Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Hated Without a Cause, Part 2
Scripture: John 15:17-25
Code: 1556

Our Father, we thank You this morning for the wonderful truths that we have just heard. The Lord is indeed our Shepherd, that we who have chosen to follow Jesus have a tender Shepherd who guards us and keeps us and leads us and feeds us and someday shall lead us through the valley of the shadow of death into His own presence forevermore. We rejoice that we are counted worthy to be disciples of such a Shepherd, of such a Christ. And, Father, we ask that this morning as we look to the Word of God, our hearts will be lifted again to see what is required of us as disciples, to see that we are to be as Jesus was, the antagonist of the world, even though it means to suffer all of the abuse the world may give, that we can do it with hearts that are full of joy knowing that we are blessed when we are reviled because of the sake of Christ. Bless our time in the Word, Father, and meet each need of each heart that is here. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

About three weeks ago, one of the young college men here at Grace Church by the name of Bob Marriet, 26 year old young man was sharing Christ in a park here in the valley. And he was giving out tracts and confronting people with their sin and the need of Jesus Christ and he was attacked and beaten up by some individuals. Then a week ago last Tuesday, the same young man was out sharing Jesus Christ again, as he usually did, only this time he was at the corner of Seventh and Broadway in Los Angeles. At 4:40 in the afternoon, he was attacked and beaten again. This time the back of his skull was fractured in four places. As best they can tell, evidently by someone antagonized by his witnessing.

In the hospital, three holes were drilled in his skull to attempt to relieve the pressure of the fracture, but without success. And in three days he was dead.

When you read something like that in the newspaper, you say, "Yeah, that's right." When something like that happens to somebody that's a part of your life, it changes. And then you realize that the world is a lot more hostile to the committed Christian than we think it is. Bob was a young man, I understand from our college young people, who would rather walk home than get a ride because he felt that if he walked he would be able to meet somebody with whom he could share Jesus Christ. That's the kind of person he was.

Ed Backe was sharing this testimony with us on Wednesday night and he said that Bob was the kind of a person who never had a bad thing to say about anybody, who never gossiped or anything, but was totally content just to be sharing Jesus Christ. Well, Bob lost his life in confronting the Christ

hating world. That was the price that he paid.

Now we've been studying in John 15 that this is the case. And indeed we've seen it illustrated to us as graphically as you could possible see it with one of our own people. The godless people who are a part of Satan's system hate Christ. And they hate those who are committed to proclaiming Christ. We are living in a hostile world. We are living in a world that reacts violently to the message of sin. In Acts chapter 1 and verse 8, Jesus Christ preparing to ascend into heaven said, "Ye shall receive power after the Holy Spirit is come upon you and ye shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth." And the word "witnesses", "witnesses unto Me" in the Greek is mumarturis and from that word marturis which meant "witness," we eventually got the word "martyr," which means somebody who dies. And the reason is because when somebody became a witness for Jesus Christ, they normally paid for it with their life. And the word marturis soon became far more than just a witness; it soon meant a person who dies for his testimony. And so many died throughout the years of the early church that the word was identified with that.

That's just exactly what Jesus said would happen in John 15. Let's go in our Bibles to John 15 and we'll pick up where we left off last week. Certainly my heart has been so burdened, I'm sure yours has too in just hearing about the account of Bob, perhaps most of you didn't know him. But I think we can go to John chapter 15 and the hatred of the world against a Christian with a little cleaner view, a little clearer understanding than perhaps we would have had last week. Jesus said it would be like this but I don't know whether we believed it, but maybe we believe it now.

And Jesus wanted to warn His disciples because, you see, they were told about all the wonderful promises that were theirs. They were told that they would have power unlimited. That they would be able to do the things that even hadn't been done when Jesus was here. That they would have peace, that they would have joy, that they would experience the abundance that God could give to them. They were told that they would have all the promises that Christ could possibly put at their disposal. They were told they would lack absolutely nothing. They were told that they would have the energy and the power and the ability to confront the world.

Down in verse 26 and 27 of chapter 15, the promise comes to them, "But when the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He shall testify of Me and ye also shall bear witness because you've been with Me from the beginning." He even tells them that they will have Holy Spirit energized witnessing, Holy Spirit energized testimony. But lest they think because they have all these promises and because they have all this power in the Holy Spirit that they can go out into the world and expect no response that is negative and no reaction, Jesus takes all the way from verse 18 clear through verse 25 to tell them that the world is going to hate them for their testimony, the world is going to despise them and the world is going to attempt to persecute them. And down in verse I and 2 of chapter 16, He says the world is going to kill you and think that by doing that they're doing God's service because they'll be so steeped

in false religion.

And so, Jesus in the last night before He leaves this world in His crucifixion, this last time with His disciples, not only gives them promise after promise after promise but He also gives them this great warning to be aware of the hatred of the world.

