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Hated Without a Cause

John 15.18-25

Series: Signs of Life

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I. Introduction

- A. I remember it like it was yesterday
 - 1. The day my parents dropped me off at college
- B. I made my college decision for purely programmatic reasons
 - 1. I chose the school because it appeared to be the best choice for the major I was interested in
 - a. And it also gave me some opportunities to participate in athletics at the college level
 - 2. But it was five hours away from home
 - a. Absolutely no one from my home town, or even from my home county, went to school there
 - b. Most, in fact, had never heard of the college!
 - c. And I knew absolutely no other students when I went there
- C. My parents and I were on vacation the week before they dropped me off
 - 1. We were camping, which was normal for us in the Hawkins' clan
 - a. We were pulling a pop up tent trailer, and our 1963 Greenbrier van was packed, not only with our camping stuff, but with all the stuff I would need for dormitory life
- D. Like most guys heading off to college and away from home, I was excited
 - 1. We found the dorm
 - a. Got access to the room
 - b. Met my roommate
 - c. Unloaded all my stuff
 - 2. And I couldn't wait to unload my parents
 - a. And send them off and back home
 - b. And get started on my grand adventure
 - c. Free at last!
 - 3. I think that was the attitude of most college students back in the early 70's
- E. But I was surprised by my reaction when the moment came
 - 1. When I said goodbye to Mom and Dad
 - a. And waved as the van headed out of town
 - 2. I was overcome, for the first time in my life, with loneliness
 - 3. I felt like I didn't belong
 - a. My roommate didn't seem like he had any interests like mine
 - b. His eight-track tape collection had no music I liked
 - c. (I didn't have an eight-track tape collection)

- d. I knew no one at the school except the basketball coach
 - e. I felt lost; out of place
 - f. Like I didn't belong
 - 4. This was another world
 - a. And there was very little I could relate to
 - b. I just didn't think I fit in
 - c. I wondered "how in the world did I end up here?"
 - F. Now it wasn't all doom and gloom
 - 1. I learned to adapt
 - a. I tried to find out how to make accommodations
 - 2. I found out where the basketball players were playing pick up games
 - a. And wheezled my way on the court
 - b. Learned to make some friends there
 - 3. When classes started I felt like I was more in my element
 - G. Long story short, I ended up having a very good college experience
 - 1. I had gone from feeling like a misfit
 - a. To being able to call the place home
 - 2. But it took a good deal of adjustment and accommodation
 - H. Maybe you feel like that as a Christian
 - 1. Like you're out of place
 - a. Like you don't fit in
 - b. Or you're uneasy in our current culture
 - c. Like you're swimming upstream
 - d. Or you're walking down the street and literally everyone is headed in the other direction
 - e. Like we're facing a cultural tsunami
 - f. Everything we've taken for granted for our entire lives is being devastated by overwhelming and unfamiliar tides
 - 2. Maybe you feel like you're like a missionary
 - a. You've left your home behind
 - b. And the place you've landed speaks another language
 - c. And practices a myriad of customs you've never heard of
 - 3. It all leaves us with a sense of anxiety and unease
 - a. Even angst – that feeling of apprehension and insecurity
 - 4. As a Christian – you don't feel like you fit it
 - I. There is a technical theological phrase for this sense of not fitting in
 - 1. It called the normal Christian life
 - J. And according to Jesus, it's not just that we don't fit in
 - 1. It's that the world we live in actually hates us
- II. Text
- A. **John 15:18–25** (NASB95) —
 - 1. 18 "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you.
 - 2. 19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this

the world hates you.

3. 20 “Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.
4. 21 “But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me.
5. 22 “If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.
6. 23 “He who hates Me hates My Father also.
7. 24 “If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well.
8. 25 “But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, ‘THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.’

