



*August 13, 2023*

*“Love, Church, Purpose”*

*SS 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King's Kids.*

*News:*

★ **Memorial Service, August 19 at 2 pm** ★ **Church Camp August 24-27** ★

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### **JOHN 15:18-27 ~**

In the first half of the great Farwell Discourse Jesus talked about the Christian's relationship with God. Now, due to our connection to Him, He will spend the second half talking about the Christian's relationship with the world.

If you are an extension of Jesus, logically, the world will treat you exactly as it treated Him.

The first goal of the Holy Spirit within the Christian person is to conform them to Christ.

Christian maturity is measured by how much a person is like Jesus. The more we are like Jesus the more the world will hate us because they actually hate Him in us.

Why does the world hate Jesus? Jesus is the one and only Savior for the world and as such He simultaneously reminds them of their rejection of God in favor of striving to live as they wish.

Friedrich Nietzsche: A superman is a person who has killed off God for themselves and so, creates their own morality - a person who determines for themselves what is good and evil.

The world hates Jesus with an intense passion. If it doesn't likewise hate you, what does that mean?

*Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.*

*God Bless You!*

In 380 Rome declared Christianity the state religion and almost immediately the state began persecuting non-Christians as well as Christians with the wrong doctrines.

Europe, and the Americas, became bastions of Christianity until recently and so, Christians in those regions have experienced very little resistance, let alone hatred. We became arrogant and abusive towards non-Christians.

Today only 6 out of 10 Americans claim to be Christian and only 2 out of 10 Americans attend church regularly.

We've learned to stand our ground, refusing to be hated. When we are hated, it's usually because we hate as well as the world hates.

When secular people look at you, do they see Jesus?

We have been brainwashed into thinking that living out loud as a Christian means sacrifice. Give up your free time by attending church services. Give up your excess money by giving to the church. Give up various vices according to your personality.

Christians have as many doctrines as there are Christians and because they are all based on human opinion they fuss and fight with each other over their own man-made rules - over their particular set of sacrifices.

Bertrand Russel, "If an opinion contrary to your own makes you angry, that is a sign that you are subconsciously aware of having no good reason for thinking as you do."

The problem is that people, both Christian and non-Christian, might hate us for the particulars of our personal set of sacrifices, but that has nothing to do with why Jesus said His disciples would be hated by the world.

Christianity is 100% about Christ. It's about us being like Him. What does that mean?

1a) Who can possibly love the church and why would we?

2a) What does loving the church look like and how would that get us hated by the world?

3a) How are we making Christianity about us and what's the alternative?

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Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_



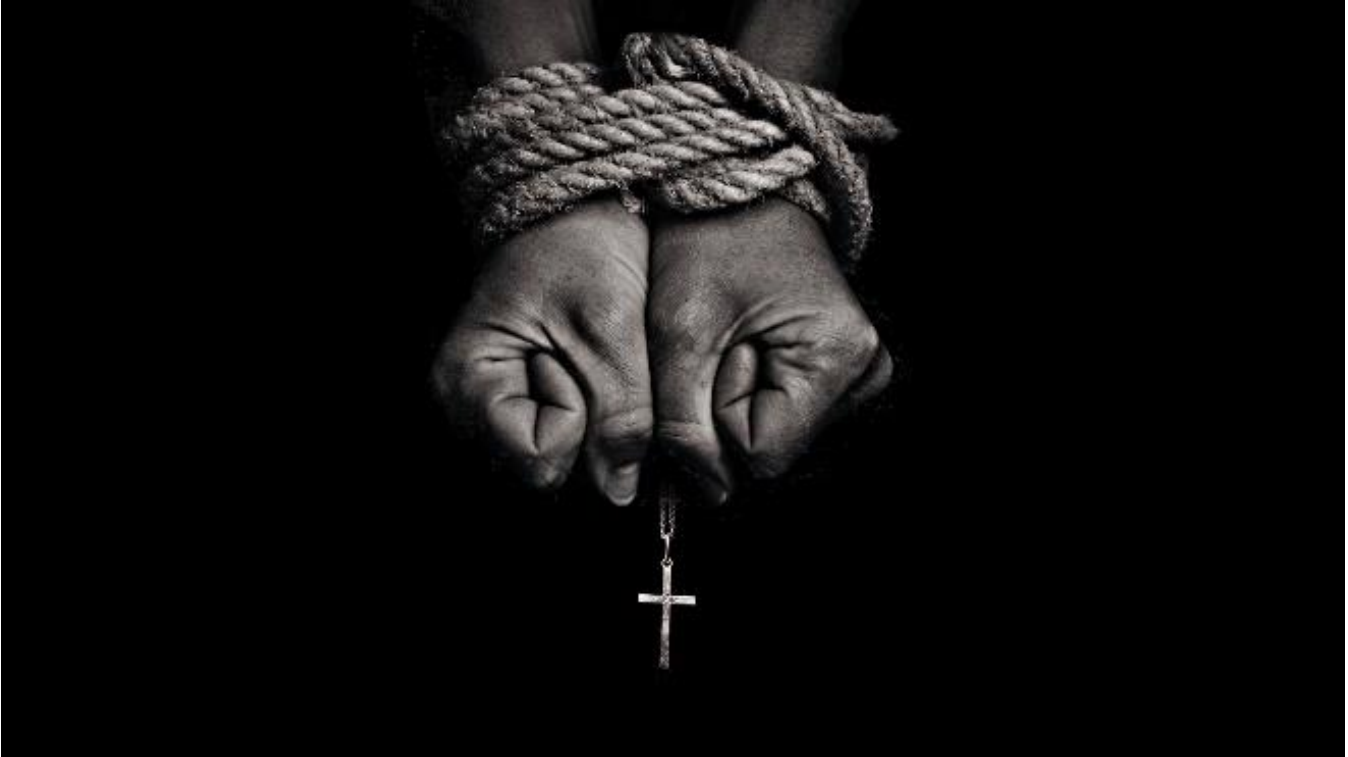
lêtheia  
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP




lêtheia  
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

the gospel of  
**JOHN**

ΕΝΑΡΧΗ Η ΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΗΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΗΝ  
ΘΗ ΚΑΙ ΘΕ ΤΗ ΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΣΥ ΤΟΣ Η ΝΕΝΑΡΧΗ ΤΙΡΟΣ  
ΤΟ Ν ΘΗ ΠΑΝΤΑ ΔΙΑ ΤΟ ΥΕ ΓΕΝΕΤΟ ΚΑΙ ΧΩΡΙΣ



John 15:18–27 ~ 18“If the world hates you, 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, because of this the world hates you. 20Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you as well; if they followed My word, they will follow yours also. 21But all these things they will do to you on account of My name, because they do not know the One who sent Me. 22If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23The one who hates Me hates My Father also. 24If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they

would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. 25But this has happened so that the word that is written in their Law will be fulfilled: 'they hated me for no reason.' 26“When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, namely, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, He will testify about Me, 27and you are testifying as well, because you have been with Me from the beginning.



In the first half of the great Farwell Discourse Jesus talked about the Christian's relationship with God. How the true disciples of Jesus were His true friends because they loved Him enough to trust Him enough to remain connected to Him enough that they would produce fruit. That they would be selfless enough to

allow Him to love His church through them. How much does Jesus love His church? Exactly this much... Arms stretched out to the side.



We saw how our willingness to be used by Jesus in that way was not possible without first loving God and further we learned that the net result of the love of Jesus freely flowing within and through the church was the very thing that enabled His love to flow out of the church and into the world reaching the lost.

The ultimate purpose then is for Jesus to build the Kingdom of God on earth through His present physical Body, the church - us. We Christians are not here to become more mature as Christians for our sake, or even for God's sake, but ultimately for the world's sake.

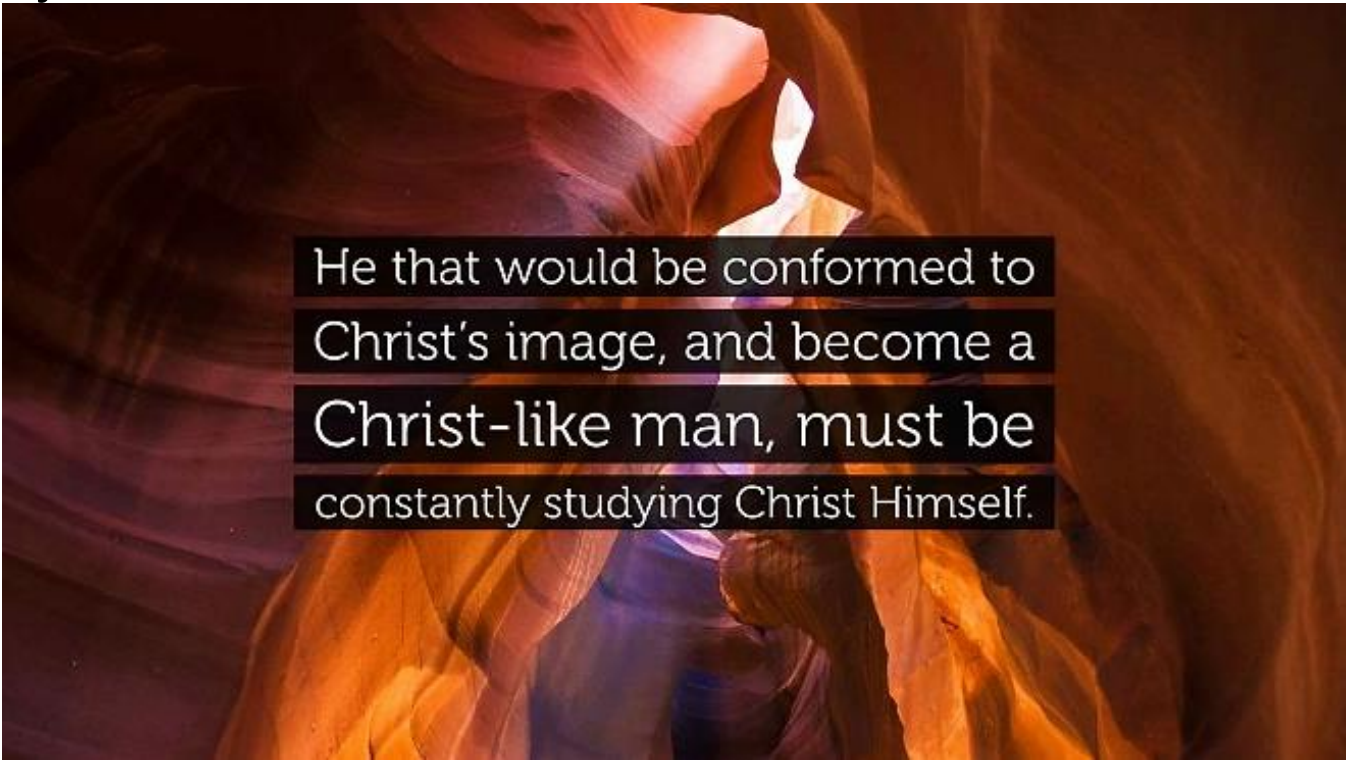
We are here as conduits through whom God loves the unsaved with the goal of Saving as many of them as possible. How are we doing so far?