Now we began to see last week why it is that the world hates Jesus Christ and why it is that the world continues to hate those who are Christ's, those of us who have decided to follow Jesus, those of us who are willing to deny ourselves, take up the cross and follow Him daily. Why it is the world hates us, Jesus gives us three reasons, really, here.

Number one, and we're reviewing for a moment, the world hates us because we're not of this world, verses 18 and 19. Now we saw this last week. We saw that because we aren't a part of the evil system of the world, the hates us. Naturally sin hates righteousness and false religion hates true religion. The world is a realm of evil. The world is controlled by Satan himself and his evil angels. The world is a society of wicked men who have set themselves against God, against Christ, against the Kingdom of God and against God's people. That's the world. And the world hates everything that is of God, of Christ or of us who are His. And as I told you last week, the heart of the whole system is false religion, whether it's atheistic religion, whether it's idolatry, cults, liberalism, modernism which is Satanic, whether it's the god of materialism or humanism or whatever it is, they all hate true religion which is that involving faith in Jesus Christ. And so, because we don't fit the system, we stand apart.

Look at verse 18, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you are of the world, the world would love its own, but because ye are not of the world but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." Don't be surprised when the world hates you, Jesus said to His disciples, it hated Me. And the reason it hates you, verse 19, is because you're not a part of it. If you were of the world, the world would love its own.

It's kind of interesting that "its own" is a neuter singular rather than a masculine plural. The world loves its own, and "its own" is an individual singular usage. Every individual in the world loves his own things. That's what it's saying. It is not that the world really loves each other; it is that each individual in the world loves himself and the things that are his. And he only loves others insofar as loving others will bring advantage to him. There's no love for the sake of love. It loves in the system to pass ... pacify its conscience, or it loves in the system to gain an advantage. The world loves its own. And it's a selfish kind of love, it's phileo love at best which is natural love, not agape which is deep, divine love. And it's superficial because it's connected to advantage. If ... if you were of the world, the world would love not you but its own, its own system, those who can give it advantage, it loves. And so naturally it would not love us because we are to the world's disadvantage. We discredit the world. We confront the world. We condemn the world. We rebuke the world by a pure life and by the Word of God and thus the world does not love us.

John tells us in 1 John chapter 5 that the whole world lies in the lap of the evil one. That's a vivid picture. The whole world lies in the lap of the evil one. There it rest in the evil one. They're not unhappy, they're relaxing there. The world is self-satisfied. The world is complacent. The world is indifferent to God. The world is unaware of its lostness, unconcerned about hell, alienated from God, lulled into the stupidity of doubting God's judgment, hypnotized by Satan and his evil. The world is asleep in the lap of Satan. And when you and I come along and start rattling the world to wake it up, it's very, very uncomfortable. The world doesn't want to be disturbed. And when we arrive and begin the disturbing message of sin, the disturbing message of judgment, the disturbing message of hell we begin to rattle the world a little bit and they don't like it. They're comfortable in the arms of Satan. And the only response the world has is to hate the message and the messenger.

And that's the attitude of the world toward Christianity. And don't you think it's any different, because it isn't. And if it's different in your life, then the world isn't too sure that you're really committed to Jesus Christ. It's a settled fact. In verse 19, we have what we call in the Greek a first class conditional. If you are of the world, the world would love its own. And the "if" there is if ... if in the purest sense this is how it is, not if possible, but if absolutely probable, absolutely fact. You were of ... if you were of the world, the world would love its own. But because you're not of the world but I've chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. It's the if of a settled condition, the world loves its own things, the world is involved in its own things.

Verse 18 is the same thing. "If the world hate you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you." And you can be sure the world will hate you. That's what it's ... it's another first class conditional in verse 18. If the world hate you, and the first class conditional in the Greek means "and it will, mark it," you know that it hated Me before it hated you.

Every man born is born into this world as a part of Satan's system. He is under the headship of Satan. His father is the devil, the god of this world. His life is centered around the things of Satan. You know, and it's hard to get people to understand this but if you read Ephesians chapter 2 and from verses 1 to 3 where it describes it, it says it right there. It talks about the fact that we're all dead in trespasses and sin. It talks about the fact that Satan controls our lives. The unsaved individual is ... has a Satan centered existence and when one man or woman comes to a knowledge of Jesus Christ by personal faith, he is then delivered from the world. And in verse 19 it says the world doesn't love you because of that. You are taken out of the world; you are delivered from the system. As Paul said it in Colossians, you are translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. You are taken apart from the world. You have been removed from all the old associations into associates and the old world hates you because of the new liberty that is yours in Christ, because of the new found joy, because of the new kind of confidence and the sense of belonging in an eternal way to God because of the fact that you have answers and that you share those answers. And that you confront them with sin and with judgment.

The response of the world is one, first of all, of antagonism. It's one of envy. It's one of jealousy. It's one of hatred because our freedom and our joy are so real and theirs are non existent. It's an old story. Anybody hates somebody who's got all the answers. And especially satanic godless men in the world hate those who give the answer when the answer is the antithesis of satanic activity, the person of Jesus Christ.

