

**HOW TO BE HATED, part 2**  
**John 15:26-16:4**

Back to John 15!...

Title...

Read text, from 15:18ff & Pray....

***\*THREE THINGS to remember when you stand up for Christ in this world:***

Based on recurring command in vv. 18, 20; 16:4...

+ Spoke this morning about what happens to unprepared, untaught Christians who face their first wave of persecution & sink & drown....

+ But positively, what do prepared Christians look like, those who are battle-ready, equipped & expecting persecution, who dare to stand for Christ at any price?!

Tommy Nelson & Denton Bible Church after bomb threat on Christmas Eve (after entire LAUSD had just shut down the week before!)...

Tommy began the service by stating the threat, then declaring: 'We cancelled once for a blizzard and icy roads, out of wisdom. But we do not cancel out of fear.

We are Christians, and this very night we celebrate our Saviour who came to conquer sin, death, and fear. Our God reigns.

We stand against evil. And if we all die tonight but one man survives, let him return here next year on this night and worship Christ. And then if he is martyred, let them build a memorial here and return again to worship Christ. Here we stand.'

5,000 people then rose to their feet in loud applause.

Then, after a service of great music and singing and a clear gospel message, Tommy ended by praying for the felon who sent the bomb threat, that God would save his soul, and that he would be caught and sentenced justly.

*\*THREE THINGS to remember when you stand up for Christ in this world:*

**1. vv. 18-25, Expect to be hated because of Christ.**

*SIX REASONS the world will hate Christians (read from my Bible, as review)...*

YET by this point, the disciples might've thought: 'But Lord, why are you leaving us behind? Why can't you take us with you?

'Must we remain only to endure the world's hatred, just to hang in there and hope we survive the fiery trial until Jesus calls or comes?...'

**2. vv. 26-27, Expect the Holy Spirit to help you bear witness for Christ.**

vv. 26-27 – 'Ah, here is why we are left behind – to testify of Christ, to fulfill His mission, to do His work, proclaim His gospel,

to join Him as He builds His Church among all nations, until He returns. Now it's starting to make sense!...

And here's the best part: You don't have to bear witness alone, You're not on your own. – Christ will send just the ultimate Coworker, the ideal Companion & Partner on this mission!...

v. 26 – Recall when we first met this great Helper & Friend: 14:16-17, 26...

HIS NAMES:

The *Paracletos* = “Another”, like Christ (14:16), to be for them all that Jesus had been for them. –

One “called alongside”, like a defense attorney. – When we stand trial for Christ before a hostile world, here’s our great comfort:

The Holy Spirit would be our Advocate, Intercessor, Mediator, Helper –

our ‘Friend in court’, to help you when in trouble, to champion your cause as a Christian, to strengthen you when weak.

NB, Jesus’ 2<sup>nd</sup> *favourite name* for His Holy Spirit – after “Helper”, “Spirit of Truth” (14:15; 15:26; 16:13). – I.e.,

He is true, He speaks only what is true, and He rejects whatever is untrue, erroneous, or unbiblical.

→The Holy Spirit never leads you into error. – Any church or Christian that claims the Holy Spirit led them into something unbiblical is guilty of blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit today gets blamed for the most bizarre things – from divorce, to cohabiting, to homosexuality, to chaotic worship services & all forms of heresy....

**HIS OWNER & SENDER:**

NB, chp. 14, the Father sends the Spirit. – Now, here, Jesus also sends the Spirit – sharing in the Father’s authority & power.

**HIS WORKS:**

So far, chp. 14, Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit will: be with us, and in us, will teach us all things, and help us “remember” His words. –

Cf. 15:20ff here, all about us “remembering” – also aided by God’s Spirit, not left to our own strength or merely a ‘good memory’ ...

Now, the Spirit’s main work promised here:

HIS WITNESS:

v. 26c – Jesus would depart, but He would never be left without a witness.

From Pentecost onwards, to this very day, the Holy Spirit has been conducting Jesus’ case for Him, bearing witness to the “truth” of the gospel before a hostile world....

NB, here is why the Holy Spirit is called the ‘shy’ member of the Trinity. – His focus is not Himself, despite all the confusion the Charismatic Movmt has brought in today. –

He points, not to Himself, but to Christ!, v. 26d....!

→How merciful of Christ – not to give up on a hateful, unbelieving world! – Though they crucified & murdered Him, still He pleads, still He speaks by His Spirit, still He offers salvation!

“All day long I have stretched out my hands to a disobedient & obstinate people!” (Rom. 10; Isa.)

THREE WAYS the HOLY SPIRIT BEARS WITNESS TO CHRIST (vv. 26d-27):

- (a) *EXTERNAL WITNESS, the inspiration of Scripture* – the writing of the books of our Bible. – As seen in 14:26 and upcoming in 16:13-14...

