

They Hate Us Because They Hate God

Although I've known this for decades, a couple of Facebook posts this week reminded me of the fact that the world hates us because it first hated God.

As Jesus said to His disciples, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. But because you are not of the world, since I chose you out of the world, the world therefore hates you" (John 15:18-19).

It is true, of course, that the world sometimes hates us because our behavior is not in keeping with the character of Jesus.

As Peter urged his readers, "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evildoer, or even as a busybody" (1 Pet. 4:15).

When we suffer for our own foolishness or hypocrisy or insensitivity, we alone are to blame, and we bring reproach to the name of the Lord.

But it is also true that the world often hates us precisely because our behavior is in keeping with the character of Jesus, and just as the darkness hates the light, the world will hate us.

Speaking on a personal level, there are lots of ugly attacks that come my way as a public figure who tackles controversial issues, from radical Islam to abortion, from the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to homosexuality, from atheism to Judaism, and from hyper-grace to strange fire.

Ugly attacks come with the turf, and I'm not complaining in

the least.

Some of the attacks are really quite amusing, like the tweet from a Ph.D. scientist responding to my article that stated that we could turn the moral tide in America. "Really?" he tweeted. "The 'moral tide' from an admitted drug addict with a 'burnt out brain'?"

When I actually tried to engage him in a civil and serious way, he responded, "Your burned brain is the issue. Drug man."

This was followed by, "admit you're a drug piece of (expletive). Then move on."

Why so much hostility from a stranger? That's the world's reaction to our being salt and light.

But this is what really got my attention.

In response to a video we posted on our Facebook page showing a Palestinian Muslim woman stabbing an Israeli guard, a man named Colin commented, "Dr. Brown, you're a smug (expletive), aren't you?" (He used the "b" word for an illegitimate child.)

Where in the world did that come from? And what did it have to do with the video?

The next day, a man named Charlie posted this comment on the Visitor section of our page: "The god you all seem to love so much is the god that sanctions genocide, slavery, human sacrifice, the murder of children, and the condemnation of people that he created, just for the sin of being born. All of this can not be denied, as it is in your bible. How can you worship this (expletive) and call him loving? Or graceful? Please tell me why I should worship the god of your bible."

He too used the same expletive—the "b" word for an illegitimate child—and, so, not only was I accused of being an expletive, but so was the Lord.

This is exactly what David spoke of in Psalm 69:9, when he wrote that “the insults of those who insulted You fell on me.”

This is why the world hated Jesus—in Romans 15:3, this same verse from Psalm 69 is quoted with reference to Him—as the Lord explained: “He who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not performed among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin. But now have they seen and hated both My Father and Me” (John 15:23-24).

That’s why the apostles left the Sanhedrin full of joy after being flogged for their open witness of Yeshua. They were “rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name” (Acts 5:41). In other words, they were rejoicing because the world treated them the same way it treated Jesus, and to be identified with Him was an incredible joy.

That’s why Peter, while warning his readers not to suffer because of their misconduct and sin wrote, “If you are reproached because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified (1 Pet. 4:14).” He also said, “Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God because of it” (1 Pet. 4:16).

In other words, when the world treats you the way it treated Jesus, you are blessed and God’s favor is upon you.

So, let us walk in love toward all, and let us be in exemplary in word and deed.

And when the flood of hatred comes your way, rejoice. (Jesus actually adds “leap for joy” in Luke 6:23.) Great is your reward in heaven.

This is how the prophets were treated before you, this is how Jesus and the apostles were treated, and this is how believers around the world have been treated through the ages.

The world hates you because it hates Him.

Understanding this puts things in proper perspective and helps us pray for this lost, confused, and rebellious world with all the more compassion. They desperately need to know the Lord.