

EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #60

John 15:12-25

John Claypool tells the story of two twin brothers who were in business together. One day a customer came into the store and made a small purchase and one brother put \$1.00 on the cash register and walked the customer to the door. When he came back he noticed the dollar was gone. He went to his brother and asked him about it and the brother said he never saw the dollar. Instead of dropping it, he kept it at his brother and actually started to accuse him and as a result the harmony between the two was lost. Charges and countercharges were made until the brothers were forced to dissolve the partnership and run a partition between the store and each conducting his own business. The whole city knew of the split between the brothers and it went on for twenty years. One day a car pulled up in front of the store with an out of state license on it. A well dressed man got out of the car and walked into the store and asked how long this brother had been in business. When he learned for over twenty years, he said, "I have an old score I need to settle." He said, "Twenty years ago I was out of work, drifting from town to town and I happened to get off a box car and walk by your store. I had no money and had not eaten for three days. As I walked down your alley, I looked in and saw there was a dollar bill on your cash register. I saw that everyone was at the front of the store. I was raised in a Christian home and was taught not to steal, but I had never been so hungry in my life so I stole the dollar to get some food. I have been convicted about this for years and I knew I would never be at peace until I came back and made this right. I will not only give you the dollar, but I will pay you what you think is appropriate damage. I am so sorry." When he said this to one of the brothers, he began to weep and he asked if he would be willing to go next door and repeat this. The man went next door and told the other brother the same story and he started weeping uncontrollably. For over twenty years these brothers who should have been loving one another, had hated each other and as a result had wasted a lot of life (Story cited from R. Kent Hughes, *Behold the Man*, pp. 72-73).

As we come to this text of Scripture we come to two diametrically opposed emotions. One of the emotions we are to be the source of and the other we will be the recipient of - one is love and the other is hate. You will notice that the word "love" is used in **verses 12-17** some four times. The word "hate" is used in **verses 18-27** some seven times.

What Jesus teaches His disciples in this text is this:

JESUS COMMANDS HIS DISCIPLES TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER AND TO KNOW THAT THE WORLD WILL NOT LOVE THEM BUT HATE THEM.

It would be critical for the disciples to love one another because while they were here on this earth, they would not find love anywhere else in this world. In other words, the world would hate them so it was very important that they maintain a love for one another.

There are two main messages Jesus Christ gives to His disciples:

MESSAGE #1 – You are to love one another. 15:12-17

Now as near as I can determine, there are five reasons why these disciples were to love one another:

Reason #1 - Because this is Christ's commandment . **15:12a, 17**

This point opens the section in **verse 12** and closes it in **verse 17**. In Greek, the text emphatically stresses that this is Christ's own commandment given to His disciples and the commandment is that "you love one another" (*αγαπατε αλληλους*).

Now a couple of grammatical points are worth noting. The tense of the verb "love" is present, meaning it is continual and habitual. The pronoun "another" means another of the same kind. The actual word for "love" is agape, which is the highest love one may demonstrate for another because it always has the other person's best good in view.

Reason #2 - Because this follows Christ's example . **15:12b-13**

This kind of love was the love Jesus Christ demonstrated for His disciples. He loved them and was about to lay down His own life for them so that they could be saved. Now Christ is not thinking here of laying down His life for those who hated Him, but for those who were His friends . His point is, I have so loved you that I am willing to demonstrate the greatest level of love for you in that I will lay down my own life for you. In view of that, you love one another.

Do we think we have really measured up to this command? Are we willing to go so far for another of like faith in Christ that we would be willing to lay down our own lives? I'm not too sure for if we get word that a brother or sister is sick in the hospital, we might go see them if it fits our schedule. We might drop them a card or give them a call if we remember. Truth is, sometimes we can hardly get along even with our brothers and sisters in Christ and most of the time, our biggest demonstration of love is to verbally criticize. Then we have the audacity to walk around telling people we love Jesus and are His disciple. Jesus said My example is to love someone to the point you would be willing to lay down your own life.

James Montgomery Boice said that a friend of his told him a story of a grandfather who was out fishing with his grandson and his grandson, who could not swim, fell overboard. The grandfather, who also could not swim, jumped in to try to save his grandson. Both ended up drowning. But when they found the bodies, the grandfather still had the young child clutched in his arms. He was so trying to save his grandson that he did not even open his arms to save himself. That is love. There is no greater demonstration of love than that.

