We Respond to Hate?**

 Jesus doesn’t say anything here because He has already taught them about this and it will be the Spirit who will

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bring His teaching back to their minds. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught,

*11 “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

***Consider it as a ‘blessing’ from God (Matt. 5:11-12)***

 That people treat us badly because of Jesus is something Jesus says is an honour. When these same disciples were arrested and beaten for telling others about Jesus in Acts 5:41, we read

*The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.*

 The New Testament lists numerous examples of the disciples, Paul and Silas, Timothy and others suffering for Jesus. To be treated like Jesus is the highest compliment in God’s eyes.

 Jesus also taught His followers to

***Pray for their persecutors (Matt. 5:43-45)***

*43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.*

 “Love” [agape] is not an emotional term in God’s Word. It’s an action word. Serve them humbly. Do good to them. Pray for them to come to know Jesus as Saviour.

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 Praying for them can change not just their hearts but ours towards them. We see them from God’s perspective. Lost, sacred and really intimidated by our commitment to Jesus. They thrash out as a way of hiding their fears.

***Overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:17-21)***

*17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.”*

*21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

 We live in a get-even world. Speak back. Hit back. Text/type back. Jesus says there’s a better way. Ina few hours the disciples would see what man’s hatred will do to Jesus. And one more way they should respond to hate, Jesus couldn’t teach them, He had to show them. And Peter describes this in 1 Pet. 2

*19 For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. 20 But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. 21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.*

*22 “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.”*

*23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.*

[Prayer]

 Father in heaven, sovereign over all life’s experiences, help us entrust ourselves to you as Jesus did when we experience abuse and possibly persecution. We are so tempted – and sometimes fall to the temptation – to attack back. Mostly verbally or on social media. While we do have certain rights as Canadian citizens that we can invoke, as citizens of heaven though, we have a greater Law we are to bend our wills too – yours.

 So we pray for those co-workers, classmates and neighbours or family members that give us a hard time for our following Your Word and Jesus. We ask that they would open their eyes and hearts to the truth of Your Word and see themselves as needing Jesus to save them from their sins. Help us to endure the general sufferings of life as well as the abuse we might receive, knowing that You consider us blessed for living for Jesus.

 Help our children to understand these things. To not abandon Jesus when life gets hard or when something says something hurtful about their walk with You. And to assure them (and us) that Jesus hasn’t abandoned them either. Just the opposite; He is with us always.

 May the Holy Spirit give us ideas about how to serve those who we’d rather not so we can show them the Saviour they reject, but who they desperately need.