

OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

THE ULTIMATE QUESTION OF LIFE
(IDENTIFYING WITH JESUS)

JOHN 15:18-27

FEBRUARY 9, 2020



SERMON OUTLINE

February 9, 2020
The Ultimate Question of Life
Mark 8:27-38

The setting: Caesarea Philippi

The questions:

Who do People say I am? Mark 8:27-28

Who do You say I am? Mark 8:29

1. Jesus is the Christ. Mark 8:29b-30

Jesus is His Name. Matthew 1:21

- Christ is His Title. Isaiah 9:6-7

Matthew 16:13

Warning (Mark 8:30)

2. Jesus is the Suffering Christ Mark 8:31-33

The Christ must...

You do not have in mind the things of God but the things of men
Mark 8:33b

3. Jesus is the Radical Christ Mark 8:34-38

Deny Yourself

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Take Up Your Cross

Follow Jesus

The question still stands!

What is God saying to me this morning?

MAIN POINT

Following Jesus often means suffering and self-denial, but He helps us live faithfully in the midst of a world that is often against us.

THINKING THINGS THROUGH

Connect the sermon to the study.

1. Name some aspects of Christianity that clash with the way of the world.

2. How have you experienced the reality of Jesus' words in John 15:18 that the world would hate His disciples?

Leader: Jesus began to prepare His followers for the world's forthcoming reaction to Christians. Simply stated, the world's reaction to believers parallels the world's reaction to Him. Jesus felt His followers needed to learn that the world does not value Him or His love; neither does the world value His disciples. As we confess Jesus' true identity, we are often called to suffer for Him. Yet, we can be confident that He is with us and will sustain us to the end.

DIGGING DEEPER

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 15:18-25.

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3. In verse 18, Jesus stated that the world would hate His disciples. Why is worldliness (living as though one belongs to the world) an enemy of discipleship?

Leader: In the New Testament the word world refers to those apart from God, those with a system of values that neither acknowledge God nor recognize His teachings. If believers would partner with the world's sin, the world would love us as its own. On the other hand, when Christians live like Christ, their light exposes the darkness around them and the world hates them as a result.

4. Where in your own life do you see worldliness having the greatest impact? How does growing in discipleship impact worldliness in your life? How, specifically, have you seen this happen?

5. What is the relationship between Jesus' teaching in these verses and becoming more like Him as we live as His disciples?

Leader: To be persecuted because of Jesus' name is to be opposed because our lives reflect His character. Close association with Christ results in suffering the reproach of Christ. Jesus warned His followers to remember that fact and not to be disillusioned when persecution came. On the other hand, Jesus' positive statement of promise is good news. If people obeyed Jesus' teaching, they would obey His followers' teaching also. We can have confidence that some people will accept our teaching of the truths Jesus taught.

6. How have you personally seen the world's hatred of Christianity or Christians increased over your lifetime? Has this hatred ever been directed toward you? Explain.

7. If the world never opposes us, what does that tell us about the degree of worldliness in our lives? Explain. How does our reaction to those who oppose us serve as a testimony for or against Jesus' power and grace in us?

Leader: Since the world hated Jesus and His Father, it hates His followers. Believers experience antagonism from the world due to their faith and obedience to Jesus. We can draw comfort from knowing that such experiences affirm our association with Jesus and our distinction from the world.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 15:26-27.

8. Why would Jesus' words regarding the Holy Spirit be a comfort to His disciples in the context of His warning about persecution? In this regard, how is He a comfort for us today?

9. Why is testifying for Jesus so important in the world in which we live? How does focusing on this mission help us fight back against the enemies of our personal growth and discipleship?

Leader: The Spirit was sent to believers, at least in part, to empower them in testifying about Jesus. We have been given the same mission as the first disciples—witnessing about Jesus. As we confess the truth about Jesus, we move further into the life He called us to, which often includes suffering. Regardless of the sense we might get from the world, we are never alone when testifying about our Savior.

DOING LIFE TOGETHER

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

10. How might you seek joy in the midst of suffering for Jesus' sake? What promises has God made to those who persevere until the end (see James 1:12, Galatians 6:9, and 2 Timothy 2:12)?

11. How might we as a group seek to encourage one another in the value of confessing the truth about Jesus in all of life, no matter the world's response?