How are we doing so far? Well, here Jesus has given us a litmus test to determine that very thing. How well is the church universal, the church in America, the church in the Flathead, the church Alêtheia doing? How much does the world of non-Christians hate us, simply because we're Christians?

Jesus spelled it out right here in the verses I just read. He said that due to our connection to Him and as an extension of Him, the world would treat us exactly as it treated Him. In fact, the nuance of these verses is that it is always Jesus Who is the one they hate, we are

hated to the precise degree that we are Him in their eyes.



The first goal of the Holy Spirit within the Christian person is to conform them to Christ. Christian maturity is measured by how much a person is like Jesus. Which is precisely why we work so hard to accurately understand the Scriptures. We must know Jesus in order to be like Jesus.

You might think that we don't really need to know Jesus as long as the Holy Spirit knows Him since He's the one doing the conforming. He conforms us by the renewing of our minds. So, the more we know the true Biblical Jesus the more we can be conformed to Him



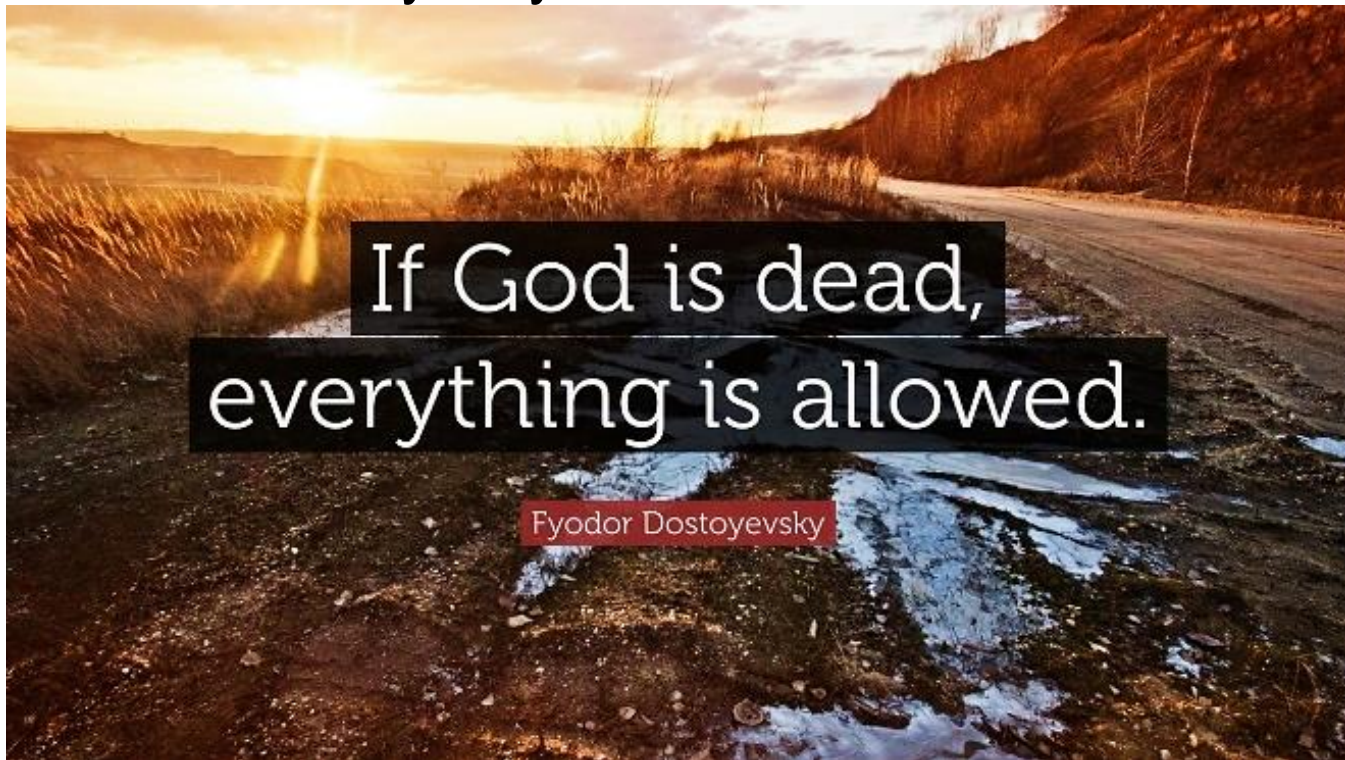
and the more we are like Jesus the more the world of unsaved people will hate us - they hate Him in us.



