

A Serious Reality Check – *If the world hates you...*

John 15:18-25

Jesus' words need to form and correct our expectations. He speaks directly about the hatred the world has for Him and for all who will ever be His followers. Jesus says (verse 1, NIV) – 'If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.' We should expect opposition for following Jesus and considering this theme leads us to gaze upon and consider His crucifixion.

1. Committed followers of Christ will face opposition from the world!

Jesus tells His followers to expect opposition. Followers of Jesus in every generation should expect to experience hatred and persecution for identifying with Him.

The world is in sinful rebellion against its Creator. Picture a tug of war between the world and the will of God. The world pulls one way and the demands of discipleship pull the other.

The world has a hard time with those whose supreme allegiance is to Jesus when they're living in rebellion against Him. Jesus' point is that we shouldn't be surprised by the world's hatred.

2. We need to allow Jesus' words to His disciples to transform our perspective and expectations about suffering and persecution.

Opposition for the sake of Christ is normal. We need to expect that the world will not understand our values and priorities.

A complete lack of opposition is NOT a sign of spiritual health. We need to recalibrate our expectations because seeking first the Kingdom of God produces push-back and resistance.

Ponder the cross, our salvation came through suffering.

3. When we find ourselves facing opposition, we must consider the reason for it.

It's possible to suffer because of our own bad behavior. We must not assume all opposition is persecution because of Christ. We also mustn't assume underserved suffering never happens because it does! If the suffering isn't because we've done wrong, we ought to rejoice.

Our default human condition is dead in our sins but most people see themselves as 'generally good'. The message of our sin is deeply offensive because it says we deserve death.

Sometimes hatred we experience isn't correlated to something we've done wrong but what we've done right. We can experience opposition and hatred because of our love for the Lord.

Remember God works out His plan of salvation through suffering which points us to the heart of the Gospel, to the cross! Jesus came to offer salvation to the world in rebellion against Him.