

Truly, we are humbled, and even honored, to have been chosen by Christ out of the world; however, His choice of us is not one that frees us of all difficulty in this life. In fact, His choice of us guarantees hardship and the world's hatred. ²

John 15:18-19 *"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 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."* ¹

In this text, the Greek word translated as "world" (*kosmos*) refers not to the created order but to the system of rebellion against God. In other words, that the world will hate us means not that each and every person who lives in the world will hate us but that those who belong to the ranks of rebels against God and His reign will hate us. ²

The Cost of Discipleship

Why does the world system, including the religious world, hate the Christian, the one who believes on Jesus Christ and seeks to follow Him? Jesus gave several reasons. ³

John 15:20 *"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."* ¹

- We are identified with Christ. ³
- We do not belong to the world. ³

John 15:21 *"But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me."* ¹

- The world is spiritually ignorant and blind. ³

John 15:22 *"If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin."* ¹

- The world will not be honest about its own sin. ³

How does the Holy Spirit encourage believers when they are experiencing the hatred and opposition of the world? It is primarily through the Word of God. ³

He reminds us that what we are experiencing is "the fellowship of His [Christ's] sufferings" (Phil. 3:10) and that it is a privilege to bear reproach for His name. (Read carefully 1 Peter 4:12-19.) ³

1 Peter 4:14 *If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.* ¹

John 15:18-16:15

John 15:23 *"He who hates Me hates My Father also."* ¹

Jesus tells us in John 15:23 that whoever hates Him also hates the Father. It is impossible to love God without also loving Jesus, so it is impossible to be reconciled to God except through faith in Christ alone. ²

John 15:25 *"But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, 'THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.'"* ¹

In this section Christ makes five statements: (1) the world hates Me (v. 18); (2) My followers are aliens in the world (v. 19); the world will persecute you because you are My followers (v. 20); the persecutors do not know God (v. 21); (5) My words (v. 22) and My works (v. 24) rebuke them. Arguments found as instruction to the faithful and as warning to pagans and Jews. ¹

John 15:26-27 *"When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning."* ¹

The disciples had a special role in bearing witness to Jesus, and a unique authority to deliver to the church what He taught. But we who come after the Apostles are also witnesses to Christ, and the Spirit enables us to hold fast to the prophetic and Apostolic witness of Jesus – the Holy Scriptures. ²

John 16:2 *"They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God."* ¹

Early church history shows that Jesus' predictions came true. For example, the entire purpose of the epistle to the Hebrews is to warn Christians from a Jewish background not to deny Christ under pressure from the Jews to do so. ²

John 16:5-6 *"But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart."* ¹

Interestingly, in mentioning His departure, Jesus said that His disciples had not asked where He was going (16:5), which seems strange at first, because earlier on the same night Jesus spoke of the persecution to come, upon which Peter and Thomas both asked Jesus where He was going (13:36; 14:5). The solution to this apparent discrepancy appears to be that Jesus meant that the disciples were so absorbed by their grief (16:6) at Jesus' departure that they were not asking thoughtful questions about where He was going. ²

The Holy Spirit of God is a person. Jesus referred to the Spirit as "He" and not "it". The Holy Spirit has a mind (Rom. 8:27), a will (1 Cor. 12:11), and emotional feelings (Gal. 5:22-23). ³

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THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

When we speak of the personality of the Holy Spirit, we mean that the third person of the Trinity is a person and not a force. This is clear from Scripture, where only personal pronouns are used when referring to the Spirit. In John 16:13, Jesus said, "when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."

Because the Holy Spirit is a real and distinct person and not an impersonal force, it is possible for us to enjoy a personal relationship with Him. Paul gives a benediction to the Corinthian church that highlights this, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all." (2 Cor. 13:14). To have communion with someone is to enter a personal relationship with him. In addition, we are called not to sin

against, resist, or grieve the Holy Spirit. Impersonal forces cannot be "grieved." Grief can only be experienced by a personal being.

Because the Holy Spirit is a person, it is appropriate to pray to Him. His role in prayer is to assist us in expressing ourselves adequately to the Father. As Jesus intercedes for us as our High Priest, so the Holy Spirit intercedes for us in prayer.

Finally, the Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit performing tasks that only persons can perform. The Spirit *comforts*, *guides*, and *teaches* the elect (see John 16). These activities are done in a manner that involves intelligence, will, feeling, and power. He searches, selects, reveals, comforts, convicts, and admonishes. Only a person could do these things. The response of the Christian, then, is not mere affirmation that such a being exists, but rather, to obey, love, and adore the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity.

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Concerning the Holy Spirit

John 16:7 *"But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you."*¹

The first time I really grasped the implications of this text, I literally began to dance in the street and jump over fire hydrants. I said, "Eureka! I can't believe it! All this time I have felt like Abraham, living in the Old Testament, looking forward to the time of Christ's coming, or wishing that I could have been alive during Jesus' earthly ministry, because those people heard and saw Him and His miracles. If only I could have been an earthly eyewitness disciple of Jesus, my Christian life would be so much better than it now is." Yet our Lord said our situation now is better than that of His disciples when He was walking on the earth. I think that is one of the most difficult statements of Christ to embrace.⁵

John 16:8 *"And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;"*¹

The Spirit, through apostles, evangelists, and preachers, will *convict* the world. To convict means to set forth the truth of the gospel in such a clear light that men are able to accept or reject it intelligently.¹

John 16:9 *"concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;"*¹

The greatest, and basic, sin is unbelief.¹

John 16:10 *"and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me;"*¹

Jesus' return to the Father will vindicate His righteous life and the truthfulness of all He said.¹

John 15:18-16:15

John 16:11 *"and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged."*¹

At the cross, Christ triumphed over Satan, serving notice on unbelievers of their judgment to come.¹

John 16:13 *"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come."*¹

These things include the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection (which the disciples did not fully understand) as well as things yet in the future concerning His resurrection, the Christian life, and His return.¹

Ephesians 2:1 *And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,*¹

When a lost sinner is truly under conviction, he will see the folly and evil of unbelief; he will confess that he does not measure up to the righteousness of Christ, and he will realize that he is under condemnation because he belongs to the world and the Devil (Eph. 2:1-3). The only person who can rescue him from such a horrible situation is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.³

Real conversion is an experience of repentance and forgiveness before God. It is not merely praying a prayer, joining a Christian church, or receiving a sacrament. It is being brought to our knees by the conviction of God the Holy Spirit. The Spirit then convinces us of what true righteousness is and shows us we do not have it, so that we understand we need an alien *dikaioisune*, a righteousness that is not our own. The Spirit exposes us; He strips us of our self-righteousness. He shows us the utter inadequacy of our own behavior to satisfy the demands of God and drives us to that redemption that was accomplished by Jesus. Then He brings us to a state of judgment. The Spirit forces us to face what societal conventions would have us avoid.⁵

The Source of Real Power

The true power, the power that will change your life, is the power, the *dunamis*, of God the Holy Spirit, and God promises to attend the preaching of His Word with that power. Preaching has no power unless God the Holy Spirit takes His Word and penetrates hearts with it. That's where the power is – if you believe the Word of God.⁵

¹ *New American Standard Bible*, Charles Caldwell Ryrie *study Bible*, 1995

² *Tabletalk* magazine, Robert Rothwell, September 2018 pp. 45-51

³ *Be Transformed*, Warren W. Wiersbe, 1986, pp. 63-73

⁴ *The Reformation Study Bible™* (2016), pp. 1980-1

⁵ *John (St. Andrew's Expository Commentary)*, R. C. Sproul, 2009, pp. 289-304

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