If there isn't any antagonism in the world toward your testimony, then you don't have a visible testimony. So they hate us first of all because we don't belong to the system and we violate the system and we confront the system. And by a pure life, we rebuke the system. And Satan militates against that.

Secondly, and we saw this last week just initially, they hated us ... they hate us, I should say, because they hated our Lord Jesus. That's number two. The world hates us because they hated Jesus Christ and we represent Him. You see, hate isn't something you can store up, hate has to be vented. And the world has always hated Jesus Christ and they have nobody to unleash that hatred on other than those of us who represent Jesus Christ. And so we get the brunt of His ... of really the hatred that is directed toward Christ. The unbelievers who reject Jesus Christ and hated Him and continue to hate Him without a cause, haven't given up their hatred, they've just redirected it to us who represent Jesus Christ. And let me assure you that the hatred of the world is just as virile today as it was two thousand years ago. There are people all over the world dying for their faith in Jesus Christ.

Now notice verse 20. It says at the beginning of verse 20, "Remember the word that I said unto you," and He's referring back to chapter 13 verse 16, "the servant is not greater than his lord." Now back there He was talking about service. Back there He was saying to them, "I'm concerned that you humbly wash each other's feet as I have done to you and serve each other." But here He's using the same principle to apply to persecution and He's saying, "You know, they persecuted Me, you don't think that if they persecuted your Master that you're going to get away without persecution, do you?" It identifies us with Jesus Christ in the fellowship of His sufferings.

In Philippians chapter 3 and verse 10, Paul talked about the fellowship of His sufferings. He knew what that meant. At our house, we have a little trophy case where we have some old trophies from way back that got all smashed in the earthquake. And that's kind of, you know, from my past life about all I have to show for a lot of years of a lot of effort is a whole lot of junk.

But you know, as I was reading in the end of Galatians some years ago, I discovered Paul's trophy case and Paul had a very interesting trophy case. He said, at the end of Galatians, he said, "I bear in my body the marks of Jesus Christ." Paul's trophy case was on his body.

And I can imagine when he was with somebody, it came time to take his clothes off, perhaps to go to bed at night or whatever, he'd take them off and the person would say, "Boy, where did you get all those marks, Paul? They're all over you." And Paul would say, "Well, you see those over there, see, got those for Jesus. You see those stripes across the back; I got those for the sake of Jesus." And I believe he loved every one of them. And he said, "For me to live is ... what? ... is Christ and to die, that's gain ... that's gain." He says, "I count my life as dung, as nothing that I may win Christ."

And see, that was commitment. That was a kind of discipleship that identified him with Jesus Christ and he felt the same kind of abuse that the world gave to Jesus and finally, his head was cut off. Now he knew the fellowship of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, most Christians don't know that. Most Christians don't have the joy of knowing what it is to suffer rebuke, the anger and hatred of the world and in that sense to identify completely with Jesus Christ.

And Peter says, you know, in 1 Peter chapter 2, he says ... you know, he says, "Christ suffered as an example for us," hupogramos is the Greek word, as a copy, or as a pattern for he ought to suffer. How did He suffer? He suffered and when He was reviled He reviled not again. He never reacted to suffering, He took it willingly. And that's the way we're to take it. Christ not only suffered on the cross to bear away our sin, but He suffered on the cross to give us a pattern as to how we ought to confront the world. And if the world abuses us, we ought to take it in silence and count ourselves worthy to have suffered with Jesus.

And so, He says, "Don't be surprised if you suffer because I did and the servant is not greater than his lord." All right, then He says in verse 20, "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also." And you know what He's saying there? He's saying, "You're going to have the same situation that I had. Some people are going to persecute you and some people are going to accept your words, there's going to be a vast majority who will come after you, who will be antagonized, who will be angered at you. Then there are going to be those who accept."

Now you know, most people don't experience this because their whole Christianity may revolve in the church. We don't feel the antagonism here because we're believers here. But you try going door to door on your block and see how it affects people when you get to their door and announce to them that they are sinners in line for the judgment of God and an eternal hell. You see, we aren't really in the business of confronting the world, we usually confine our Christianity to ourselves and that's the problem.

And so, what does He say? He says, "They're going to persecute you. But some as have accepted My word, will also accept your word." And that's the joy of it all. But keep in mind, there's always going to be only a few. Matthew 7, Jesus said, "Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be that go in there at, but narrow is the way into life everlasting and few there be that find it."

One minister said that there's going to be more people in heaven than there will be in hell. I don't believe that. I don't believe that for a minute. I believe it's always the few, it's always the narrow way, it's always the remnant. But that's the joy of our ministry to be able to confront the world and suffer whatever abuse may come and know that some will hear the gospel and believe.

