



**SERIES: November – December – Walking with Jesus**

**SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD**

**Wednesday, 12/29/2021**

**Scripture: John 15:18-25**

**TITLE: Should We Avoid Persecution?**

Compromise. This is what every Christian, every church, every para-church ministry is encouraged to do today. There's a lot of talk about being culturally relevant at the sake of being faithful to Christ. But are Christians called to compromise at the face of persecution and accusation? Hardly. In fact, Jesus was very clear about what it entails to be a Christian.

Listen to Jesus in John 15:18-25 (CSB).

“If the world hates you, understand that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, the world hates you. Remember the word I spoke 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 also keep yours. But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they don't know the one who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now they have no excuse for their sin. The one who hates me also hates my Father. If I had not done the works among them that no one else has done, they would not be guilty of sin. Now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. But this happened so that the statement written in their law might be fulfilled: They hated me for no reason.”

One of the great temptations today is to change or hide the message of the Bible because we don't want to offend the people around us. And I agree. We never want to add more offense to the Gospel. The Gospel is offensive enough. We must live a life that is consistent with the teaching of the Bible. We are called to conform our lives to standards of God. We are called to be transformed by the renewing of our minds in God's Word. When we do this, it will, on one hand, create an intrigue into what makes us different. And on the other hand, it will cause great hatred because the world loves darkness. The world is driven by animosity towards God and His way.

So Jesus' words are relevant today. Don't be surprised when the world hates you and calls your faith “hate speech.” Don't be surprised when your family shuts you out of holiday gatherings. Don't be discouraged when your coworkers lie about you to your boss. Jesus said, “they hated me. They will hate you.”

But all this happened so one more prophesy would be fulfilled. And, Jesus' gave us some encouragement for when this happens in Matthew 5:10. “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.”

So here's my encouragement for you today: Stand firm with the King. Jesus' took the punishment for our pain. He took the hate before you did. So, though the persecution is real, you're protected by the King. Live like it. Don't compromise to fit in or be relevant. Instead stand firm with the King.

When we do, we will win the day.