Why? Why would anyone hate Jesus? Jesus is the one and only Savior for the world of unsaved people and as such He simultaneously reminds them of their self-centered, self-serving, self-aggrandizing, rejection of God in favor of what they want, just like their many hundred times great-grandfather Adam. It is their desire to determine good and evil themselves, just like their many hundred times great-grandmother Eve.

People despise being judged by others and that's why for centuries most did their evil in the dark, behind closed doors, away from the light. That didn't work with

God Who sees all and so they resented Him more and more until finally they killed God.



Only 141 years ago, Friedrich Nietzsche, wrote “Gött ist töt,” “God is dead.” What he meant was specifically that “the belief in the Christian God has become unbelievable.” That mankind had evolved past a need for superstition. That it was therefore up to man to realize that God was dead and jettison all of the superstitious morality associated with Christianity.

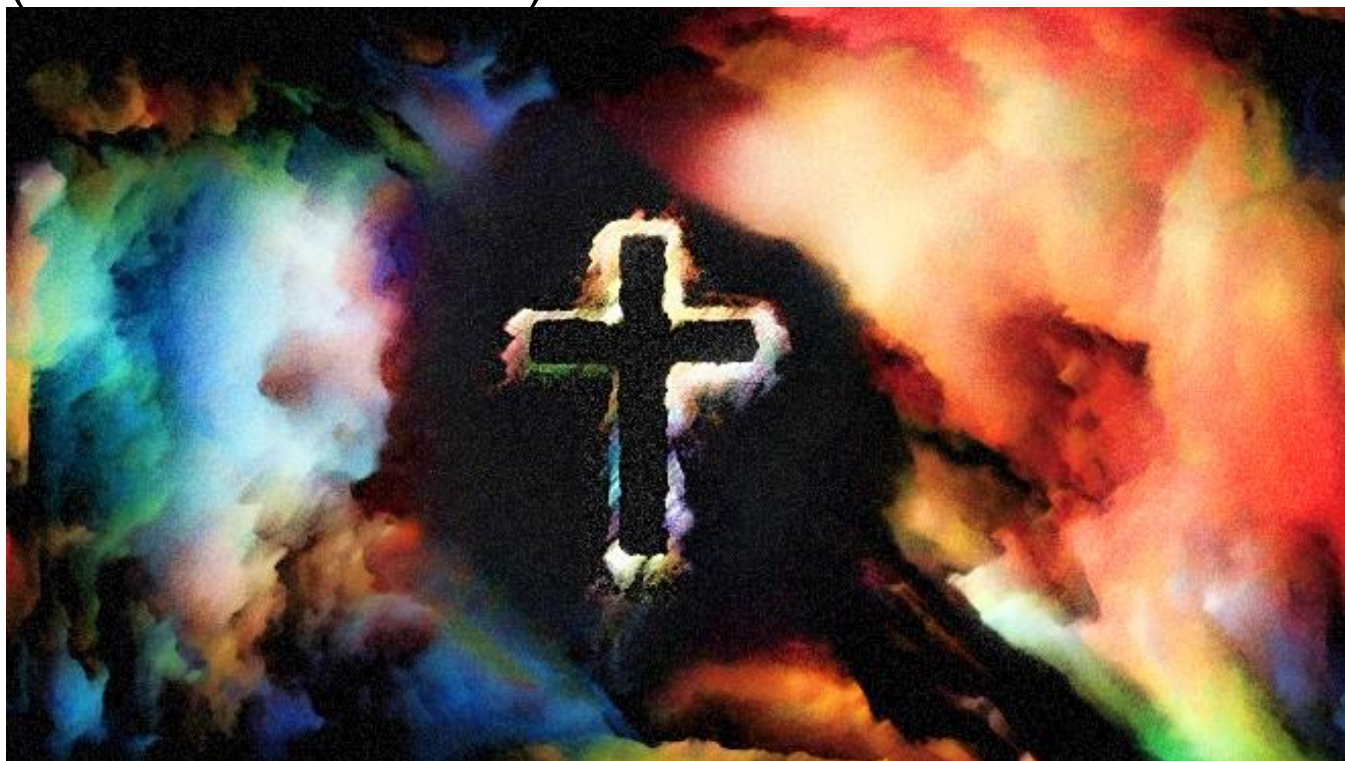
In his book “The Gay Science,” published in 1882, only a year after his hero Dostoevsky died, Nietzsche wrote, “God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all

that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?" The people who were brave enough, intelligent enough, and strong enough to own the fact that we humans killed God, Nietzsche called Übermensch - Overman, or more popularly, Superman. A superman is a person who rejects superstition and creates their own morality - a person who determines for themselves what is good and what is evil and allows others to define that for themselves, so long as it's not bound in the false and oppressive morality of the Bible. A person who unapologetically takes what they want from life.

Can you see how philosophy permeates culture? Oh, it usually takes quite a while for the ideas of academia to filter down and become the ideas of the masses, but it inevitably does so.

Nietzsche's philosophy led to the eugenics movement where they essentially applied selective breeding to people and from there inexorably to the genocide of the Nazi regime. Today, after 141 years of the philosophy

soaking into every facet of western society, we no longer feel God breathing down our neck - we have lost all fear of God - and so we now sin with abandon in broad daylight. "They thought it foolish to acknowledge God... Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning... Worse yet, they encourage others to do (these things), too" (Romans 1:28-32✂).



