

SERMON THOUGHTS ABRIDGED **John 15:16-27**
FRUITS OF FAITH IN THE FACE OF HATE

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another.

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 its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, "A servant is not greater than his master." If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.

If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, "They hated Me without a cause."

But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

"Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love" are the opening words of the hymn we just sang. I hope every one of you can identify the thought of "home" with "love." A place where there is love between the closest and most important people in your lives. I pray that "home" does not simply revolve around nice things, easy living, ready cash, good food, etc.; but around love and forgiveness. Love and forgiveness--not anger, fault-finding, jealousy, back-stabbing, revenge, grudges, etc.

The disciples had spent three years around Jesus and His love. They saw and felt His love for others. Forgiveness to guilt-ridden hearts and souls, health to the ailing bodies, comfort to the distressed. For the disciples themselves He had intervened in love. He had stopped the storm when they thought they were going to drown. He had calmed their hearts when they thought they were confronted by a ghost walking on water. He had corrected them in love when they needed correcting—they wanted to chase away those with little children, James and John wanted to call down judgment on the cities of the Samaritans, Peter told Jesus that He, Jesus, would surely never die. Now they had just seen His love again in a striking way that very evening. They had gathered to celebrate the Passover. This was the night Jesus would be arrested. Jesus took the servant's job of washing their feet! Such love.

After the meal, at the Mt. of Olives outside of Jerusalem, He spoke to them the words of our text. Sheltered in the security of His love, He was preparing them for larger responsibility and service in His kingdom, for He was about to leave. *You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another.*

The Lord reminded them that their presence in His circle of love was not due to themselves, but to Him. He had chosen them, trained them, loved them, and appointed them to go out and bear fruit--as a branch on a grapevine. Wrapped up in this whole concept was the truth that He Himself was their life-giving, self-sacrificing Savior from sin. He was their all. He wanted them to go out in life and extend His love to others, to bear fruit that would "remain"--not just be a temporary fix or band-aid for a few months or years on this earth, but to share with others His eternal love and forgiveness and salvation, about to play-out on the cross the very next day as He took the punishment for every sin of the world. They should go out to bear fruit "that remains," and the Father in heaven would be a ready aid to help them. Whatever they would ask of Him in Jesus name, for the furtherance of bearing fruit that remains, He would give them. Above all, Jesus said, "Love one another."

You and I aren't the twelve disciples, but these same truths apply to us. Jesus has called us to Himself, chosen us to be His. We haven't mustered the good sense to say, "I'm going to turn to Jesus for help now and

forever.” Our inborn sinful pride won’t admit that. In fact, do you love God above all things in this life? all the time?? And do you despise His precious Name or throw it around like wadded up paper in some sort of game? Do you heed the preaching of His Word and the Rest-for-your-soul that He has for you, or do you often ignore it or treat it just as a magic salve to fix everything in life by rubbing a little of it on your hurt? You and I by our own nature haven’t chosen the Savior. He has chosen us.

He sends us out to bear fruit that remains. Not as if this is some sort of chore, or payment, or our part of the deal. Just as a branch naturally bears fruit on a grapevine, by connection to Christ by faith simply bear fruit for Him, fruit that lasts. And this bearing fruit is done in love—love for Jesus and love for one another. It colors everything we do. Why live a Christian life of love? why seek to lead others to Christ? Is it, because you have to?? Because you have a debt to pay?? No, His love is a gift. His love and salvation generate this love in your heart and life. Within this wonderful cocoon of His love for us, we bear fruit and live in love for one another.

But Jesus instructed His disciples and us, that the harsh fact is, there is a lot of hate out there in the world where He sends us and where we live. Hate that we will feel, hate directed at Him. *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 its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, “A servant is not greater than his master.” If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, “They hated Me without a cause.”*

Contrary to the love that Jesus extends to us and that fills our hearts and lives, is the hated of the devil, and the sinful world toward us. Hate—it’s a strong word. It means to loathe, to find disgusting, to abhor—to “just can’t stand something.” That’s what to expect from the world in which you live. Hatred toward Christ and toward you. In deception the devil may act like your best friend, the sinful world may warmly invite you into their circle—but they hate Jesus, the Savior from sin, and they hate, YOU, those in whom Christ lives, those whom Christ has chosen out of this world, those whom Christ has sent to bear fruit.

Don’t school boys want to get the good and well-behaved student into trouble? Don’t the guys or girls at work want you to “cuss” and swear like they do? Don’t the purveyors of pornography want you to indulge with them? They hate your good conduct in Christ, and they hate Christ. They hate Christ because He has shown them their sin which God does not accept. That hurts their pride! And so they hate. They hate God, and Jesus, and you.

The disciples would see this hate with its teeth bared. The next day Jesus would be crucified to the glee of Jesus’ enemies. Later the disciples would see Stephen stoned. James himself, one of the twelve, would be executed by King Herod. Peter would be in line to die next, but the Lord would rescue Him from prison by an angel. Yet Peter would die later with arms outstretched which Jesus Himself said—surely meaning crucifixion. The world hates you too. It’s not fun. It’s too easy to try to dodge it, by giving in, by not making waves, by not disagreeing. Then you will not be an object of their scorn and hate. Do you remember Jesus words in Luke 6:26 “Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets.” When everybody likes you, you’re doing something wrong. Hatred against Christ and His children is part of what to expect.

And we’re not struggling on all alone. Jesus says, *But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.* Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to coach, advise, and comfort us in this life--leading us to Christ, working through the Word! In the Word we are in on the ground-floor with Jesus. His love wraps His arms around us and we go forth in love, to bear fruit even in the face of hate. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are your home of love and comfort and life. Be refreshed and strengthened in their Word!

So be it! Amen!

Pastor Kanzenbach --