All right, in Acts chapter 7. I want to show you a little illustration of this, of the attitude of one individual. In Acts 7:52, a man named Stephen turned out to be, in Scripture at least, the first martyr of the church. In Acts ... 52, and all through this chapter he's been preaching a great message, really indicting the people for their sin. And listen to how really powerfully he indicts them. Verse 52, "Which of the fathers have not your fathers persecuted?" He tells them, "You guys have just ... which of the prophets, I mean, have not your fathers persecuted?" He says, "You've just persecuted the prophets from the beginning of your history to the end and they have slain them who showed before the coming of the just one. You killed all the prophets, of whom you have been the betrayers and murderers." He calls them what they are. "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels and have not kept it."

Well, by the time he got done with this sermon, they were really furious. Verse 54, "When they heard these things they were cut to the heart and they gnashed on him with their teeth." They began to grind their teeth they were so mad. "But he being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God."

Well, naturally, this would ... you know, here he was seeing a vision of God Himself in heaven in His glory. And verse 57, "Then they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears." They were so furious at him because he had indicted them and said that he was the one who had a relationship with God, he was the one who had a vision of the glory of God, not them. And they slammed their hands over their ears and they ran on him with one accord. Boy, that's antagonism. "And they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet whose name was Saul, who later became Paul, and they stoned Stephen who was calling upon God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord; lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." It's a little bit of the antagonism of the world.

Look at chapter 8. "And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles, and devout men carried Stephen to his burial and made great lamentation over him." That's a little idea of the pure hatred of the world when confronted with sin.

We were at a conference earlier this week, Paul and I in San Diego, National Youth Workers Conference, and the speaker for the week was Dr. Francis Schaeffer, the author of many books, The God Who Was There, Pollution: The Christian View of Ecology, many other books. And he was saying, in essence, what we have to get rid of are cheap presentations of the gospel and we've got to tell it like it like it is. And he's right. He's right. We have to confront men with their sin openly and f rankly and expect a reaction. Sometimes they'll receive Jesus Christ, more times than not ... than that, they'll violently react. When you confront the world, you get a reaction. And if you're not getting it, you're not confronting the world.

In the fifteenth century in Italy, the church was going great. Organized religion was at its heyday. The Pope was ruling everything. The Catholic Church had extended itself all over the place, and certainly in Italy especially, it was powerful and everybody went to church and everybody believed in God. And everybody was religious. But it was a fake. And the whole system at that point was under the control of Satan.

There came a preacher at that time, in the fifteenth century in Italy, whose name was Savana Rolla. Savana Rolla was, historically, one of the greatest reformers, preachers, prophets, politicians, philosophers the world has ever known. He entered into fifteenth century Italy and began to confront Italy with its sin. He preached on sin constantly. He denounced the sins and the corruptions of the Roman Church and he also denounced the sins and corruptions of individuals. He really prepared the way for the Reformation and had Italy had the kind of soil that Germany has, Savana Rolla might have been the reformer and not Martin Luther.

His preaching, his biographer says, quote: "Was a voice of thunder and his denunciation of sin was so terrific that the people who listened to him went about the street half dazed, bewildered and speechless. His congregations were so often in tears that the whole church resounded with their sobs and weeping. So they burned him at the stake. His body went up in flames and organized religion led the fire."

You never can confront the world without expecting to get a reaction. And false systems of religion are behind it all. Satan operates through false religion. And I'm not just talking about Catholicism, there are some Catholics who know and love Jesus Christ. I'm talking about Catholicism perhaps sometimes in history as a system. I'm talking about liberal Protestantism. I'm talking about modernism. I'm talking about cults. I'm talking about whatever other kind of false system Satan can get, whether or not it has proximity to the Christian faith or is far from the Christian faith, they're all antagonistic to Jesus Christ. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "You will be hated of all men for My namesake." And the world does hate us because they hated Him. And if He lives in us and lives through us, they're going to hate us ... they're going to hate us.

All right, then thirdly and lastly, not only does the world hate us because we're not part of the system and because they hated our Lord, but thirdly, they hate us now watch this one because they don't know God ... they don't know God. And this is naturally the hardest thing for the world to swallow, especially those in false religions. And you can imagine how this went over when it was constantly the message of Jesus to the Jews. The Jews always prided themselves on their knowledge of God and Jesus repeatedly told them you don't know God ... you don't know God. And that is what infuriated them more than anything else.

Now here's the real deep inner cause of all hate. It is the absence of a knowledge of God. Look at verse 21. "But all these things will they do unto you for My namesake because they know not Him that sent Me."

You see, He says they're going to kill you, they're going to persecute you because of Me and they're going to do it because they don't know God who sent Me. Man is born into the world in enmity with God. He is rebellious. He is full of hate toward God. Men don't love God. Men don't know God.

