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John 15:18-25 MKJV If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. (19) If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. (20) Remember the word that I said to you, The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they have kept My saying, they will also keep yours. (21) But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. (22) If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have had sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. (23) He who hates Me hates My Father also. (24) If I had not done among them the works which no other did, they would not have had sin. But now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father. (25) But that the Word might be fulfilled that is written in their Law, "They hated Me without a cause."

"They hated me without a cause." Many of God's servants are hated without a justifiable cause. Paul was hated, beaten and imprisoned for casting out a demon in Acts 16! Peter and John were beaten for healing a lame man! Christians are not persecuted and killed for being liars or thieves or murderers - but because they are Christ's!

"If you were of the world, the world would love its own." Worldly compromisers avoid persecution by joining the demonic world system that is opposed to God. They water down the gospel and emphasize the powerless aspects of merely human religion. If a clergyman is openly gay or denies the resurrection, he or she is lauded as progressive. The world loves its own man-made faith. But the churches that preach it are dead and dying. The growing churches are those that preach the Scriptures and which abound in the apostolic faith.

"But because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." We are aliens and strangers on the earth, God has chosen us out of the world and we do not belong to it any more. **Galatians 6:14 MKJV** But may it never be for me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world." There is this radical break between Christians and the world system of pomp and pride and boasting and social status. We have come out of the world and no longer play by those rules any more. Our election is obvious, we are God's and by obvious implication, they are not.

"Remember the word that I said to you, The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." The world system, the "cosmos", hated Jesus before it hated the apostles. It is opposed to Jesus and is therefore opposed to any that are like Him. To be a Spirit-filled, bible-believing, born-again Christian who works the works of God is to be in direct opposition to the established social order. The social order will say things such as "there should be a separation of Church and State." indicating that the biblical, apostolic Christian faith is not welcome in the halls of power. Why? Because Christianity pricks consciences and exposes injustice and above all because it says that they have not "made it" until they find Christ and that their system grants no

lasting honors and that all lasting honors are awarded by God alone.

Notice Jesus does not say "they might persecute you" but "they will persecute you". Some form of persecution is practically a guaranteed certainty. "2 Timothy 3:12 MKJV Yea, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." This will be especially true in the end times that are fast approaching. It is a daily truth for the 260,000 Christians that are martyred for their faith each year. (Source: World Christian Encyclopedia)

"If they have kept My saying, they will also keep yours." The converse is also true - the sheep know the voice of the Master even when it is coming from the humblest of pastors. People will follow their pastors as they would follow Christ - and that is a very great honor! There will be some that listen to the gospel, and some that want to follow Christ, and we must lead them to good pastures and feed them with the living Word. We cannot let criticism deter us from speaking the truth they need to hear, they have not come to us to hear the world, but Christ. They can hear the world's preaching at any time, from us they must hear Jesus.

The "world" is not just a political or social system it is a spiritual system:

"1 Corinthians 2:12 MKJV (12) But we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit from God, so that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God."

The world has its human religion, commandments and taboos:

Colossians 2:20-23 MKJV (20) If then you died with Christ from the elements of the world, why, as *though* living in *the* world, are you subject to *its* ordinances: (21) touch not, taste not, handle not; (22) which things are all for corruption in the using, according to the commands and doctrines of men? (23) *These* things indeed have a reputation of wisdom in self-imposed worship and humility, and unsparing severity of *the* body, *but are* not of any value for the satisfying of the flesh.

and this spiritual system is evil :

"Galatians 1:4 MKJV who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world according to the will of God and our Father,"

and is controlled by the Devil :

1 John 5:19 ISV We know that we are from God and that the whole world lies under the control of the evil one.

Thus to be a friend of the world is to be an enemy of God:

James 4:4 ISV You adulterers! Don't you know that friendship with the world means hostility with God? So whoever wants to be a friend of this world is an enemy of God.

But we overcome the world by having faith in Jesus as the Son of God:

1 John 5:4-5 ISV because everyone who is born from God has overcome the world. Our faith is the victory that overcomes the world. (5) Who overcomes the world? Is it not the person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

We must leave the world's value system far behind:

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 ISV (14) Stop becoming unevenly yoked with unbelievers. What partnership can righteousness have with lawlessness? What fellowship can light have with darkness? (15) What harmony exists between Christ and Beliar, or what do a believer and an unbeliever have in common? (16) What agreement can a temple of God make with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, just as God said: "I will live and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people." (17) Therefore, "Get away from them and separate yourselves from them," declares the Lord, "and don't touch anything unclean. Then I will welcome you. (18) I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters," declares the Lord Almighty.

Thus there will always be a tremendous tension between the true Christian and the world system and this tension is not easily resolved. For some they may have to join a monastery to consecrate themselves utterly to God, others will manage an inner separation in the midst of secular life. But we cannot compromise and we cannot wimp out. Christ, not the culture, is the judge.

Blessings,

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