Make no mistake about it my friends, the world hates Jesus with an intense passion and so if it doesn't hate you, you should ask yourself why. Really, there can be only one reason for that... Right? I mean if the world

doesn't hate you with an intense passion, they simply don't see enough Jesus in you to be noticed and if they do, it isn't enough Jesus in you to warrant their irritation, let alone their anger, let alone their loathing hatred. They simply don't see enough Jesus within you to be bothered.

In 301 the Kingdom of Armenia became the first nation to declare Christianity its state religion. In 313 Rome declared it legal and in 380 they followed Armenia by declaring Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire. Not long after the state began persecuting non-Christians as well as Christians with the wrong doctrines.

Over the next 16 centuries people in Europe and the Americas were solidly in the Christian camp and so Christians in those areas were surrounded by other Christians for the most part and therefore experienced very little resistance, let alone hatred. Christians became self-assured, pompous, and highly abusive towards non-Christians. So-called Christians became the haters of the world. Talk about genocides and religious and ethnic cleansings.

Now, the tables have turned, or at least they are turning.



Only 6 out of 10 Americans claim to be Christian...

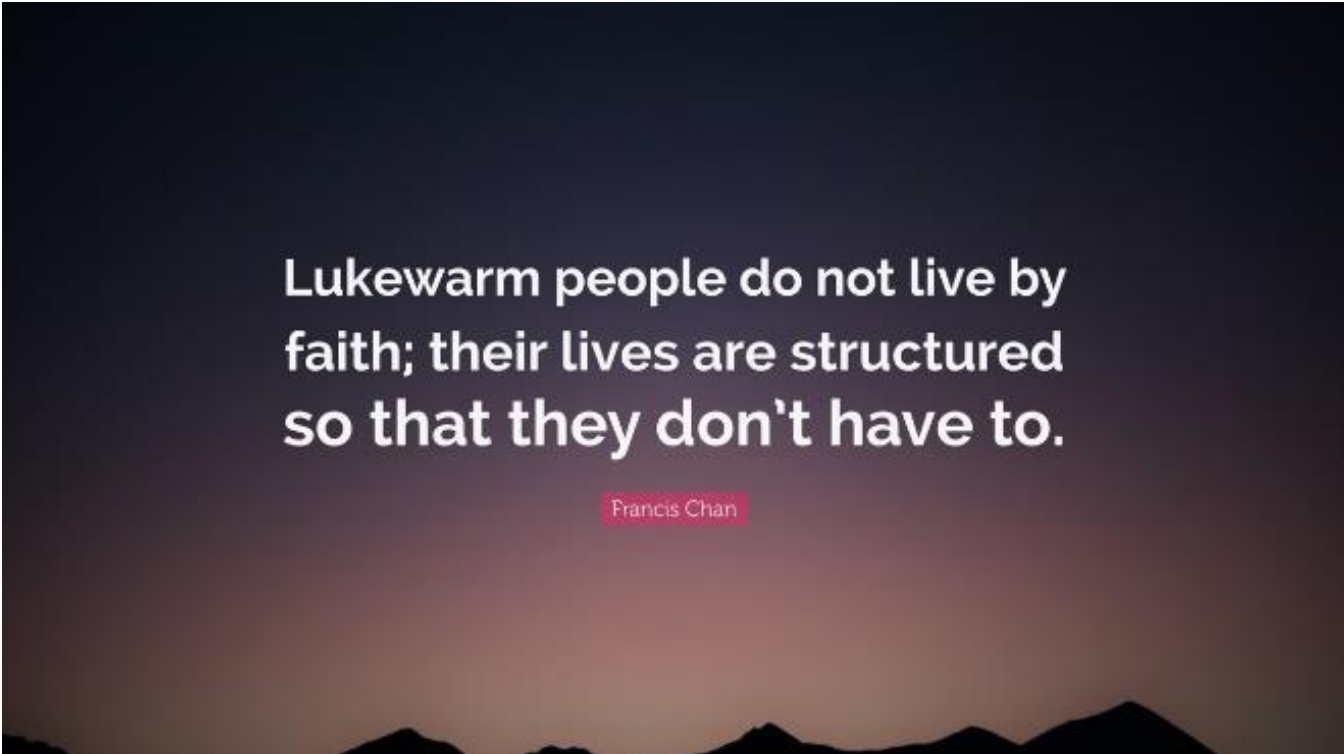


and only 2 out of 10 Americans actually attend church regularly.

20 percent of Americans attend what is called Christian church services weekly and that includes, Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses (who are definitely not Christian). It includes Roman Catholics, liberally progressive Methodists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and Presbyterians (who deny the authority of Scripture). It includes the prosperity Gospel people, the barking in the spirit folks, the universalist unitarian hipsters, the Westboro Baptist fascists, and a whole host of other wacky groups. They're all in the 20 percent and we wonder why secular people think dedicated Christians are insane.

Solidly Biblical Christians trying to follow Jesus in word, thought, and deed, in America... A very tiny fraction of the population. Yet, even for the devoutly orthodox Christian minority there is little to no persecution in America. Why?

Partly due to a remnant of tolerance instilled as an historic American value. Partly due to the relative newness of secularism. But it's mostly due to the fact that the truly Christian minority refuses to stand out as those who have been set apart.



