

“The World Club Will Hate You”
John 15.18 – 16.4
October 11, 2020 by John Hattenberger

By way of context, Jesus has been teaching his apostles privately: parting words, farewell instructions, in one long lesson. Started in John 13, goes through John 16. Almost finished. Two days after finishing this lesson, Jesus would be crucified. Most of the lesson were words of encouragement and comfort. David Hinkle left off last week with John 15.17: *These things I command you, so that you will love one another*. This week, Jesus turned his attention to hate.

But first, let’s talk about clubs. Not golf clubs or night clubs. Clubs like ski clubs, bridge clubs, weight loss clubs, book clubs, RV clubs, chess clubs, soccer clubs. We all like to hang out with other people who are just like us, people who share the same goals, interests, hobbies and activities as we do. That’s where clubs come in. Clubs are official groups centered around common activities or interests. You join a club where you share the same activities or interests.

There is a club for almost every interest. Ejection Seat Club: Only for airplane pilots who have survived an airplane crash using an ejector seat. Disney’s Club 33: Cost: initiation fee of \$100,000, plus \$30,000 a year. Waiting list: 14 years to get in. At Club 33, eat dinner a secret dining room at Disneyland in Los Angeles. Obedient Wives Club: An organization that teaches wives how to be submissive to their husbands. Has 3,000 women members. Operates in 6 countries. Not in the US.

What is the most popular club in the world? The World Club. Has the most members and longest history, by far. The World Club:

- Current membership: approx. 6 billion people, growing 1.1% per year
- Established in 195 countries around the world
- No initiation fees. No annual dues.
- Joining is easy: you automatically become a member the day you are born
- ONE common interest: Active rebellion against God. Members of the World Club are sinful people who do not believe in Jesus.

The Bible says a lot about the World Club. Paul describes the Members of The World Club in Romans 1.

They are filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. ... envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. ... They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. (Rom 1:29–32).

Christians do not belong in The World Club. The Bible commands all Christians to avoid the World Club.

- *James 4.4: ... Do you not know that friendship with the World [Club] is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the World [Club] makes himself an enemy of God.*
- *1 John 2.15: Do not love the World [Club] or the things in the World [Club]. If anyone loves the World [Club], the love of the Father is not in him*
- *Romans 12:2: Do not conform to the pattern of the World [Club]...*

Of course, the Bible doesn't use the term "World Club". The Bible simply refers to it as "The world". But I like the name "World Club" and I'll use it today. Bear with me. In today's section of John Chapter 15, Jesus warned his disciples that The World Club would hate them and persecute them.

John 15:18–25: "If the world [club] hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world [club], the world [club] would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world [club], but I chose you out of the world [club], therefore the world [club] hates you. 20 Remember 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. 21 But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. 22 If 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. 23 Whoever hates me hates my Father also. 24 If 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. 25 But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'

In this section, Jesus warned his followers about The World Club. Jesus warned them: "The World Club will hate you". Why does the World Club hate Christians? Here in John 15 Jesus gave 3 reasons why the World Club hates Christians:

1. The World Club rejects those who are not members of the World Club
2. The World Club hates Jesus
3. The World Club doesn't know God the Father

Reason 1: World Club rejects those who are not members of the World Club

John 15:19: If you were of the world [club], the world [club] would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world [club], but I chose you out of the world [club], therefore the world [club] hates you.

Those who are Members of the World Club hate those who are not Members. That is, Christians. It's not just because Christians do not share the same interests as the World Club. It's more than that. Christians are opposed to the interests of the World Club. Christians are commanded to avoid the sinful actions of the World Club, AND to expose them:

Ephesians 5:11: Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness [i.e., the sinful deeds of the World Club], but instead expose them.

The World Club does not like it when their sins are exposed.

Proverbs 29:27: A ... man ... whose way is upright is an abomination to the wicked.

Cain, one of the first Members of the World Club, murdered his brother Abel. Why?

"Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. (1 John 3.12)

Earlier in John's gospel, Jesus said:

John 3:19-20: And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world [club], and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

Members of the World Club hate those who refuse to sin. Because it exposes their deeds to others. Like a spotlight. Are Christians not Members of the World Club because they're better than other people? Less sinful? More righteous? No. Not better.

All of Jesus' apostles were previously Members of The World Club. I was a Member of the World Club for 26 years, until 1981. Our membership in the World Club was terminated when we believed in Jesus. That's when Jesus plucked us out of the club.

Verse 19: Jesus said: *"I choose you out of the world [club]"*. This is the doctrine of divine election. Christians were chosen by Jesus, elected before the foundation of the World Club to believe in Jesus. Christians were plucked out of the World Club because of God's grace. There is no ground for pride or boasting.