You say, "What about religious people?" First Corinthians 10:20 says, "What they do is sacrifice unto demons and not unto God." False religion is demonic. Liberalism, modernism, those things that even call themselves Christianity that deny the virgin birth of Christ and the deity of Christ and the verbal inspiration of Scripture, those are not people who love God, those are people who hate God. They are under Satan's control. Whether it's gross kind of atheism or whether it's superficial kind of liberal modern Christianity, they all hate God. They are at enmity with God. They are against God. They are on Satan's side.

And to be honest with you, an individual who doesn't worship the true God through Jesus Christ presented in the New Testament, comes out an atheist no matter what else he may worship. For to worship the wrong God is nothing but practical atheism. And people in our world who think they're worshiping God are worshiping a God who doesn't exist and not worshiping the God who does. And that comes out atheism.

The Jews came along and they claimed to know God and yet they hated God in a body, Jesus Christ. What kind of a strange paradox is that? Jesus said, "You claim to know God and you hate Me and I'm God in human flesh." Their love of God was a facade, it was a fake, it was a lie. They didn't love God. Jesus said you don't even know God; you're of your father the devil in John 8. And they were super, super, super religious people.

Let me just show you a couple of verses in John 8. Verse 19, "Then they said unto Him, Where is Thy Father?" He was talking about the fact that God was His Father. "Where is Thy Father? Jesus answered; 'Ye neither know Me nor My Father. If you'd known Me, you should have known My Father

also.'"

Then over in 50 ... verse 54, "Jesus answered, If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father that honoreth Me of whom ye say that He is your God." See. But watch this. "Yet ye have not known Him."

They claim to know God, very religious, tremendously religious. And Jesus says you don't know God. He's not your Father at all. You're of your father the devil. You have no knowledge of God whatever or you would know Me and you would honor Me as God.

The world worships the God who doesn't exist. In Acts chapter 17, you remember Paul arrived in Athens. He stood up on Mars Hill and he said this, "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are very religious ... very religious. For as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD whom therefore ye ignorantly worship."

Now, there they were worshiping some God they didn't even know and yet they were very, very, very religious. Typical of man's approach to religion. He postulates a god who doesn't exist, worships that god and then says he worships God when in fact he's an atheist.

In 1 Corinthians 2:7, Paul said, "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages unto our glory which none of the princes of this age knew, for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Paul says if men had known God, they never would have crucified Jesus Christ. And if men knew God today, they wouldn't continue to put Him to open shame and crucify Him afresh, but they do and that's proof positive they don't know God at all.

And I've told you so many times throughout our study of John's gospel that if an individual has never invited Jesus Christ into his life and received Him as personal Savior, I don't care who that individual is or what he thinks he knows, he has absolutely no knowledge of God at all. No man ever knew God who rejected Jesus Christ, who is God in human flesh. And here is the deep reason why people hated Christ and why they hate us, they don't know God and they are lulled to sleep by satanic counterfeit religion into thinking that they know God when they don't. That's why false religion is such a curse. I believe Satan spends his time in false religion. The world thinks it is theologically oriented, but it is godless, it is blind.

Now, at this point somebody might pop up and say, "Well, you know, this is kind of a sad thing because after all, it's not my fault, right? I mean, it's not my fault I was born ignorant of God. I came into the world; I don't know God, why are you holding me responsible?"

You are responsible. Let me show you why. In Romans chapter 1 verse 19, read this ... well, verse 18, really, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness.” In other words, men know the truth ... men know the truth. Verse 19, “Because that which may be known of God is manifested in them for God hath shown it unto them.” Every man that comes into this world, God gives him the basic knowledge that He exists and not only from his inward knowledge, but verse 20, from creation he can know there’s a God. “The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen.”

You say, “Well, if all of the information is there, how ... how did man get to the situation where he doesn’t know God?” I’ll tell you how, verse 21, “Because when they knew God,” listen to this, “they glorified Him not as God but became vain in their imaginations, their foolish heart was darkened, professing themselves to be wise they became fools and changed the glory of incorruptible God in an image,” and it goes on to describe the image. And finally, they wind up worshiping themselves. And in verse 28 it says, “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, a worthless mind.”

Men who enter the world are born in rebellion against God but with an innate knowledge that God exists. And Jesus in John 1 is said to be the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Men know the truth of God. Man willingly rejects the truth of God, is willful. He rejects God and Christ not because of ignorance but because of malice, because of evil, because of wickedness, because he loves the darkness rather than the light. And when the darkness shines like the bug under the rock, he crawls back in the dark. Man doesn’t know God, it’s truer but not because of anything but man’s own malice and man’s own wickedness and man’s own rejection of God’s full revelation. Men have committed the most serious sin possible. Men have committed the sin of rejecting the revelation of God.

Notice verse 22, “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin but now they have no cloak for their sin.” I want you to see what this verse means cause it’s absolutely one of the most important verses in the whole book of John.