Leader: In seeking to answer this question, point the group to some challenging areas that the church is currently facing. Examples include issues of sexuality, abortion, poverty, joblessness, etc. As time allows, invite group members to share other examples that come to mind and/or that they are facing personally.

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PRAYER

Ask the Lord to convict you today of the areas in your life where worldliness has the greatest influence. Pray for the wisdom and strength to take action against those influences. Pray also for the courage to join with the work of the Spirit this week in testifying about Jesus.

MEMORIZE

²⁰ Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.

- John 15:20

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE

JOHN 15:18-27

15:18-19 Jesus declared that if the world hated His disciples, they must remember that the world also hated Him. The construction of the first part of this verse in the Greek language indicates certainty that the world would hate Jesus' disciples. There is no doubt about the matter. Jesus was sure of that fact and wanted His followers to be aware of it also. He instructed them to keep in mind that the world hated Him first. The word hates, though it certainly carries strong emotion with it, should not be interpreted only in emotional terms. The verb primarily indicates making a choice to reject and oppose. Jesus' disciples did not belong to the world because He had chosen them out of the world. Because Christians and the world in opposition to Christ are following different Masters and going different directions, believers experience opposition as Christ experienced rejection. The world resists those who do not follow the ways of the world. Christians who daily demonstrate their faith are a reproach to a sinful world.

15:20 Jesus instructed the disciples always to remember what He had taught them. The treatment the Master receives determines the treatment the servants can expect. The latter part of verse 20 contains both a warning and a promise. Although the negative element of warning is prominent, the positive statement is also true. Jesus' words leave no question that Jesus was persecuted. Therefore, since the world persecuted Jesus, it will persecute Jesus' followers also. On the other hand, if people obeyed Jesus' teaching, they would obey His followers' teaching also. Again the phrase is stated in such a way as to indicate that some people did indeed obey Jesus' teachings.

15:21 Jesus wanted His disciples to understand why the world in general would reject both Himself and His disciples. The reason was because of His name. In biblical thought a person's name represented that person's character and nature. Those who eventually would carry the name Christian would draw opposition and rejection as Christ did. A root cause of the persecution of believers is traced to the world's ignorance of God. The world at large is ignorant of God (see John 16:3). They may believe in a Supreme Being, but they do not know Him as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

15:22 The disciples also needed to understand the relationship between Jesus' coming and the knowledge of sin. If Jesus had not come and spoken to the Jews and others, they would not be guilty of sin. But Jesus did come and proclaim God's purposes and plans to them. His message was the good news of salvation that required a turning away from sin and a turning to Jesus as Savior. Had He not come and delivered His message to them, they would still have been sinners,

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but they would not have been guilty of the sin of rejecting Him as God's Son and the Savior. Christ's coming, however, manifested the rebellion that previously had existed within them. Their sin became imputed to them after they had seen Him and His works (15:24) yet chose to reject Him anyway. They saw and heard and chose not to believe but to reject and crucify Jesus.

15:23-25 Anyone who hates Jesus hates His Father as well. In their spiritual blindness, the Jewish religious leaders convinced themselves that resisting Jesus was God's will. However, since God sent Jesus into the world, resisting Jesus means resisting God. What Jesus had done among them encompasses His miracles and teachings. Jesus' works pointed people to spiritual truths and to the reality of who He is. Even though the Jews had seen the miracles, many still hated and rejected both Jesus and His Father. The Jews' rejection of Christ fulfilled the Law, in this context a reference to the Old Testament as a whole.

15:26-27 Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit in light of the coming persecution and the disciples' continuing purpose of testifying for Him. Jesus identified the Holy Spirit as the Counselor. The Greek word is *paraclete*, which literally means "one who is called alongside." The word conveys the idea of one who encourages through being an advocate. The Holy Spirit comforts believers in persecution by remaining alongside them in the midst of their difficulties. The Holy Spirit possesses the same purpose as Jesus, just as He has the same divine nature as Jesus. He who is the Spirit of truth leads believers to be witnesses of the truth. Believers can depend on the Holy Spirit's advocacy to reveal through them the truth about Christ. The Greek word translated testify comes from the same root as "martyr." Through the disciples' verbal testimony, the witness of their lives, and the manner of their deaths, they would testify about Jesus.