

The Lesson of the Secret Agent

The Larger Story—part 7

John 15b-16

May 23, 2021

DAY 1: Hatred of Christianity and Christians

1. Jesus predicts opposition to the church and to Christians—stiff opposition, of the worst kind.

John 15:18 “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹ If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ ¹ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. ²¹ They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. ²² If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. ²⁴ If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. ²⁵ But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’

2, How many times does Jesus utter the word “hate?”

3. Why would someone in the world hate Jesus? (v. 19). Why would they persecute Him? (v. 20)

a. How does verse 22 shed light on why the world would hate Jesus?

b. How does verse 24 shed light on why the world would hate Jesus?

c. How does verse 25 shed light on why the world would hate Jesus?

4. The world hates Jesus because He exposes the darkness in their lives. Until Jesus came along everyone could deceive their own conscience and justify their disobedience and rebellion. When the light is turned on in the basement, rats run for darkness.

5. The hatred of Jesus will spill over into persecution of His followers.

John 16:1 “All this I have told you so that you will not fall away. ² They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God. ³ They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. ⁴ I have told you this, so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them.

6. Why will His disciples be persecuted? Because our lives also shine a light—a light of holiness, other-centeredness, and a very different set of values.

7. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 2: The “world’s” system

*John 15:18 “If the **world** hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹ If you belonged to the **world**, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the **world**, but I have chosen you out of the **world**. That is why the **world** hates you.*

1. The “world” is used three different ways in the bible.
 - a. First, it’s used to describe the *physical* world. John 1:10...*the world was made* by Him...
 - b. Second, “world” is used to describe all *humanity*. John 3:16 For God so loved *the world*...
 - c. Third, “world” is used to describe the society of the people opposed to God and His ways.

2. In this sense the “world” includes all people, institutions, groups, purposes, plans, actions, values, ethics which are rooted in a very different way of thinking, acting, and valuing than the ways of God.

3. Regarding the “world” in which we used to live, Christ has changed how we think. He makes two important statements. Next to each, write down how each statement strikes you:
 - a. “You do not belong to the world” -

 - b. “I have chosen you out of the world”-

4. The scriptures tell us we are “in Christ” as opposed to being “in the world.” We are “in the world” in the physical sense but...
 - a. ...we are no longer “in the world” in the personal, spiritual, and purposeful sense. We are now living for very different purposes, aims, values and satisfactions.
 - b. ...we are not “of the world.” “Of” here means of the same nature, cut out of the same cloth.
 - c. ...but we are not to be isolated “from the world.” We are to be salt and light to the world.

5. We are not to be conformed “to the world.” Instead we are to be transformed by the renewing of our mind (Romans 12:2).

1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world passes away and the lust of it but he who does the will of God abides forever.

6. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 3: The person and ministry of the Holy Spirit (our “secret agent”)

1. Secret agents in spy thrillers do almost all their work “undercover.” They work behind the scenes, out of the limelight, and draw no attention to themselves, yet their work is vital to our national security.

2. The Christian has a “secret agent,” who does His work behind the scenes, out of the limelight and drawn no attention to Himself. He is the Holy Spirit.

3. Who is the Holy Spirit? The question asks “*who*” and not “*what*.”

*John 15:26 “When **the Advocate** comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—**he** will testify about me.²⁷ And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.*

4. The bible describes God as one being, three persons. This is called the Trinity (If you don’t understand how that can be welcome to the club).

5. Verse 26 includes all three members of the Trinitarian God.

6. The Holy Spirit is not an “it.” The Holy Spirit is a “he.”

7. Jesus describes the Holy Spirit as “the Advocate.” The Greek word is “*parakletos*” which means someone who comes alongside. In different contexts the word is used to denote comforter, one who takes up our case, counselor or helper.

*John 16:7 But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, **the Advocate** will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.⁸ When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment:⁹ about sin, because people do not believe in me;¹⁰ about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer;¹¹ and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.*

8. List what roles the Holy Spirit plays in the lives of people.

*John 16:12 “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear.¹³ But when he, the **Spirit of truth**, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.¹⁴ He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.”*

9. Jesus gives us another list of the ministry roles the Holy Spirit plays. List them, below.

10. What strikes you about the Holy Spirit? How have you see Him play a role in your life?

DAY 4: A very different kind of joy (especially for those with shattered dreams)

1. Remember, Jesus is giving these instructions just before His arrest.

John 16:19 ... “Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me’?”

2. The disciples do not understand what He is telling them. He is describing His upcoming crucifixion, death, and resurrection.

John 16:20 “Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.”

3. There were a lot of people that rejoiced when Jesus died. Since that time there are also a lot of people who rejoice when the kingdom of God seemed to take a hit.

4. Crucifixion would look like the ultimate shattered dream. A time of mourning and weeping would ensue for God’s people.

5. But in the Larger Story of God, in His providence, shattered dreams are never the final chapter or the epilogue.

6. God is able to take the very worst that Satan or fallen man throws at you and redeem it for His glory and your good.

7. In other words, a time of rejoicing is coming!

Psalm 30:5 For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

Psalm 126:6 Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.

8. Jesus illustrates this kingdom of God principle about His kind of joy.

John 16:21 A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. ²² So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. ²³ In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ²⁴ Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

The kind of “joy” the world offers is circumstantial.

The kind of joy Jesus offers us is transformational.

9. He transforms our deepest griefs and apparent defeats into glory.

10. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 5: Peace, especially after personal failure

1. Jesus to anchor His disciples in His divinity, and the love of God the Father for them.

John 16:25 “Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. ²⁶ In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. ²⁷ No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. ²⁸ I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”

²⁹ Then Jesus’ disciples said, “Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech.

³⁰ Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God.”

2. The light shines brighter on what Jesus has been trying to tell them for over three years. The disciples now think they’ve “got it.” But living in this world, along with our fallen nature is more difficult than they imagined or we imagine. Notice where Jesus goes with their “got it” moment.

John 16:31 “Do you now believe?” Jesus replied. ³² “A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.”

3. When we fail the Lord, when we sin, we are “surprised” because we think that if we know what to do, of course, we will do it. We naively think all we need is truth.

4. The disciples are going to fail miserably. (Welcome to the club).

5. How should we respond to our failure? What should we do? What should we remember?

6. Here’s what Jesus tells them.

John 16:33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

7. He tells them four important truths. Jot down what strikes you about each one.

a. “...in me you may have peace.” –

b. “In this world you will have trouble.” -

c. “But take heart!” -

d. “I have overcome the world.” –

8. What strikes you about peace, especially in the aftermath of personal failure?