Jesus says, “If I hadn’t come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin but now they have no cloak for their sin.” Now He’s not talking about general sin because whether Jesus came or didn’t come, men were still sinners. He’s talking about the sin of willful rejection when you have the total revelation. In other words, the greatest sin that a man could commit is to have all of the specifics of God’s revelation and then reject. And Jesus said, “I have come and I have spoken unto you and you have seen My life and when you have rejected Me, then you have committed the sin of total rejection with total revelation. And the cloak of your hypocrisy is ripped off, you can’t hide your sin anymore. It’s obvious. You proved it by spurning me.”

He’s talking then about the specific sin of rejecting God and willfully spurning Jesus Christ. The greatest sin possible that a man can commit in the world is the sin of rejecting God’s full revelation. When the world killed Jesus Christ, they did it in the face of revelation. God had given them the whole Old Testament. God gave them Jesus Christ. They heard what He said. They saw what He did. They watched His life and then they killed Him. And they had thus reacted to all that God could communicate with hatred, antagonism and unbelief. They rejected every single thing that God could possibly reveal to them. Jesus says, “If I hadn’t have come and given you full display of revelation,, you could never have committed the sin of rejection against full revelation, but now that I came and I totally displayed God to you and you rejected, you’ve committed the sin? The sin of total rejection to total revelation and the cloak is off; your hypocrisy is over with. I came. I completely revealed God to you and you wouldn’t have been able to commit the fullest sin if I hadn’t given you the fullest revelation. But you’ve done it. You’ve done it.”

This is the sin of which the writer of Hebrews speaks in a very important passage that many have misunderstood. I’ve shared it with you before, let me just give it to you again. Hebrews 6:4, “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit and have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they shall fall away to renew them again under repentance, seeing they crucified of themselves the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame.”

It says right there that when somebody has been enlightened with the revelation of God, when somebody has tasted the heavenly gift, when somebody has been partaker of the Holy Spirit, seen what the Spirit of God has done, watched the energy and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the age to come, when somebody’s had all the revelation God can give, if they fall away there’s no way they can ever be renewed again to repentance. Why? Because they had a total rejection at the point of total revelation and God can go no further than that.

That’s not talking about a Christian losing his salvation, we know that because further on down in verse 9 he says, “But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you and things which accompany salvation.” That comes later in the chapter. These things are not salvation. This the man who has full revelation, he sees it, none of those words in there are salvation words, they’re all words about getting the insights into the truth. And if when a man receives all the information God can give, all the revelation, he gets in on everything that’s going on, he sees, he hears and he rejects, he has committed a sin for which there’s no remedy. He has made total rejection at the point of total revelation and it’s all over.

Now, to give you an illustration of how this works, Matthew chapter 12. Here’s a group of people who did this very same thing, exactly what they did, they rejected totally Jesus Christ at the point of total revelation and there was no other recourse. Matthew 12:24, the Pharisees came to Jesus who had just cast out demons, they had seen His life, His miracles, heard Him speak, they had it all. God

couldn't give these guys anymore revelation. They were students of the Old Testament. They ... everything Jesus had done He had done right in their face. Here's their conclusion. "This fellow doth not cast out demons but by Beelzebub the prince of demons." He's casting out demons because He's demon possessed. They concluded that Jesus was from hell. That was their astute conclusion after all the Old Testament and the whole life of Jesus; they said He's out of hell.

Now that's not just a little off ... that's the whole gambit off. But you see, they did that after they had seen the whole revelation. And Jesus knew their thoughts and so forth and so on. He talks to them about a house divided against itself can't stand.

Verse 31, "Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men." He can forgive all sin, all blasphemy. "But the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven men and whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age, neither in the age to come."

You say, "What happened here? What is the blaspheming of the Holy Spirit." It is this, it is that Christ did everything that He did through the Spirit. The Spirit was working in Christ. He says if you have come through My life and you've seen me and you've seen all the works that the Holy Spirit has done through Me, and you have concluded that they're of Satan, you have blasphemed the Holy Spirit. In other words, blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is attributing the works and words of Jesus to Satan ... to Satan. And He says for that you cannot be forgiven.

You see, what they had done is this, they had seen everything He did, heard everything He said and it was all of the Holy Spirit in Christ doing it and they said it was right out of the pit of hell. You see what they had done? They had total revelation and they made a total rejection. They were so far off; they were at the opposite end completely. And Jesus says, "Man, you've had it. There's no way you will ever, ever, ever, ever be saved." Why? "Because if I gave you all there was to give and I told you all there was to tell and I did all there was to do and you concluded it was out of hell, what ... there's nothing else that can be done." They made total rejection at the point of total revelation. It was over ... it was over ... it's done. That's the sin that Jesus is talking about in Matthew 12.

Now I don't believe that particularly that same experience in Matthew 12 is for this age because Jesus isn't here on earth. But I think it will happen again in the Kingdom when He comes back. But today a man can still make total rejection at the point of total revelation and he walks away like Hebrews 6 and God says, "I'm sorry, fella, that's the end, it's all over with. I can't do anything else', I've done it all."