Reason 2: The World Club hates Christians because the World Club hates Jesus.

John 15: 18: If the world [club] hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.

John 15: 20-21a: Remember 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. 21 But all these things they will do to you on account of my name...

The World Club hated Jesus. They criticized him, gossiped about him, ridiculed him, picked up rocks to stone him, plotted to kill him, and finally crucified him. Jesus told the apostles: If the World Club persecuted the master, they will persecute his servants too.

Jesus said V 21: *"all these things they will do to you on account of my name"*.

"My name", Jesus Christ. Sometimes we forget the word Christian comes from the word "Christ". Just like "Houstonian" comes from the word "Houston". Houstonians are called Houstonians because they live in Houston. We are called "Christians" – or "Christ-ians" – because we follow Christ. I think we should pronounce it "Christ – ians" to remind us. The World Club persecuted Christ. They will persecute the ones called by his name: Christians.

Martin Luther said this about Members of the World Club: "The name of Christ from your mouth will be to them nothing but poison and death."

Because Christians bear Jesus' name, they will be treated like Jesus was: Hated, insulted, reviled, persecuted, prosecuted, killed.

Jesus had one more thing to say about hate from the World Club.

John 15:25: 25 But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'

Jesus said that the World Club has no reason to hate him, but they do anyway. It was a fulfillment of OT prophecy. In Psalm 35:19 and 69:4 David complained to God that the World Club “hated him without cause”, for no good reason. Likewise, the World Club hated Jesus for no good reason. In fulfillment of Scripture. The World Club hated Jesus, and would hate the apostles too.

But the picture is not entirely negative. Jesus said V. 20: *If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.* Jesus was saying: ‘If the World Club persecuted me (and most of them did), they will persecute you also; If they obeyed my teaching (and some of them did), they will obey your teaching also.’ There is hope. The majority of the Members of the World Club will reject the teachings of Jesus. But some, not many, will accept the gospel message and be saved.

Reason 3: The World Club hates Christians because the World Club doesn’t know God the Father.

John 15:21-24: But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. 22 If 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. 23 Whoever hates me hates my Father also. 24 If 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.

John 16:3: And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me.

V. 21: The world [club] does not know “him who sent me.” That is God the Father. Jesus said: “The world [club] will hate you because the world [club] doesn’t know God the Father or me.” The “hate chain” was clear, like a trickle down of hate from one to another. The World Club doesn’t know God the Father, doesn’t know Jesus the Son, hates God the Father, hates Jesus the Son, and will hate Jesus’ followers too.

Jesus then said something confusing in verses 22 and 24:

John 15:22: If 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.

John 15:24: If I had not done among them the works that no one else did [miracles], they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father.

On the surface, this is difficult to understand. If Jesus had not come to earth and spoken to people... If Jesus had not done miracles in public ... the people would not have been guilty of sin. What did Jesus mean by this? Was Jesus saying that if he had never come to earth and done miracles, then people would have been sinless, never sinned at all? OR... All sinners would have been declared not guilty of their sins? No. That would be inconsistent with other Scripture. All people sin. No one is sinless except Jesus. All sin incurs judgment and must be paid for.

No, I believe what Jesus meant was if Jesus had not come to earth, if he had not performed miracles, then people would not be guilty of a specific sin, namely: willfully rejecting Jesus despite obvious proof. People in Jesus’ day rejected Jesus even though they had the best eye-witness proof possible. They had seen Jesus face to face with their own eyes, seen Jesus’ miracles with their own eyes, and heard the

gospel message with their own ears, from Jesus himself, the Son of God. It doesn't get any better than that! They had the clearest evidence, the fullest revelation, the most convincing truth, because it came from Jesus himself, in the flesh.

But they had made a conscious, deliberate, willful choice to reject it. This was a very serious sin. Now, there was nothing else that could save them. They had no excuse and no recourse.

Having told the apostles that the World Club would hate them, they would suffer and be persecuted, even to death, Jesus then comforted them.

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. 27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

Jesus said: "You won't have to go through this alone." Jesus would send the Holy Spirit – the Helper. For what purpose? To make the World Club stop hating them? To rescue them from persecution? No. To indwell them and empower them to "bear witness" about Jesus. We know what it means to "bear witness". It means to "give testimony". Many of us have done this in a court of law. "Here's what I saw. Here's what I heard. Here's what happened. It's the truth."