Esp. the official role of the apostles as agents of biblical revelation....

Cf. 2 Pet. 1:21...

(b) *INTERNAL WITNESS*, the *illumination of the believer* –  
1 Jn. 2:20, 27...; 1 Cor. 2:12-13...

→Without this double witness of the Spirit, we would have no Bible and no salvation – would be blind, lost & doomed eternally!!...

(c) *OUR WITNESS as evangelists* –

v. 27 – God is sovereign and doesn't need any of us; but He works through means, He loves to use instruments!

+ Peter got this: Acts 5:32, “And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit”.

Stephen's murderers also got this, Acts 6:10, “they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by which He spoke”.

→NB, the witness of the Holy Spirit is usually inseparable with the witness of the Church. – That is how Christ ordained for His gospel to advance and His work to get done in this world.

→It is not more spiritual just to relax and ‘wait for the Spirit to move’. You know He is moving when YOU get moving! –

The Spirit testifies AS we testify for Christ. – The Spirit speaks through us speaking Christ's word.

→Thankfully, we are the *junior* partner in this enterprise! – The Holy Spirit is the Founder, Owner & Sr. Partner. – We rely heavily upon our great “Helper, Comforter, Advocate, Witness”!

The power & authority comes from HIM, not from us! –  
Zech. 4:6...

Only God's Spirit can convict of sin (as we'll soon see, 16:8ff), can regenerate a dead sinner, can convert a lost soul,  
can open blind eyes to see the truth, can grant faith & repentance to the hardest heart!...

Left to ourselves – we would be powerless, all our witnessing would be in vain, not one soul would ever be reached!

As Jesus promised, Matt. 10:19-20, "But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, *but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.*"

→But you will never experience this promise if you never witness! – Only when you step out in obedience will you discover the Spirit's presence & power within you!...

+ Last week when I spoke to the two Muslim girls, or the Russian petrol attendant – Christ giving me the words, getting to plant the seed!...

+ William Tyndale – constantly fleeing his persecutors, yet all the while translating the Bible into English. – Faced betrayal, disappointment, and fear, yet persevered until he was captured & burnt at the stake. –

What was his dying cry while being martyred? – "Lord, open the King of England's eyes!"

That's the Holy Spirit at work!..

*O Breath of Life, come sweeping through us,  
Revive Thy Church with life and power;  
O Breath of Life, come, cleanse, renew us,  
And fit Thy Church to meet this hour.*

*...Revive us, Lord! Is zeal abating  
While harvest fields are vast and white?  
Revive us, Lord, the world is waiting  
Equip Thy Church to spread the light.  
(Bessie Porter Head, 1850-1936)*

### **3. 16:1-4, Expect rejection from the religious.**

16:1 – Jesus, the faithful Counselor – warning against starry-eyed optimism, taking off any rose-coloured glasses.

Stumbling = i.e., not trapped, tripped up, caught unawares, scandalised.

NB, Jesus didn't want His integrity called into question later on by the disciples, when the going got tough. –

He didn't want Peter & John in a few weeks time, when they got arrested by the Sanhedrin in Acts 4 for preaching Christ – he didn't want His apostles saying,

'Lord, you never told us. You said it would be our 'best life now', that following You would only bring personal peace & fulfillment,

a life of unlimited health & wealth if only we had enough faith, right?

'Not all this hatred and pain, that's not what we signed up for.'

v. 2a – ‘Get ready to be excommunicated from Judaism, cut off from all fellowship or any further relations with your Jewish kinsmen.’

+ Like they did to the healed blind man, Jn. 9. – And what the Jewish leaders feared most, 12:42, what kept them from following Christ.

+ I.e., they will hold your funeral while you are still alive – you are dead to them, deceased, non-existent...

Because you have apostasised from Judaism, you have renounced the faith of your fathers – you must be banished forever!...

+ Like many converts out of Islam or Hinduism today – totally alienated from their families forever!...

v. 2b – Key word, “think”, because of deep deception, Satanically-induced blindness, that makes murderers think they are worshippers. –

The world is famous for making good look evil, and evil look good, even look *godly*!

~ Jewish Rabbinic sources from 1<sup>st</sup> c: “everyone who pours out the blood of the godless is like one who offers a sacrifice”

+ NB, many Protestant martyrs had a sermon preached right before they were burned at the stake. – Untold numbers of believers have been killed by those convinced they were doing God’s will.

+ Read *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs* – Christians burnt, impaled, torn limb from limb, knee-caps smashed, children drowned in front of them, etc.



Many of whom were killed BY the Church of their day – esp RCC or Anglican!...

+ Jonathan Edwards excommunicated out of his own church after ministering there 19 yrs, for no good reason. – Charles Spurgeon kicked out of the Baptist Union for his biblical stance....