Lukewarm people do not live by  
faith; their lives are structured  
so that they don't have to.

Francis Chan

There is a collective reticence of the genuine followers of Christ to actually follow Him publicly. The authentic biblical Christians of America are stealthier than an F-35, but with no purpose other than to remain undetected. We're wearing the world's disguise to pass unnoticed, we're incognito to avoid any negative attention, we're undercover to remain unbothered.

How many of your casual acquaintances, neighbors, and coworkers, recognize and know you as an uncompromising child of the Living God fully committed to Christ Jesus as your only Lord and Savior in constant communion with the Holy Spirit dwelling within?



There's the old question, if you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Would there be a line of witnesses ready to testify against you? Or would your neighbors all say, "He was quiet, mowed his yard, kept to himself, he seemed like such a nice guy - I had no idea that he was a Christian!"? Such a scenario was never Jesus' plan.

Of course, that's not always the case. But when Christians do make waves in the world it's nearly always in the wrong way and for the wrong reasons. Such Christians annoy everyone around them with a holier-than-thou, condescending, judgmentalism that can only be matched by a 15-year-old girl from Sweden ranting about the environment.



Sure, people will hate you for that, but it will have everything to do with you and nothing to do with Jesus. Can you see that? We Christians will be hated because we are who we are as people. That's the nature of being stuck in the human condition. People will hate us because of our opinions, and political views, because of our grooming habits and the clothes we wear, because of the color of our skin and our personality - that's normal. It isn't right, but it is part and parcel to being a person. That's not what Jesus was talking about.

What Jesus was talking about was being hated by people specifically because when they look at you, they see Jesus. Not Donald Trump, not Greta Thunberg, not even you, but Jesus in you. When secular people look at you, do they see Jesus? When secular people look at you, do they see Jesus, or do they see just another irritating human being whom they have to deal with?



The goal is to be conformed to Jesus, to be so like Jesus that Jesus is Who people see in you. Why would we do that? Because Jesus has been alluding to what He plainly said in verses 26&27 that I read. In order that the Holy Spirit would testify about Jesus through His Christian friends. How are we to do that? By loving the church. What, not by haranguing people on every street corner, not by sending missionaries everywhere, not by being obnoxiously pious, not by abstaining from every fun thing in life?

We have been brainwashed into thinking that living out loud as a Christian means privation. Sacrifice - it's all about sacrifice - but not too much and mostly on my terms. Here's what I mean...



Christians, and non-Christians alike, associate devout Christianity with what the Christian person must or at least should give up. Give up your free time by attending church services. Give up your excess money by giving to the church. Give up your vacation to go on a mission trip. Most especially, give up various vices according to your personality.

You heard me right. In Medieval Europe you were a Catholic or you were in danger of being burned at the stake. The Catholic church defined what sacrifices were to be made. Once the Protestant Reformation opened the floodgates to new religious ideas and convictions, a torrent of new denominations burst on the scene, each with a slightly different idea of what

sacrifices were appropriate. Fast forward to our culture and every person gets to freely choose their own personal religion to include what must be sacrificed, what should be sacrificed and what may be sacrificed in order to be in good standing in their own individually created denomination.

Honestly, we don't have hundreds of denominations in America, we have as many denominations as there are people claiming to be Christians and each one of those people determine what is good and what is evil for themselves.

Don't kid yourself. I have been asked, far more times than I can count, whether a particular behavior that someone really wants to engage in, is a sin, or not. They're not asking me to in order to discover the Truth, they're asking me to find out if I'll be the pastor who gives them the permission that they seek. No matter how sternly I warn a person against engaging in some sin, if they want to do it badly enough, they will find a way to either ignore me, find another pastor to consult, or simply rationalize it away.

Make no mistake about it, we are Eve's kids. My point is that one person sacrifices by abstaining from certain things, while another person with a different opinion,

sacrifices by abstaining from completely different things.



Some see going to church and giving to the church as completely unnecessary, but they can't understand why their kid becomes an agnostic or an atheist. Some have no problem with alcohol in moderation and others are certain that even a thimble of wine for Holy Communion is a one-way ticket to the Lake of Fire. Christians have as many doctrines as there are Christians and because they are all based on human opinion they fuss and fight with each other over their own man-made rules.



## AGNOSTIC

A person who says he knows nothing about God and who, when you agree with him, becomes angry.

A friend of mine who likes to justify to me why he doesn't "practice religion," sent me this Bertrand Russel quote. "If an opinion contrary to your own makes you angry, that is a sign that you are subconsciously aware of having no good reason for thinking as you do. If someone maintains that two and two are five, or that Iceland is on the equator, you feel pity rather than anger, unless you know so little of arithmetic or geography that his opinion shakes your own contrary conviction. The most savage controversies are those about matters as to which there is no good evidence either way. Persecution is used in theology, not in arithmetic, because in arithmetic there is knowledge, but in theology there is only opinion."

I mention that because Russel was brilliant in mathematics and philosophy and so his insight is extremely valuable. On the other hand, Russel was clueless regarding theology and ironically, we see his own anti-Christian bias in the midst of his admonishment against being biased.

First, he was completely right, even though he was on the left, when he said people only get angry with ideas when they feel threatened by them. For us it confirms that the vast majority of the things Christians fight about with each other are meaningless human opinions. We'll explore that part.