Reason #3 - Because this indicates you are Christ's friend . **15:14-15**

You do not become a Christian by obeying the Word of God; you become a Christian by believing on Jesus Christ, however you do show you are Christ's friend by obeying the Word of God.

In all theological reality, when Christ died for us, we were not actually His friend, but His enemy (Romans 5:10). In fact, Paul says in Romans 5:8 that He died for us "while we were yet sinners."

Now the example that Christ gives of friendship is extreme and that is why I am so glad in **verse 14 and 15** when He says "you are My friend if you obey My commands." Jesus could have said you will be My friends if you follow My example and die for someone, but that is not what He said; He said you are My friends "if you continually obey My Word."

Now the tense of the verb “do” in **verse 14** is present, meaning if you continually obey, if you habitually obey, if you persistently obey. The challenge is not to obey the Word once in a while, but all the time. Some people think if they go to church one day a week that proves they are Christ’s friend. That may or may not prove anything. Proof of being Christ’s friend is continual obedience to the Word of God. Christ’s friends will love to learn the Word of God and apply it.

We may notice from **verse 15** the obedience would be to “all things.” So we are truly Christ’s friend when we want to know all things from the Word of God so we may apply them to our own individual lives.

Apart from this text right here in **John 15**, the only other character who is called a friend of God is Abraham (James 2:23; II Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8). Think of this, you and I have the potential of being a friend of God.

Several years ago, Dr. Oswald Sanders was asked to address the Back to the Bible staff and he said this: “Each of us is as close to God as we choose to be” (Warren Wiersbe, *Be Transformed*, p. 47). You will choose yourself how close to Jesus Christ you want to be and it will be based on your love for the Word of God and your obedience to it.

Reason #4 - Because this is one reason for Christ’s election. **15:16a**

Friends are chosen. If you are wise you carefully select your friends. You choose who you will permit to be your friend. You choose who you will befriend and let get close to you. You have a choice in the matter and so does the other person. Most of us don’t have too many friends. There are just a select few that you really let into your heart. You don’t share your secrets with just anyone, but you do with your friend. I want you to realize that Jesus chose you to be His family and His friend. He will open up wonderful secrets of God for you if you pursue obeying His Word.

Now if you actually believe that you chose to become a friend of God, you do not understand your own depravity and you do not understand God’s grace. God chose you before the foundation of the world to become a friend of Jesus Christ. He had to remove the sin barrier that barred you from God and then He had to draw you into a relationship with His Son. Long before your heart ever thought about a relationship with God, God’s Spirit was tracking you down and He brought you to the place where you saw yourself honestly as a depraved, helpless sinner and He touched you and brought you to faith in Jesus Christ. He not only gives you sonship, but also friendship with God.

The fact that we may be a friend of God is a real stoop downward for God. His purpose for appointing you to this relationship was that you should go forth and bear fruit. Not just any kind of fruit, but a lasting fruit.

There are some Christians who would give almost anything to have a good Christian friend. Isn’t there someone in the church that you could befriend? In view of the fact that Jesus has let you into His circle, isn’t there someone you could let into yours? Most of the time God’s elect don’t feel like great champions. Couldn’t you choose someone to encourage, to pray for, to visit, to befriend? Isn’t there someone here, you could choose to learn to love as your friend?

Reason #5 - Because this is one key to answered prayer. **15:16b**

If we put this in the context here, love prays for one another. When we love one another, we will pray specifically for one another and we will see answers to the prayers.

Again you will notice that Jesus brings up the fact that prayer to the Father must be made in His name. This was all new information to these disciples, but they were learning that the only way to God was through Jesus Christ.

MESSAGE #2 – You are to know that the world will hate you. **15:18-25**

Just as Jesus taught the disciples to love one another, so He also teaches them that they won't be loved by the world. The noun "world" is articular which means Jesus has something specific in mind. He is not speaking here of the beautiful world created by God, nor the world of humanity for whom He died, He is speaking here of the satanic world that is opposed to God. It is a world that is hostile toward God in its philosophy, goals, pleasures, beliefs and education. It is dark and depraved and it hates Christians.

There is a faulty teaching that the job of the Christian is to make the world a better place, to improve it, to give it an extreme make over. But when you look at today's world after some 2,000 years of gospel preaching and teaching, this world is certainly not improving, it is becoming more and more of a despicable, immoral, wicked and evil place. Make no mistake about this, the world hates Christianity and it will hate you if you are a Christian.