Jesus wants us to give our witness testimony about Jesus. Back in John 15, Jesus was about to leave, going to heaven. He would send the Holy Spirit to help the apostles. Why would the apostles need help? Because they were going to "bear witness", "give their testimony". To whom? To the World Club. The World Club that hated them. Their testimony would produce hatred, hostility, persecution, prosecution, and death. The apostles would need power and boldness. The Holy Spirit would give them both. The Holy Spirit's help is essential. It's why Jesus told the apostles to wait in Jerusalem for 50 days until the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost. It is the empowering of the Holy Spirit that gave the apostles, and us, the power and boldness to bear witness to a hateful, hostile World Club.

Finally, Jesus explained why he was warning them about the World Club's hatred.

John 16:1-4: "I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. 2 They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. 3 And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me. 4 But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you. I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you.

Jesus warned them in advance: "The world [club] will hate you and persecute you." So that when it happened, they would not "fall way", or "stumble" or "go astray". Jesus didn't want them to hide the fact they were Christians, or deny that they were Christians, or despair, quit, and walk away. Jesus didn't want that to happen. Not to the apostles. Not to us. It's why Jesus warned us to count the cost when choosing to become a Christian. Following Jesus has a cost.

Jesus gave them two examples of what the cost would be in John 16:2. The two examples show a broad range of persecution. The first one was socially, emotionally and spiritually painful: They would be thrown out of the synagogue, no longer able to worship with other Jews, and cut off from social interaction with Jewish neighbors.

The second was very different: Physically painful. They would be murdered by people who thought they were serving God. I think Jesus had in mind the Jewish religious leaders, including the apostle Paul before he was saved.

Persecution was not limited to the 1st century apostles. The World Club has persecuted all Christians, even today.

Finally, V. 4 Jesus said: *I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you.*

John doesn't say, but I think Jesus was responding to a question from an apostle. Something like: "What? They're going to hate us, persecute us and kill us? Why didn't you tell us about this before??!!" While Jesus was alive, the hatred and hostility were directed at Jesus. After his death, resurrection and ascension, the hatred of the World Club would be directed at the apostles, and all other Christians. Jesus wanted them to be ready, fully prepared for the hatred, hostility and persecution that would follow soon.

In summary, Jesus told his apostles: "The world [club] is going to hate you. They will persecute you. Why? Because: You don't belong to their club, they hate me, so they'll hate you too, and they don't know God the Father. I will send the Holy Spirit to help you. You'll need his help to bear witness to the Members of the World Club. I'm telling you this now so that you'll be ready. When I leave, all the hatred and persecution directed at me will be aimed at you."

I have 3 applications:

1. Be ready. The World Club will hate you. You will be persecuted for your faith in Jesus.

2 Timothy 3:12: Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Persecution is one of the costs of being a disciple of Jesus. Believing in Jesus has a cost. Yes, it has eternal, glorious benefits. But it's not free. Jesus told us to "count the cost".

Luke 14:27-28: Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?

Matthew 10:38: And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

"Take up your cross and follow me" means "Be willing to die in order to follow Jesus." Following Jesus has a cost. One of those costs is persecution. Persecution comes in many different forms. Physical persecution includes imprisonment, beatings, torture, death. Today, thousands of Christians are killed each year for the name of Jesus. Those of us in "free nations" like the US feel relatively safe from physical persecution.

Sometimes when we read the Bible's instructions about persecution, we tune it out. We ignore it. We say: "Doesn't apply to me. I've never been arrested or beaten or tortured. That's just for missionaries

in uncivilized countries.” But physical persecution is not the only kind of persecution addressed in the Bible.

The Bible says we will be persecuted mentally, emotionally, socially, verbally, spiritually. People will insult us, revile us, slander us, scorn us, ridicule us, call us names, exclude us, and speak evil about us. These are words that the Bible uses to describe persecution. We should expect to be persecuted like that, especially in the US.

Be ready. The world Club will hate you and persecute you. Don't hide your faith. Don't deny your faith. Don't quit and walk away from your faith. Be ready.

2. Love your enemy.

Matthew 5:43–44: You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

Paul wrote in Romans 12: *“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ... never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God... To the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”* Romans 12:14, 19–21

Who is your enemy? He is the one who hates you and persecutes you: Members of the World Club. They will hate you and persecute you. In return: Love them. In a World Club filled with hate, to quote David Hinkle: “Love is really, really, really important.”

3. Tell the good news. One of the best ways we can love the Members of the World Club is to cancel their membership in the World Club. How do we do that? Share the good news of Jesus Christ with them. When they believe in Jesus, Jesus will pluck them out of the World Club. Their Membership in the World Club will be cancelled. The Holy Spirit has a role: he will give us power and boldness. And we have a role: we must speak. We must bear witness and give our testimony to the Members of the World Club. Will the Members of the World Club respond favorably? Most will not. But some will.

Be ready. Love your enemy. Tell the Good News.