Before we do, I just to finish the thought about Russel's bias and the reason my friend sent me this quote is Russel assumed that all of theology was opinion. He was wrong about that and that not only shows his bias but negates my friend's argument that all religious belief and practice is nonsense. If we want to know about non-Euclidian geometry we ask a mathematician, if we want to know about quantum chromodynamics we ask a physicist, if we want to know about theology we ask a theologian, not an atheist philosopher.





Going back to the point, both Christians and non-Christians hold that there is some set of sacrifices necessary in order to be a good Christian, even though they disagree on the particulars of the set.

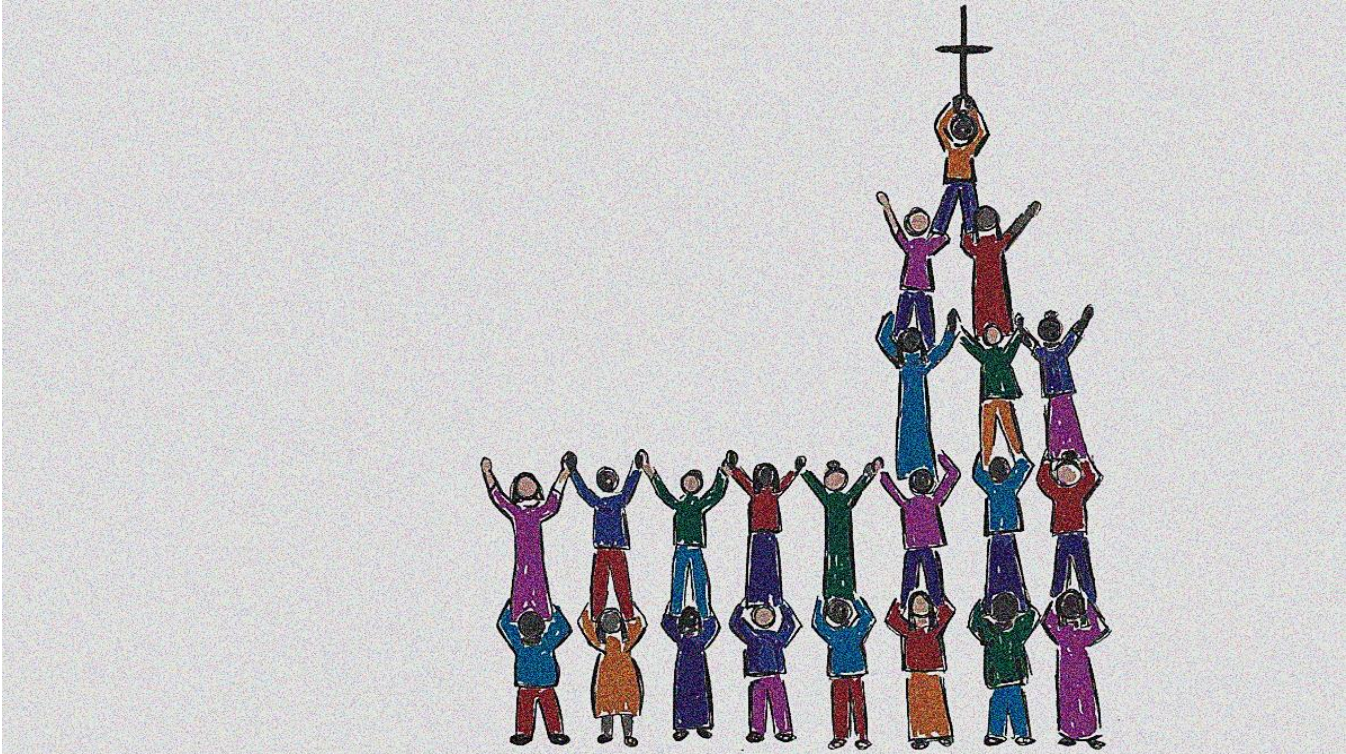
The problem is that while people, both Christian and non-Christian might hate us for the particulars of our personal set of sacrifices, that fact has nothing to do with why Jesus said His disciples would be hated by the world. That's a rather profound realization, isn't it?

So, what's to hate then if it's not my annoying opinions? What Jesus was telling His guys, and by proper extrapolated extension what Jesus is telling you this morning, is that it isn't about us. Please get that my

friends. Christianity isn't about you, or me, or us, or even about them. Christianity is 100% about Christ. It's about us being like Him. We are supposed to be hated because we are like Him.

What does that mean? Well, we've been dealing with aspects of that for months now. We are to be like Christ by allowing the Holy Spirit to conform us to Him which looks like you and me loving the church.

There are three areas to discuss in what I just said. 1a) Who can possibly love the church 1b) and why would we? 2a) What does loving the church look like 2b) and how would that get us hated by the world? 3a) How do we make Christianity about us 3b) and what's the alternative?



Again, the church is not an institution, a building, or a religious culture; the church is Jesus on earth. It is Jesus physically and so to love the church is to love Jesus. To interact with the people who make up the church - the Body of Christ is to interact with Jesus... With the Jesus in them. So, it is loving Jesus by obeying His command to love, but also loving Him as He exists in the church and that is doing what's best for you, which is loving Jesus in you and it is what's best for the world, which is loving Jesus, by allowing Him to be made manifest to them.