B. In this section of the Gospel of John, known as the Upper Room Discourse, Jesus has been encouraging His disciples

1. He has been telling them that He’s leaving them
 - a. And this is quite troubling to them
2. But in order to lessen their anxiety He’s been giving them all kinds of words to lift their spirits
 - a. To give them confidence
3. He told them He’s going to prepare a place for them – and that their hearts should not be troubled
 - a. He promises them intimacy with the Father
 - b. He tells them that they will accomplish even greater things than He has
 - c. He encourages them with the promise of answering prayers offered in His name
 - d. He promises that once He leaves He will send the Spirit of God to indwell them – that it will be better for them once He leaves because then God will actually live in them
 - e. He tells them He’s leaving His peace with them, and that they shouldn’t be afraid
4. Then He gives them the key to experiencing all these encouraging benefits
 - a. He tells them He is the true vine
 - b. And they need to abide in the vine so they can bear fruit
 - c. And as they do that, they will experience the love of the Father and the Son
 - d. Not to mention the fullness of joy

C. But then, He tells them – the world hates you

1. No wonder you feel out of place
 - a. That you don’t fit in
 - b. That you’re anxious, insecure
 - c. Maybe even depressed
2. The world doesn’t see things the same way you do

- a. The world is inherently suspicious of you
- b. The world makes all kind of assumptions about you – many of which are not true; lies in fact
- c. The world sees you as a threat
- 3. We all want to be liked
 - a. We all want to fit in
 - b. We want to belong
- 4. But as Christians we don't fit in
 - a. We don't belong
 - b. We aren't universally liked
- 5. The world hates the followers of Jesus

III. **The World**

- A. As we begin to explore what Jesus is teaching about our troublesome relationship with the world, we need to do a little bit of biblical interpretive homework
- B. The word **“world” (cosmos in Gk)** is one of those words – and we have many of them – that is used to mean different things depending on the context
 - 1. And if we don't understand what it means in this context we are liable to misunderstand and misapply what Jesus is teaching
 - a. And that gets us in even more trouble than we're in!
- C. Even in the Gospel of John the word “world” is used to mean at least seven different things
 - 1. **World = the created universe**
 - a. **John 1:10** (NASB95) — 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him...
 - 2. **World = human beings who live in the created world**
 - a. **John 3:16** (NASB95) — 16 “For God so loved the world...”
 - 3. **World = human beings who are unbelievers**
 - a. **John 1:10** (NASB95) — 10 ... the world did not know Him.
 - 4. **World = human beings for whom Christ died**
 - a. **John 3:17** (NASB95) — 17 “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”
 - 5. **World = human beings in general**
 - a. **John 7:4** (NASB95) — 4 “... If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.”
 - 6. **World = planet earth**
 - a. **John 16:28** (NASB95) — 28 “I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again and going to the Father.”
 - 7. **World = the world system which is antagonistic to God**
 - a. In its values, its motivations, its operations
 - b. **John 16:11** (NASB95) — 11 ... the ruler of this world has been judged.
 - c. **John 14:16–17** (NASB95) — 16 “... 17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or

know Him...”

- D. It's this latter meaning that Jesus explains in our passage today
 - 1. **World = the anti-God system** aligned with the rule of Satan and antagonistic to God, to His kingdom, to His values, to His Son, to His people
- E. So when Jesus says “the world hates you” he's not so much talking about people in the world
 - 1. But about the world system arrayed against God's kingdom values
 - 2. Some of the opposition may be expressed by certain people
 - a. But people per se are not the enemy of God's people
 - b. The enemy is systemic hatred for the kingdom of God
 - 3. **Ephesians 6:12** (NASB95) — 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.
- F. We hear a lot about systemic injustice today of one sort or another
 - 1. The Bible's position is that the one systemic injustice in our world today is hatred of God
 - 2. Because that's what the word “world” means in scripture in this context
 - a. The world system which is antagonistic to God and to His kingdom values

IV. **The World's Hatred of Christians**

- A. **Association with Christ** whom the world hates
 - 1. **John 15:18** (NASB95) — 18 “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you.”
 - 2. **John 15:20** (NASB95) — 20 “Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you...”
 - 3. Christians are objects of the world's hatred because of their association with Christ
 - a. Truly guilty by association
 - b. If we are Christians, and if we are public about it – we will, sooner or later, be subject to antagonism, persecution, and hatred of the world
 - c. Not because of anything we might do – for much of what we do is for the welfare of others – indeed, for the welfare of the very world that hates us
 - d. But we will be objects of animosity for no other reason than that we follow Jesus
 - 4. Also implied in v. 19
 - a. **John 15:19** (NASB95) — 19 “If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.”
 - b. We'll talk about being chosen out of the world in a moment
 - c. But if we emphasize “I” it becomes clear that we will be the objects