Listen, people who appear to be religious and appear to worship God who have not received Jesus Christ as Savior and have spurned the total complete revelation of God, don't know God at all.

They’re hypocrites and verse 22 says that this rips the cloak of hypocrisy and uncovers their sin.

Verse 23, here’s as clean a statement as you’ll ever hear, “He that hateth Me hateth My Father also.” That’s uncluttered, crystal clear. He that hateth Me hateth My Father also. He showed them they didn’t love God. They couldn’t love God and hate Him, it was impossible. They were liars. They were practical atheists. They played the religious game but they were atheists. They went into the synagogue, you know, as today they go to church, go through the motions, but they’re atheists. Men who mock Jesus don’t know God. Men who like a Jesus that’s watered down and not like the Jesus of the Word of God don’t love Him, they hate God. John 5:23, Jesus said, “He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father that sent Him.” Don’t ever be lulled for a split second into thinking that somebody can love God and not Jesus Christ.

I told you when I got back from Israel, I’ll never forget standing on the outskirts of Jerusalem looking over the city in the morning about 6 o’clock, and beautiful sunlight shining on the white city of Jerusalem. And down below me in a cemetery were a lot of little rabbis that were bobbing up and down, praying for somebody. And I said, “That’s really pathetic because they don’t know God. God doesn’t even hear one thing they’re saying ... false religion, apart from Jesus Christ.”

This lady next to me who was a Christian already said, “Well,” she got very antagonistic and very angry, “Well, you certainly don’t have any love and compassion.” I said, “Yes I do.” She said, “You know,” she said, “I found it just a wonderful joy to go down there with them and pray and do what they do.” She says, “I’m the only one of Christians in a group that I came with before who would pray with them and they’re ... they’re seeking God in their own way. And God hears them.” And she was giving me all this dialogue.

And I said, “Dear lady,” I was really getting a little antagonistic, perhaps I shouldn’t have, but I said, “Dear lady, they are ... they are talking to the devil before they’re talking to God.” She didn’t like that too well. In fact, most of the rest of the way, she sat in a different section of the bus. Anyway ... I don’t think ... if you tolerate that, you can’t reach those people. We don’t point these people out just so we can stand back and say, “Ha, look at them, they don’t know God.” But because we have to understand that so we can confront them with the truth. Some people who reject Christ don’t appear as violent haters of God, but the facts are there. If you’re not for Him, you’re against Him. That’s the way it is.

And so, some men persecute the followers of Jesus because they don’t know God. And it is inexcusable not to know God, my friend; because God has given you full revelation for which you’re responsible. Romans 1 says, “So that you are without ... what? ... excuse.” God did everything.

Verse 24, in verse 22 He said it was the things I said, I spoke. In verse 24, “If I had not done among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin but now they have both seen and hated

both Me and My Father." He says I've displayed the Father in My works and they've seen the Father working through Me and they've concluded that I'm from hell. They rejected His words and they rejected His works. I don't know how they can reject His works, unbelievable. They must have known about Lazarus, that Jesus walked up ... remember He walked up to the graveside of Lazarus? And He said to Martha, He said, "Roll the stone away." And Martha thought, "Oh no," see. And she made that classic statement, "My Lord, by this time he stinketh." You know, he had been in there four days, it would smell awful. What does He want to roll the stone away, just to say, "Goodbye, Lazarus," you know?

He said, "Just hang on, Martha, and do as I say. Roll the stone away. Jesus said, Lazarus, come out." Now that's the acid test, right? That is. I mean, you can go down to Forest Lawn and say, "come out" till you're purple and nobody's going to ... except the caretaker, chase you away. Jesus said, "Lazarus, come out." And the Bible says, "Lazarus came out." The processes of death were reversed ... reversed and all of the tissue that had decayed and rotted began to reverse itself ... just like the film going backwards and Lazarus stood up and walked out of the grave.

Now they knew about that because they saw Lazarus and the word was everywhere. But it didn't matter what Jesus did, they were so willfully and so determinately hardened in their hearts against Him. They loved their darkness. They loved their sin. They loved their pride and willfully they said no to Jesus Christ and blasphemed the Holy Spirit. And men still do it. The depths of the world's hate, they hear His words, they see His deeds, they see the manifestation of the Father, He says in verse 24, "I've shown them both me and the Father and they've hated Us both."

You see, sin reaches its peak like that when a man makes a total rejection against total revelation. I say this to you in warning. If you're here this morning and you've heard the story of Jesus Christ and you've seen what He was ... what He was on earth and what He did to manifest God and you've never received Jesus Christ, you're moving toward that place where that final rejection may seal your eternity in hell. And I encourage you to receive Jesus Christ while your heart is still fresh and responsive to what you hear.

