

Exaudi  
28 May, Anno Domini 2017  
St. John 15:26-16:4  
Pr. Kurt Ulmer

In the Name of the Father, and of the +Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Can anyone really argue that we aren't living in the fulfillment of these words of Jesus just as the apostles did? The body of Christ is under a relentless assault from all those who, by deceit or sword, in the name of their false gods, think they are offering service to God by silencing the preaching of the Gospel and driving those who believe into hiding or even death. To be sure, it's not new. The sinful world has hated God ever since Adam and Eve bowed the knee to Satan and renounced their communion with God. Unbelieving Cain rose up to murder his faithful brother Abel. Hagar and Ishmael persecuted believing Sarah and Isaac. The Egyptians, Assyrians, and Babylonians enslaved Israel.

The world hates Jesus, and His Gospel. It always has and it will until the day our Lord returns in glory. And because it hates Jesus, it will most certainly hate you if you will be so bold as to confess this Jesus whose Name you bear through the waters of Holy Baptism. You are not greater than your master. Truly, if the world loves you, if you are comfortable in the world and have not tasted its hatred of Jesus, if the world is comfortable with you and doesn't see you as a threat because you sit silently in the face of its rebellion against God, if the desires of your own flesh don't disturb you and you believe you really don't have any sins to confess - repent. You can't befriend both God and the world.

Nothing about the Christian faith is compatible with the world because everything the world believes and does and wants is rooted in Satan's desire to overthrow God and to do everything that God has forbidden. That means that as a Christian you can't just blend in. You will stick out like a sore thumb. Not because you're trying to but because what you believe, that life and salvation no where but in Jesus Christ and Him crucified, is so completely contrary to everything the world believes. What God calls good and true, the world despises and calls the greatest evil and precisely what God calls evil, the world rejoices in and calls the highest good. You will be forced to make unpopular and uncomfortable choices because by every

means necessary Satan and the world are trying to rob you and your family of Christ's Word, the very power of God by which you are saved.

Popular entertainment is a prime example. We are fools to imagine that the world isn't taking every opportunity to numb our hearts and tease our flesh through music, television, movies, and the internet. And parents, make no mistake, your children are being targeted. Your kids can find whatever they want and the world is going to make it easy because it wants your kids to find it. Just as an example, Netflix is now pushing their new Bill Nye series "Bill Nye Saves the World" which is specifically marketed to kids and accessible under the kids section. And what is this fraudulent "scientist" doing to save the world - teaching your children, through perverse sketches and music, that we evolved from monkeys and that every perverse sexual fantasy is good and should be enjoyed. He is trying to "save" the world from the Word of God. And you can be sure he's not the only one. Increasingly, public schools are taking as their primary objective convincing your children that you, as a Christian parent, are the obstacle to your child's happiness; that you don't love people; that the Christian faith is just backwards religious hogwash which they need to be freed from. It is absolutely imperative that for ourselves and for our children we be more discerning about the images and ideas that we allow in our homes and the false teachings we expose ourselves to. We need to be willing to say "No, those things will not find a home in our homes. The world may call us freaks or prudes or out of touch. That doesn't matter because the world is wrong." Remember, a little bit of leaven leavens the whole lump.

Even activities that are benign in and of themselves can become weapons that are used against you, to lure you away from Christ - work, fun, family, sports. God has graciously shown you that the ways of the flesh and the world are the broad and easy path that lead to eternal destruction. The world will not understand when you don't follow along, when you refuse to participate, when you speak the truth. The world will hate you for it with the same bitter hatred that Satan has for your Lord. Whether the idol is Allah or "science" or fun or money or sex, you will be expected to fall down and worship. No desire, no idea, no activity is to be labeled bad or wrong. And if you dare to resist, there will be a price to pay. You will be mocked and ostracized. Friends and even family will turn against you. You will be labeled with the most vile names and accused of hatred, intolerance, and bigotry. And as our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world have

known and experienced for centuries, the world is not above putting you to death.

“But do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.” Jesus has warned you so that you won’t fall away from him, so that the world’s hatred doesn’t surprise you or lead you to think that the problem is with the Christian faith. The world’s hatred is nothing. It can’t harm you. Instead, St. Peter says, “Rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s suffering...If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.” Your suffering for the faith is seen by God and is precious in His sight. Your Lord and Savior has traveled this narrow, difficult road before you and in Him, by patience and comfort of His holy Word, you will endure and be brought safely to eternal life.

Sadly many Christians have been overwhelmed by the world. Some have quietly faded away from the Church. Some have blatantly apostacized. Entire church bodies have sprung up and taken as their confession whatever they believe the world desires to hear, whatever it takes for the world to love them. They have shipwrecked their faith. They have thrown away Christ for Satan, truth for a lie, life for death. They look beautiful on the outside but on the inside they are filled with death. They teach a salvation of works that only leads to judgment. And they even join the world in its persecution of the truth, indeed of Christ Himself. The Word of God has been replaced with the doctrine of demons because the doctrine of demons is more palatable to the world and draws a much bigger crowd. They have despised the cross of Jesus because it is offensive and falsely proclaimed “Peace, peace” when there is no peace.

This is why Jesus sent the Helper, the Holy Spirit, from the Father - to bear witness to Jesus. Through the apostolic witness, the Holy Spirit points us to the crucified and risen Savior who was despised by the world and those who loved their own righteousness, who was martyred under their hatred and who rose again on the third day, triumphant over the devil and the unbelieving world. Jesus is truth and for that the world hates Him. What must the world be that it would kill the One who not only preached but delivered the mercy and forgiveness of God? The world doesn’t and can’t know the Father because it refuses to listen to and believe the Son. It doesn’t want to believe that it is evil. It doesn’t want to believe that its wisdom is foolishness. It doesn’t want to believe that it needs grace or

forgiveness from God because it is already good. And that is why it hates you too. If you have lost the friendship of the world, rejoice, because the only way to do that is to be restored as a child of God.

The apostolic witness is true. Jesus was sent by the Father, born of the Virgin Mary, died to pay for your sins and the sins of the whole world, rolled back the stone on Easter to leave death behind, and ascended to the right hand of the Father all to save you from the world and the death it would drown you in. There is no uncertainty in that. And this is the continued help of the Helper. He draws you again and again to Jesus the source of your life and your peace. He speaks Christ's forgiveness when you fall. He strengthens you in hour of temptation as He holds the Body and the Blood before your eyes and says "This is given by Christ for you, to eat and to drink. This is your salvation. By this you have been restored to God. You are no longer His enemy because this Body and this Blood have atoned for you and given you a share in His victory over death and the world. The world only knows how to lie and deceive and wants to kill your soul. But Christ has come to give you life and to lead you into all truth."

Suffering as a Christian in this world is inevitable. But do not be ashamed. Do not be ashamed of your salvation. Do not be ashamed of Jesus. It is truly Jesus that your enemies hate and they are powerless against Him. Instead, let us who suffer according to God's will entrust our souls to a faithful Creator while doing good, and thus bring glory to the Name of the one who died and rose to save us.

In the Name of +Jesus. Amen.