- of the world's hatred because of our association with Christ
 - d. "You are not of the world, but *I* chose you out of the world"
 - e. It wasn't that we decided to leave the world; Jesus called us out of the world
 - f. And because Jesus did the calling – the world hates those He called
 - 5. We are objects of the world's persecution and hatred because we follow Jesus
 - a. Our association with Him is what puts us under jeopardy
- B. **Not of the world; chosen out of the world**
 - 1. Again, "world" is the world system which is antagonistic to God
 - a. The values of the world are not God's values
 - b. The aspirations of the world are not God's aspirations for humankind
 - c. The pleasures of the world are not the pleasures God intends for human flourishing
 - d. The activities and pastimes of the world are not the activities and pastimes that please God
 - 2. To the extent that we truly follow Jesus, our values, our aspirations, our pleasures, our activities and pastimes are contrary to the world's
 - a. We're strange – a peculiar people as the King James phrased it
 - b. We're out of sync with the world's modus operandi
 - c. We stick out like a sore thumb
 - d. We're like rocks in the gears of the world's machine – and the world doesn't like that!
 - e. We're not of the world
 - 3. We used to be of the world
 - a. That's what the world really hates – to see its own reject its values, aspirations, and behavior
 - b. **1 Corinthians 6:9–11** (NASB95) — 9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.
 - c. "Such were some of you"
 - d. We used to be of the world; now we've left the world behind
 - e. And the world hates that!
 - f. **Ephesians 2:1–5** (NASB95) — 1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by

nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)...

- g. Jesus chose us out of the world; we've left the world behind
- h. And the world hates that

C. **Persecuted for the sake of Christ's name**

1. The World hates followers of Jesus because of one primary value that we hold above all other values
 - a. We live to glorify Jesus Christ
 - b. We know that Jesus Christ is the creator of all things and upholds all things by the word of His power (Hebrews 1.3)
 - c. We know that Jesus is the light of the world (John 8.12, 9.5)
 - d. We know that Jesus is the Savior of the world (John 4.42)
 - e. We know that in Jesus dwells all the fullness of God (Colossians 1.19)
 - f. We know that Jesus through His death has reconciled all things to Himself (Colossians 1.20)
 - g. We know that Jesus is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His nature (Hebrews 1.3)
 - h. We know that Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father, reigning until He makes all of enemies a footstool for His feet (Ephesians 1.20-21)
 - i. We know that all things are in subjection to Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1.22)
 - j. We know that Jesus Christ saves us from the wrath of God (Romans 5.9)
 - k. There is no being in the universe who deserves our praise and adoration more than Jesus Christ
 - l. And there is nothing we would rather do than praise Jesus Christ!
2. **John 15:21** (NASB95) — 21 "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake..."
 - a. "For My name's sake"
 - b. The first thing that the believer in Jesus longs to do is exalt Jesus Christ
 - c. The last thing that the world wants to do is exalt Jesus Christ
 - d. The world would rather have Jesus relegated to the dung heap of history; to disappear as a mere footnote in the annals of the historian
 - e. But Jesus doesn't go away
 - f. Here we are 2,000 years later – and we're still praising Jesus
 - g. Herod tried to get rid of Him as a mere baby
 - h. The Jewish religious leaders tried to stone Him
 - i. Pilate tried to eradicate Him as a political problem
 - j. Saul tried to stamp out His followers until Jesus Himself stunned

- Him on the road to Damascus
 - k. The Romans tried on multiple occasions to destroy those who would exalt the name of Jesus
 - l. Other religious groups have sought to destroy Christianity over the centuries
 - m. Atheists have sought to relegate Christianity to a strange philosophical afterthought
 - n. But here we are, still proclaiming the name of Jesus!
 - 3. And the world hates that
 - D. The world hates those who follow Jesus
 - 1. Because of our association with Jesus
 - 2. Because we are not of the world any longer
 - 3. And because we seek to glorify Jesus whom they seek to stamp out like a bug
- V. **The World's Hatred of Christ**
 - A. But the bottom line reason why the world hates followers of Jesus is that the world hates Jesus
 - 1. Two reasons why the world hates Christ
 - B. **The World Hates Christ's Word**
 - 1. **John 15:22–23** (NASB95) — 22 “If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 “He who hates Me hates My Father also.
 - 2. Jesus came, and He spoke
 - a. And the world didn't like what He said
 - 3. Some people say things, and people hate them for it
 - a. Some people are arrogant
 - b. Some people are hateful in their speech
 - c. Some people are selfish
 - d. Some people are insensitive and say things that are deeply offensive
 - e. Some people are just mean and their speech is just nasty
 - f. Some people are hypocritical; they say one thing and do the opposite
 - g. Don't believe me, just watch the news
 - h. Not just the politicians; its also a lot of pundits, so-called journalists
 - 4. But Jesus never spoke like that
 - a. Jesus was never arrogant
 - b. Jesus was always humble
 - c. Jesus was never selfish – He gave Himself up!
 - d. Jesus was gentle in His speech
 - e. Jesus was never hypocritical
 - 5. What was it about Jesus' speech that was such a catalyst for hatred?
 - a. When Jesus spoke it exposed the sinfulness of the world's speech
 - b. The world was used to a relative judgment of their own speech
 - c. The world could be a little arrogant – but not too much
 - d. The world could be a little hypocritical – but not often