+ Who can read v. 2 today and not think of Muslim terrorists, and their 'jihad' & martyrs in God's name? – Often their last words shouted as they kill, 'Allah akbar' (God is great)!...

→Some of the worst enemies of Christians have been in the church, not outside. – Not half-crazed persecutors brandishing machine guns, but fine, respectable, high-minded citizens and church members!

→WHO has persecuted you most here in SA today, for loving Christ, His Word, sound doctrine, church purity, personal holiness, etc.?? – Usually other 'Christians', professing believers....

~ Joel James: *There is no fury like the fury of a professing Christian whose lack of love for Christ and lack of commitment to God's Word is exposed by the devotion and faithfulness of a true believer.*

NB, Matt. 24 – Jesus warned about the last days when apostate ex-Christians will turn on the Church:

*“Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another (Matt 24:9-10, NAS).”*

~ Joel James: *What about the professing believer who defines his Christianity in terms of the self-love of pop psychology?*

*What will he do when the person he loves most - himself - comes under threat? Will he stand for Christ?*

*Or how about the masses who saunter through the doors of the seeker-sensitive mega-churches each Sunday? If you go to church because it's convenient, because you enjoy the humour, the skits, the music, and the stage show,*

*and because you like the fact that they don't ask you sing anything, sign anything, give anything, forsake anything, or believe anything, are you going to stand firm when persecution comes?*

*...When the first wave of real persecution sweeps the church in South Africa, all the prosperity, self-love, entertainment-enthralled, liberal, agnostic, Emergent, and traditional Christians are going to head for the exit doors.*

*What's more, they're going to be furious that you won't go with them. They're going to be enraged that you won't join them in abandoning biblical Christianity, as they frantically "reimagine" their faith in order to secure the approval of the world.*

→HOW can you persevere in the face of that kind of discouraging resistance from inside the Church? – One way is to remember that the early church's most bitter & violent enemy was **Saul of Tarsus**. –

He embodied Jn. 16:2 – was sure he was serving God in prosecuting Christians....

YET Christ arrested Saul on the Damascus Rd and turned him into Paul, the church's greatest missionary ever! –

From persecutor, he became one of the most persecuted, hated Christians ever – suffering greatly for the name of Jesus.

God can do that again today with those religious people who persecute us!...

v. 3 – Back to the earlier vss: 15:21b, 23, 24c...

→Knowing & fearing God is the “beginning of all wisdom” and the key to all true understanding & insight (Prov.). – Not knowing God makes you do all kinds of dumb, stupid things! –

And the most insane of all being to reject Christ – to choose death over life, darkness over light, lies over truth!

v. 4a – To be forewarned is to be forearmed. – Here again, Christ the faithful Shepherd and loving Counselor who ensures that His disciples are not blind-sided, or shell-shocked, by the coming persecution.

→Cling to Christ’s Word for dear life! – The more we treasure Christ’s Word, the better prepared we are for whatever the future holds!

v. 4b – Jesus told them on a ‘need to know’ basis. – Milk was all they needed at first; but now it was time for the meat, for an adult diet.

(It wasn’t necessary then, with Christ Himself there to guide and defend them, and prior to His cross. But all that was about to change, and they’d better get ready.)

CONCL. – Repeat points...

+ Christians who meditate upon & truly grasp these truths are fortified with a steel spine & a ‘face like flint’ for whatever comes –

E.G., All those Malagasy martyrs – hurled off cliffs by the evil Queen, yet stood firm b/c they had been well taught & had Scripture in their own language....

+ Or C.T. Studd, born to privilege, gifted athletically, trained at Eton & Cambridge. – But b/c of Christ, Studd turned his back on wealth & worldly fame. –

Instead, he served Christ for decades, against unimaginable odds, first in China and then in Africa. – He penned these words of deep conviction:

*Some people want to live within the sound of chapel bells;  
but I want to run a mission a yard from the gates of hell.*

~ Isaac Watts understood well what Jesus was saying:

1. *Am I a soldier of the cross,  
A follow'r of the Lamb?  
And shall I fear to own His  
cause,  
Or blush to speak His name?*
2. *Must I be carried to the skies  
On flow'ry beds of ease,  
While others fought to win the  
prize,  
And sailed through bloody  
seas?*
3. *Are there no foes for me to  
face?  
Must I not stem the flood?  
Is this vile world a friend to  
grace,  
To help me on to God?*
4. *Sure I must fight if I would  
reign;  
Increase my courage, Lord;  
I'll bear the toil, endure the  
pain,  
Supported by Thy Word.*
5. *Thy saints in all this glorious  
war  
Shall conquer, though they  
die;  
They see the triumph from  
afar,  
By faith's discerning eye.*
6. *When that illustrious day shall  
rise,  
And all Thy armies shine  
In robes of vict'ry through the  
skies,  
The glory shall be Thine.*