

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide
SB 05.14.2023

FOLLOWING JESUS IN A WORLD THAT DOESN'T – John 15:18-16:3

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

Pastor Daniel tells us “In the past, being a Christian could help you socially, politically, and even professionally. Nowadays, if you put on your application that you're a Christian that is going to hold you back instead of helping you. But the loss of our cultural influence might not be such a bad thing after all. It has helped weed out all the people who weren't really Jesus followers to begin with so that only those who truly love the Lord remain. Considering the growing hostility that we are facing as believers, the question I want to consider with you this morning is, how do you follow Jesus in a world that doesn't?” Let's get into our lesson...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you most from Pastor Daniel's sermon?
2. What does persecution look like in your life? What ways are you persecuted for your faith?

The persecution of the church goes far beyond the martyrdoms of early Christians. Persecution and martyrdom are present throughout the church today. Christians worldwide are losing their lives because of their continued faith in Christ. While we may not feel this type of persecution in this country or city, it is a real danger to many believers. Christ knew that persecution would come and prepared His disciples for the trials that were ahead.

Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 15:18-25

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.

1. How does Jesus' warning to believers in these verses make a difference in how we live?
2. What is the relationship between Jesus' teaching in these verses and the result of spiritual transformation—Christlikeness?

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1. How have you personally seen the world's hatred of Christianity or Christians expressed? Has this hatred ever been directed toward you?
2. How does our reaction to those who oppose us serve as a testimony for or against Jesus' power and grace in us?

“PROMISES” in 2023

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 15:26-16:4

- 1. In your own words, why was Jesus sending the Holy Spirit? What is the role the Holy Spirit serves?**
- 2. How would you describe your daily interaction with the Holy Spirit?**

The Spirit was sent to believers, at least in part, to join with them in testifying about Jesus. As the Holy Spirit supports the disciples as agents of communicating the gospel, they have the same mission—witnessing about Jesus. Regardless of the sense we might get from the world, we are never alone when testifying about our Savior.

- 1. What did Jesus say the result of testifying would be? What do you think the range of emotions were for the disciples, hearing about the Spirit then being warned of persecution?**
- 2. How does the Spirit help us be constant in our faithfulness to the calling of Christ?**

Jesus warned the disciples of persecution that would come. Much like Matthew 10, He identified where it may come from, promised the Spirit, and then warned them. This must have given the disciples a mix of joy and fear. We also have been given the Holy Spirit, our Helper. In light of what Christ did and the gift of the Spirit, we, too, are called to testify about Christ.

Applying God’s Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

How are you supposed to live in the world without becoming part of it? As a child of God, your job is to be an ambassador of the kingdom of heaven. An ambassador represents the country he comes from and seeks to advance that country's agendas and values. That's what we're called to do. The believer's job is to saturate this world with heaven. We're not called to hunker down and hold the fort. We're called to storm the gates of hell and rescue those who are being held as captives. Our prayer isn't 'Lord, help me to escape down here' but rather, 'Let Thy kingdom come, and Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' {Matthew 6:10}

- 1. What things in our culture make it difficult to persevere in Christ above everything else? How can our group help each other?**
- 2. What does it look like to be conscious of the world's attitude toward the Christian faith?**
- 3. How does the Spirit help you remain constant in difficult times? What might that look like in a situation you are facing right now?**

PRAYER – Praise God for the saving work of Jesus Christ. Ask that God would open your eyes to the opportunities to testify about Him to others. Pray for our church, that God would lead the church to be a source of stability for followers of Christ, a place where they can come and receive comfort as they go out into the world. Pray that God would place names of people on the hearts of the members of your group and that they would feel called to go and share Christ with them.

**“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love of for the Father is not in them.”
{1st John 2:15}**