That brings us to the answer for the second question. When we show Jesus to the world as the ultimate fulfillment of God's love for the world... In other words,

when Christians self-sacrificially serve one another in the unconditional Agapê love of God poured out through Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit and outside people, non-Christian people, the world's people see that, they will despise and hate us for it.

Why? Why on earth would non-Christians hate us for truly loving one another? Because if they saw that from the church they would be convicted to their core. They would know that they wanted that, they would know that it was completely impossible to achieve through any means other than full submission to God through Christ Jesus and because they don't want to submit, they would be threatened, and they would lash out, and they would hate.

Then and only then would the church be hated by the world for the right reason. Hated with a burning passion because the world - the people who have not embraced God's Agapê love for them - would see a love that makes no sense to them. A love that is utterly impossible in their experience. A love that human beings are incapable of giving. At the same time, a love which all human beings, at least secretly, long to receive.



An example is in order... A Christian person wrongs another Christian and the wronged person unilaterally, and unconditionally, forgives the wrongdoer. Truly and without resentment and from strength, not weakness and for the reason that they themselves have been forgiven for all by God. The love because they have received love, they forgive, because they have received forgiveness. They are patient because Jesus is so beautifully patient with them.

The world cannot make sense of that. How do I know? Because most Christians cannot make sense of it. If we Christians loved each other as Christ loves us, we would not only be loving Him in return, we would be loving the world by extension as He does.

Because the world isn't ready to submit fully to God in Christ, they will simply hate us for His love flowing through us.



That brings us to the third area where I said that Christianity isn't about us. We have our set of sacrifices which can be thought of as our rules of conduct to avoid sinning. We obey our rules in order to protect ourselves. Please think about all the things that you've been told are the dos and don'ts of Christianity and recognize that all of them exist to keep the individual believer from sinning. See how it's about keeping me out of trouble with God? See how it's about me?

When did Jesus or His Apostles ever teach such nonsense? When was the exact same behavior of the Jewish legalists ever condoned in the Bible?

An example... It's merely one small example to draw your attention to a fundamental Christian principle few people ever grasp. When a Christian says that drinking alcohol is a sin they do so because they have made Christianity about themselves. Before you get the rope and firewood to burn me at the stake... what I mean is that a total ban on alcohol is as a sacrifice to keep the individual Christian safe from the potential ravages of alcohol abuse - that's the reason.

In Christ's Christianity the reason a Christian would abstain from alcohol is to protect others, not to protect themselves. With such a shift in purpose a Christian could also imbibe with caution, restraint, and propriety given the right circumstances. What is a sin biblically speaking is the abuse of alcohol, which is to say overindulgence, or drunkenness.

Why is drunkenness always a sin? It's because of its negative effect on others. See that? If a person who has no problem with alcohol abuse drinks a single beer among only people who likewise have no problem, then no harm has been done to any other person. If

that same person in that same company overindulged, they will certainly cause harm to others. I can explain why that will always be the case if anyone's interested, but for now take my word for it.

The point then has to do with the nature and definition of sin. Sin in Christ's Christianity has to do with harming another be it God Himself, or you fellow Christian, or the world. Man-made religious legalism defines sin as that which harms oneself.

To genuinely love your fellow Christian means sacrificing for their benefit. Sacrificing for your own benefit means self-love, a very popular practice among non-Christians and those influenced by them. Just because a self-help, self-improvement, personal growth, plan plasters on some out-of-context Bible verses, it does not make it Christian.

By definition, sin is always an offense against God. There are two basic types of sin, those that are direct and those that are indirect. Direct sin is really just refusing to submit to God's Will. His Will includes being in right relationship with Him through His provided means, which is Jesus. It is basically seeking your human will over His divine Will.



Indirect sin is harming His creation, other people, animals, the planet, even yourself, without a necessary and just cause. What constitutes a necessary and just cause - well we could say, "Let your conscience be your guide," assuming that you've given the Holy Spirit access to your conscience. Maybe a better way to say it is to always remember that one day, far sooner than you realize, you will stand before Jesus and explain yourself. Let that reality guide your choices.

What have we discovered? Well, for one thing we know that sin is not the breaking of man-made rules no matter how right they might seem. That's precisely why the Jewish legalists were so angry with Jesus - He kept breaking their religiously reasonable rules.

Sin is about selfishly hurting God or others. That's why the Bible never condemns alcohol but denounces drunkenness. Why Jesus never said a negative thing about sex but had nothing but negative things to say about sex outside of a Biblical marriage.

Love your fellow Christian the way Jesus loves you and the world will hate you for it, but God will through that very thing reach some, and they will turn, and He will save them from eternal torment.

# my SERMON NOTES



My favorite song today:

[Blank area for writing favorite song]

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Bible Book: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_

Verses: \_\_\_\_\_

Who's Talking? \_\_\_\_\_

Who's Being Talked to? \_\_\_\_\_

What's the Main Point? \_\_\_\_\_

1) The 1<sup>st</sup> half of Jesus' Farewell Discourse was about...

2) The second half is about...

3) What is a mature Christian? Why would they be hated?

4) Why haven't Christians been hated in America?

5) Christianity isn't about me...

A)

B)

C)

Stuff I didn't understand...

draw something