- e. The world could be a little selfish – but not too obviously
 - f. But Jesus’ speech revealed how pathetically vapid and insidious was the world’s speech
 - g. He showed it to be sin
- C. **The World Hates Christ’s Works**
- 1. The second reason why the world hates Jesus is because of His works
 - a. **John 15:24** (NASB95) — 24 “If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well.
 - 2. We’ve recognized that the Gospel of John is oriented around signs
 - a. Seven to be exact
 - b. Signs – miracles; things that only God could do; even Nicodemus understood that
 - c. And in doing those miracles Jesus was doing the works of God
 - d. He demonstrated through those signs that He is God incarnate!
 - 3. The world couldn’t just dismiss Jesus as some charismatic teacher
 - a. Or worse, some strange, deranged madman
 - 4. No – Jesus, in His works, showed that He was God
 - a. And His works embarrassed the world
 - b. The world discovered it was in over its head
 - c. The world saw that One greater than the world was here
 - 5. And the world hates that the Supreme Sovereign manifested His presence
- D. The world hates Jesus because of His words
- 1. And the world hates Jesus because of His works
- VI. **The Guilt of the World’s Hatred**
- A. And so the world is guilty
 - 1. They have “no excuse” for their sin (v 22)
 - B. **Christ’s Word exposes the world’s sin**
 - 1. Harry Ironside story
 - a. Inland Africa had been visited by missionaries
 - b. Wife of African chief visited the mission station
 - c. Missionary had a little mirror hanging on a tree outside his home
 - d. The woman, coming out of her pagan practices had never seen a mirror or knew what it was for
 - e. When she looked into it, she saw the hideous paintings on her hardened face; she saw the ugliness of it all
 - f. So she asked the missionary, “Who is that horrible looking person inside that tree?”
 - g. Missionary: “It is not the tree. The glass is a reflection your own face.”
 - h. She couldn’t believe it until she held it in her hand
 - i. Then she said to the missionary, “I must have the glass. How much will you sell it for?”
 - j. The missionary didn’t want to sell it; but she was insistent
 - k. He set a price just to avoid trouble

- 1. Once she had it, she said, “I will never have it making faces at me again.”
 - m. She threw it down and broke it in pieces
 - 2. That’s the way the world looks at Christ
 - a. It hates Christ because He exposes their sin
 - b. They can’t stand its ugliness when it’s revealed
 - C. **Christ’s Works vindicates His person**
 - 1. And Christ’s works demonstrate that He’s God
 - a. And the world will have no god before themselves
 - b. They will do anything to avoid submitting to Jesus
 - D. **The World has no excuse; condemned for its hatred**
 - 1. **John 3:18–21** (NKJV) —
 - a. 18 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
 - b. 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.
 - c. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.
 - d. 21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

VII. **Responding to the World’s Hatred**

- A. How should we respond to the world’s hatred?
 - 1. That’s the thing – we don’t respond in kind
- B. **Rejoice!**
 - 1. **Matthew 5:10–12** (NASB95) —
 - a. 10 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 - b. 11 “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.
 - c. 12 “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
- C. **Love your enemies and pray for them**
 - 1. **Matthew 5:43–45** (NASB95) —
 - a. 43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’
 - b. 44 “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.
- D. **Count the cost of following Jesus**
 - 1. Are you willing to endure the hatred of the world for the sake of His name?
 - 2. **Philippians 3:8–11** (NASB95) —
 - a. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the

surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,

- b. 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,
- c. 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;
- d. 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.