Then in verse 25, Jesus gives a pointed conclusion. "But this cometh to pass that the Word might be fulfilled that is written in the law; they hated Me without a cause." Those are some kind of words, aren't they? They come from two of David's Psalms, Psalm 35 and Psalm 69. David foresaw that they would hate Messiah. But you know what that verse means? It means this, the first part of it says, "This cometh to pass," what does? Verses 22, 23 and 24, the fact that Jesus spoke enough words and did enough deeds to make them responsible. He did that so that when they hated Him, they would be hating Him without a cause.

In other words, you know what God did in His wonderful grace? God erased every reason for a man to hate Jesus, every one. And if men continue to hate Jesus, they do it for no other reason than their

own sin. There's no reason to hate Jesus. God didn't plan this ... some people say the verse means God planned people to hate Him. No. God didn't plan that men would hate Him. God planned that men would hate Him without reason. That's what it says. God designed the full revelation so that if a man hates Christ, he does it without any cause at all, except his own selfish sinfulness. God gave so much revelation. God gave so much grace. God gave so much love. God made Jesus Christ so beautiful, so pure, so attractive, so magnetic, so drawing, so desirable that if a man goes on in sin, he goes on hating Jesus with no reason but his own sin. God did everything to save men, everything to keep men out of hell. And God planned that the coming of Jesus Christ would be so ... such a perfect and complete manifestation that if men hated Jesus, they would be doing it for not cause at all, for no reason other than their own sin.

I'll tell you something. There's nothing in Jesus to make you hate Him, is there? Nothing. There's nothing about Him that could make you hate Him. And anybody who hates Him hates Him without a cause. But God wanted to make sure that He removed every vestige of excuse, leaving a man only with his own sin as the reason.

Well, some thought as we close. The world hated Jesus. They hated Him because He exposed their sin. He showed them who they were and they didn't like it. When Jesus turned the spotlight of His divine holiness on the sins of the people, they writhed and they rebelled and they twisted and squirmed under it because He stripped away the darkness and He laid bare what was in their hearts. And instead of turning to Him in loving faith and receiving the salvation that He had and accepting the cleansing for sin, they turned against Him and they hated Him for exposing their sin. And the world's ... the world still hates Jesus, no different. And the world still hates those who are His and who live for Him and love Him.

And so, if you're going to count the cost and be a disciple of Jesus Christ, you're going to find out that true discipleship necessitates a willingness to suffer the hatred of the world. And if you're not willing to suffer the hatred of the world, then you're not really willing to be the disciple that Jesus wants you to be. That's part of it. The system still hates you.

Many of you, perhaps, feel that you've beaten the problem of the hatred of the world and you kind of go on day by day thinking you're a friend of the world. If you're a friend of the world then you're no friend of God. First John 2:15, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." James 4, "Friendship with the world is rebellion against God." If you're wrapped up in the system, you're violating everything that your discipleship stands for ... everything. You can't be a friend of the world and a disciple of Jesus Christ. And the subtle temptation of Satan is to get us to be comfortable in the world, to get right at home with the system and to make the world feel comfortable around us. We don't want to offend anybody. And when we do that, we violate everything that Jesus desires in our lives. He didn't send us into the world to make the world comfortable, He sent us into the world to make the world miserable. Start offending people. Start rebuking and start reproving their sin. Have

no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, said Paul, rather reprove them.

Preach the cross. Preach the offense of the cross. In 1 Corinthians, Paul says, “Sure ... sure the cross is an offense, it makes the Jews stumble and it makes the Gentiles stumble and they don’t like it a bit and nevertheless I am determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. God forbid that I should glory in anything save the cross of Jesus Christ by whom I am crucified of the world and the world of me.”

Paul could have dropped the cross from his message. He could have dropped sin. He could have dropped the blood from his preaching. He could have removed the rebuke. He could have eliminated the stumbling block. He could have deleted condemnation for sin. And he would have been acceptable in the Greek world, the Roman world and the Jewish world. But he wouldn’t have been acceptable to God. Where is the conviction of our holy pure living? Where’s the conviction of that which confronts sin and calls it what it is?

I say to you, Christian, this morning; stand for Christ. Expose sin. Reprove it. Confront the world. Call it what it is whatever the cost.

And I say to you, unbeliever, this morning; you have no excuse. By what you do with Jesus, you seal your eternity. Let’s pray.

Father, we thank You this morning again for truths in Your Word. We thank You for the fact that You want us to be totally committed, that You want us to be willing to face the world. Father, we know how important it is that we do that and that we call sin, sin and that we’re not trying to be popular with the ungodly. We’re not trying to make friends of the world but that we’re trying to reach them for Jesus Christ and we can’t do it until we confront them with their sin.

Father, we pray this morning that if there are some who are here who have never received Jesus Christ, that they’ll do it this morning, that they’ll open their life to Him and that we Christians will live to the glory of God, confronting the world boldly, fearlessly that we might bring them to Christ in whose name we pray. Amen.

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