Reason #1 - The world will hate the disciple of Christ because it first hated Christ. **15:18**

You don't find the world singing, "Praise Him, Praise Him, Jesus, our blessed Redeemer." This world never liked Jesus Christ, in fact, it hated Him. This hatred started right when He was born. Herod got wind of the fact that Jesus was born and he wanted to kill Him. Christ was hated by the world His entire life and we will be too. This world has never liked the believer who is Jesus' friend.

Reason #2 - The world will hate the disciple of Christ because he is not out of the world. **15:19a**

A key reason for the world's hatred is because there is a big difference in existence. The believer in Jesus Christ has actually left the kingdom of darkness and has been transferred into God's family and linked to His Son. This is a very real change and transformation. We now have a different focus, a different purpose, a different hope, different goals and different destiny. We now have a different code or standard of living - the Word of God. We now have different interests and different friends and we love the church and the people. We are no longer of this world; we are out of it and we are hated.

Reason #3 - The world will hate the disciple of Christ because he has been chosen by Christ. **15:19b**

Don't be deceived the world will hate you because you have been chosen by Christ and those in this world haven't. We do not even begin to realize how much damage our election causes to us. We are despised by the world because we have been chosen by Jesus Christ. The world isn't just mad about this, it hates us for it.

Reason #4 - The world will hate the disciple of Christ because he is a servant of Christ. **15:20**

The root cause of all of the hatred we experience is our connection to Jesus Christ. We are His elect, His servant and His friend. That is the reason for our trouble. One cannot help but think of Daniel who lived an exemplary life and was hated for it and thrown into a lions' den because he was a servant of God.

Reason #5 - The world will hate the disciple of Christ because of Christ's name. **15:21a**

There is no other name in the world that can generate such reaction than the name of Jesus Christ.

Reason #6 - The world will hate the disciple of Christ because it does not know God. **15:21b**

Now keep in mind that we live in a very religious world. There are churches in every community and most of them claim they can lead you to God. The truth is, most don't know God and will hate one who does know God. I cannot help but think of the time Jesus went into a synagogue in Nazareth and preached from Isaiah. The entire synagogue was filled with rage against Him and not only was He hated, they wanted to throw Him down a cliff and kill Him (Luke 4:28-29). These were religious people who went, as it were, to church every week. But when Jesus taught the Scriptures to them, they hated Him.

Reason #7 - The world will hate the disciple of Christ because of their exposure of sin. **15:22**

This is a very important verse of Scripture because it shows that Jesus came to establish the fact that Israel was sinful. Jesus came to expose all of us as being sinners. Because this is the only way people can get into a right relationship with God, by admitting this. Before Jesus came to this world, people could claim ignorance about the fact that they were sinners, but Christ came and exposed their sin and instead of thanking Him and repenting, they hated Him. If you are connected to Jesus Christ and you teach the Word of God accurately, there will be some who will hate you because their sin will be exposed.

Dr. Ironside told this story: Several years ago a woman chief from a tribe in Africa visited a missionary who had a mirror hanging on a tree outside of his house. The chief looked at the mirror and said who is that horrible person living inside your tree? The missionary said there is no one in the tree, you are seeing you. You are looking at what you really are. The chief said I want to buy that mirror so name your price. As soon as the missionary made the deal the chief threw the mirror to the ground and smashed it and said I'll never have to see myself again. That is what Jesus did and what God's Word does. It shows us to be ugly sinners and most don't like that and they hate the one exposing them.

Reason #8 - The world will hate the disciple of Christ because it hates God the Son and God the Father. **15:23-24**

God the Father and God the Son are so uniquely connected that to hate Jesus is to hate God the Father and to hate God the Father is to hate Jesus Christ. Both members are co-equal in Deity and both are coequal in animosity.

Reason #9 - The world will hate the disciple of Christ because of fulfilled prophecy. **15:25**

Now notice that they hated Christ without a cause. As one writer said, they hated Christ without any “rational cause.” This same kind of thing was experienced by King David. People hated him for no reason (Psalm 35:19; 69:4; 109:3).

The only explanation as to why you are hated sometimes is because you are connected to Jesus Christ and the Word of God. This is why it is so important to love one another, because if we don't take the time, some believer will live their entire lives being hated rather than loved.