

Take a moment right now to write down the thoughts going through your head so that you can focus on God's Word. Thoughts about what you have to do today, expectations not met during this time, what it is like to do school online, what you have been doing during quarantine, etc.

Take a moment to thank God that He uses all things in your life to know Him more and more, both good things and hard things. Write out a prayer below if you would like.

Love and Being Hated By The World

In yesterday's passage, Jesus talked about abiding in Him. If we abide in Him, the fruit we will produce in our lives is for His kingdom. This fruit will last for eternity. Jesus' desire is for us to stay connected to Him through His Word, prayer, and active obedience. As we stay connected to Him, we can experience the full life Jesus desires for us. In today's Scripture, Jesus will talk about the active obedience of loving other believers and how even though we are seeking to follow Jesus, we will still encounter pain and suffering for following Him. Why? Because just as the world rejected Jesus, it will reject us. But take heart, the Holy Spirit is our helper!

John 15:12–17 ¹²*"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. ¹⁷These things I command you, so that you will love one another."*

- 1) From verses 12-13, at this time Jesus has spent three years with His Disciples, which means when He tells His Disciples to "love as He has loved" them, they can grasp the kind of love He is talking about. Give a few examples of the love Jesus displayed for His Disciples and others so far in the book of John.

- 2) From verse 13, what is Jesus foreshadowing? Why would Jesus call His Disciples to this radical kind of love? What is your initial reaction to this love?

- 3) From verse 16, how is it encouraging to know Jesus chose the Disciples and they were not the “best of the best”? What does that tell you about God’s plans for you?

- 4) From verse 17, how have you experienced self-sacrificial love from someone? How did it impact you?

- 5) Why is the command to love one another so important to Jesus? Do you have to literally die to have this kind of love? Explain your answer. What would it look like on a day-to-day basis?

*Note: When John says “the world” he means the system of organized society hostile to God, which is under Satan’s power (John 14:30). This does not mean society directly says they are against God, but the ways it works are in direct opposition to God’s ways found in The Bible.

John 15:18–20 ¹⁸*“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.”*

- 6) Why would the world hate Christians if we love as Jesus has just commanded us to in verses 12-17? (Also check out 1 Peter 4:4, Colossians 1:13.)

- 7) Should you be surprised when people at school or on your sports team are stand-offish, see you as different, or even mean to you when you live for Jesus? Why or why not?

- 8) From verse 20, what comfort can you take knowing Jesus was persecuted first? What comfort can you take knowing Jesus suffered and so will we?

John 15:21–25 ²¹“But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. ²²If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³Whoever hates me hates my Father also. ²⁴If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. ²⁵But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: ‘They hated me without a cause.’ “

- 9) From verse 21, should we expect those who do not know Jesus to act as they do? How can this verse help you have mercy, grace, gentleness, and forgiveness for those who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus?

- 10) Is there someone in your life who is not a Christian and has been causing you suffering? How have these verses spoken to you regarding this person? First, make sure your own heart is right before God in how you have treated them. Then, how do you need to respond towards them?

- 11) In light of the suffering, we will face in our lives for being followers of Jesus we have three options, which are below. Circle the one you are most like and explain why you are living like that.
 - a. Isolate ourselves from the world then the world can’t hurt us.
 - b. Be like the world then we are no different and will not suffer.
 - c. Live like Jesus knowing we will face suffering, and trust our lives will bring glory to God and impact others.

John 15:26–27 ²⁶*“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. ²⁷And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.”*

12) BUT PRAISE GOD we are not alone! We have the Helper, the Holy Spirit to help us on this earth as we live for Jesus. How does the Holy Spirit help us to live for Jesus?

13) How does the Holy Spirit use us to “bear witness about” Jesus?

Final Application:

14) When life returns to “normal” and you go back to school, sports, friends, etc. how can your life bear witness to Jesus? How has today’s devotional encouraged your faith in the future?