



prayer *life!*

Weekly Prayer Focus

June 17, 2018

Hated Witness: Our Role in the World

—John 15:18-27

More often than not, our struggle with the Bible is not what we don't understand but with what we do understand. We can accept the trinity as beyond our comprehension and trust God's justice in the way He *works all things according to the counsel of his will* (Ephesians 1:11), but His command to love our enemies and pray for those who spitefully use us stretches our faith to the breaking point.

The difference between our Maker and us is categorical. God is simply "other" than what we are. Yet He is making us like Himself. If we're honest, God's will for us is not entirely to our liking, and we don't naturally embrace His plan to make us like Christ and know *the fellowship of His sufferings*. Yet that is where our victory and the world's hope lies.

Nothing is impossible for God. He can make creatures of earth fit for heaven and use sinful people to call others to Himself. God turns enemies into friends, then uses them to do the same with others.

This is the miracle of the Church. We pray because God called us to love those who hate us until they love Christ and receive His salvation—which is humanly impossible, so only He can do it. We abide in the vine, so God's mighty power can accomplish His impossible purpose through us. We receive His love so we can endure the world's hatred and be His light, shining in the darkness.

Jesus described this process like this.

"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.

- The world hates us, because it hates Christ. Our choice is either to love the world and be rejected by God or to love God and be rejected by the world. Pray for God's love to strengthen you to endure the world's hatred.

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.

- The world's hatred is a given, and it's proof that we belong to Christ. Pray for grace and peace to deal with this reality.

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.

- Rejoice! Whether we're rejected or accepted, we are Christ in the world. Our role as believers makes an eternal difference.

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.

- The world's rejection of Christ and of our witness about Him prove that His judgment is just.

But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause.'

- The world's hatred for Christ and His Church is unfounded and irrational. Pray for grace to be confident in Christ's triumph over the world's hatred, when He used it to bring redemption on the cross and deliverance from death through the resurrection.

"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.

- We are not alone when we witness for Christ. The Spirit of Almighty God works in and through us to guide, empower, and use us to bring others to saving faith in Christ.

Something to Remember

To Christians in America, the world has long seemed to be a safe place. But the only safe place in heaven or earth is in the palm of God's hand and the center of His will. The ugly reality that the world hates Christ thrusts us as His people into the eternal reality that He has overcome the world (John 16:33). Ask God for grace to live in that eternal reality.

Prayer for Northpoint

Ask God to unite our church body as a strong witness to the world. We belong to the Father, His Son is interceding for us in His presence, and the Holy Spirit dwells with in us as individuals and as a body. We are the Church of the Living God. The only unstoppable force on earth.

1. **Our Pastors and Directors:** Brent Whitefield, Scott Williams, Terilyn Brown, Geoff Grant, Taylor Mendoza, Tamene Menna, and Marty Wiegman.
 - Ask God to empower their leadership and ministries in our church.
2. **Our Lay Elders:** Tim East, Steve Flood, Mark Kiker, Mike Russell, and Vinoj Zechariah.
 - Ask God to reveal the priorities He has for us as a church and for them as our leaders.
3. **Our Church Staff:** Michelle Balga, Bob Brown, Andria Brucks, Jacob Williams, Carolee Jefferson, Josh Figureoa, Amber McEwen, Mark Norland, Corie Saunders, and Teri Vaughn
 - Pray for supernatural ability to keep us operating smoothly and demonstrating God's love in all we do as a church.
4. **John Sloan, Brent Whitefield and their families:** Seek God's grace and guidance and blessing as they serve Him in the churches where He is calling them.
 - Pray for steadfastness to *have its full effect*, so they *may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing* (James 1:4), as they take on ministry in a new place.
5. **Our Church Body:** Pray that God's love will conquer our fear and make us bold in our witness for Christ. Ask for opportunities to share Christ and readiness to speak up.

Prayer Record

Record specific prayers you have below. Note when and how God answers your prayers. It will help you to see that He really is paying attention.

Date	Request	Date	Answer

Do not love the world or the things 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 desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. —1st John 2:15-17