**In the Upper Room (6) – Persecuted Like the Master**

*John 15:18-25*

**Introduction**

1. Paul told Timothy, ***“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12).***
2. This was not anything new to that which Jesus had taught previously.
3. Jesus was about to experience the most severe persecution imaginable, and He promised His apostles they would have to endure persecution in His name as well (**cf. John 15:18-25**).
4. The same is true for all who believe in His name.
   1. This is one of the many reasons it is imperative that we love one another **(v. 17).**
   2. The world will hate us, and persecute us, and we must be there for each other.
5. Why are we persecuted?
6. The Master Was **(vv. 18, 20)**
   1. **John 15:18, 20** – The simplest explanation for persecution of the disciples of Christ is the persecution of Christ Himself.
      1. **(v. 20)** – A look back to what Jesus spoke before concerning serving each other **(cf. 13:12-17).**
      2. **The same applies with persecution. If Jesus is not above being persecuted, neither are we.**
   2. **Disciple** – A "disciple" was not only a pupil, but an adherent; hence they are spoken of as imitators of their teacher (VINE).
      1. Jesus was persecuted because of what He taught and did.
      2. If we are truly His disciples, we will be persecuted the same.
   3. **John 13:36-38 –** Jesus to Peter. Also true to an extent with all Christians – WE WILL FOLLOW JESUS IN PERSECUTION.
   4. ***“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (Matthew 16:24).***
7. We Are Not Of The World **(vv. 19)**
   1. **John 15:19** – Jesus chose us out of the world, and took us out of the world, so the world hates us.
   2. ***“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love” (Colossians 1:13).***
      1. Our separation from the world in this way was necessary – consecrated to God.
      2. **However, we are not entirely separated from the world yet. 🡪**
   3. **John 17:14-17** – Jesus prayed for His apostles, not that they would be taken out of the world, but that they would remain in the world, and be distinct from it.
      1. God’s word sanctifies us, or separates us from the rest of the world.
      2. **However, we must remain in the world. This will lead to persecution.**
   4. **Galatians 6:14 – world crucified to me, and I to the world. (You choosing to live righteously has negative effects on you from the world.)**
   5. **1 Peter 4:1-6** – Because we live lives separate from the world of sin, but remain in the physical world, we will be spoken evil of. (*God will judge those men, but will judge us as well, which is why the gospel was preached to us, and it is necessary to be sanctified by it.*)
8. We Speak The Word Of Christ **(vv. 20c-25)**
   1. **John 15:20c-25** – The words of the apostles would be the words of Christ, thus, if they rejected and persecuted Jesus because of His word, they would do the same to the apostles.
      1. **13:20** – Jesus was sending the apostles forth to be witnesses, and ambassadors of Him – to reject them is to reject Him.
      2. **(v. 20c**) – Those who speak as Christ spoke will be rejected by many, and as such they reject Jesus.
      3. **(vv. 21-24)** – The apostles would proclaim the truth of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God – for this reason they would be rejected and persecuted.
         1. **(vv. 22-24)** – God sent Jesus, and HE SPOKE with authority, and WORKED the works of God (miracles).
         2. Their sin in rejecting Him, and putting Him to death was without excuse. (Even though they were ignorant.)
         3. Their rejection of Him was a rejection of God.
      4. **(v. 25)** – They hated Jesus without a cause.
         1. **IRONY – The law they claimed to love actually spoke of their rejection of it, and the Christ.**
         2. Jesus taught the truth about Himself and His Father, and was rejected.
         3. **The same is true for all who speak that same truth, and all its implications.**
   2. **Acts 4:18-20; 5:28-32, 41-42** – Put in custody, threatened, commanded not to speak in the name of Jesus, put in prison again, released by God, continued to speak the truth, suffered for speaking the truth, and rejoiced.
9. The Proper Reaction to Persecution
10. Do not be surprised.
    1. **1 Peter 4:12-13** – Do not think it strange! You should expect it!
       1. It is a trial to try you – you must prove ***“the genuineness of your faith…though it is tested by fire” (1:7).***
       2. This should be expected by understanding Christians. Also, welcomed 🡪
    2. **James 1:2-3** – Count it all joy! Endure! It produces patience! (***NOTE: Hebrew Christians persecuted – allowed as discipline from God – Hebrews 12***).
11. Do not stumble.
    1. **John 16:1-4a** – If Jesus had not told them what to expect, it may surprise them, and cause them to stumble.
       1. Persecution should not cause us to stumble.
       2. ***“If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small” (Proverbs 24:10).***
    2. ***“no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this” (1 Thessalonians 3:3).***
12. The Blessing in Persecution
13. Jesus Has Overcome, As Have We
    1. **John 16:32-33** – The worst the ruler of this world could throw at Jesus, He overcame – death.
       1. There will be tribulation in the world.
       2. **The comfort does not come from deliverance from these things, but overcoming them to be found with God.**
    2. **1 John 5:3-5** – Our faith is what allows us to overcome, because we believe in Jesus, and He overcame.
       1. Commandments may seem grievous because of the suffering they cause.
       2. **This isn’t so, because ultimately, as we love, and have faith in God we overcome sin, the world and tribulations!**
       3. **What is far more grievous is sin! And we overcome such by faith in God, i.e. keeping His commandments.**
14. We Will Be Rewarded
    1. **Revelation 2:8-11** – Church in Smyrna.
    2. This church was faithful, but would soon undergo severe persecution for a complete amount of time.
    3. The had to not only be willing to endure it, but continue faithfully to the point of death (**v. 10)!**
    4. It is far better to die for Christ in this life than to experience the second death for eternity **(v. 11).**

**Conclusion**

1. The question of persecution is not whether we will experience it, but when will we experience it, and how will we handle it?
2. Jesus promised His apostles they would experience persecution because **(1)** He did, **(2)** they were not of the world, and **(3)** they spoke the truth to a world that hates it.
3. **These same reasons are true for us. We must count it a blessing to be identified with the Lord in such a fashion!**