



AND YET HE WAS HATED

Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. 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. But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law. "They hated me without reason."

John 15:23-24

In this modern world, where use of the word "hate" for almost anything--a person, a place or thing--is frowned on, it might come as a bit of a shock to see Jesus using it four times in this brief passage. And yet for many of us, what Jesus says here might hardly sink in, so accustomed are we to the words of Scripture. Are we paying enough attention? Are we hearing him? Have we considered the enormity of his statements?

In the above verses, Jesus warned his disciples of the attitude the "world" had towards him—the same attitude it would have towards his followers and their mission. It would be one of hostility and animosity. We should be shocked to hear the word "hate" applied to our Lord and Savior, someone who loved so much. Now hated, after all he had done.

Worldly minds are stubborn about accepting or loving Jesus, no matter how great his works have proven to be. They knew that what he had done had never been done by anyone before him, and yet they refused to apply value and appreciation to it. Despite the good Jesus had done, despite being aware of it, they chose to hate him who had given so much and who would soon be sacrificing his life on the cross.

Try putting yourself in his place, supposing you had given your all to heal the sick, to teach wisdom to eager listeners, to treat outcasts with acceptance and love. All of this had been witnessed by those Jesus referred to as the "world." And yet, they hated him. Could there be a worse form of rejection?

Jesus echoed the words from Psalm 69:4: *'They hated me without reason.'*

How huge the gulf that exists between Christ's immense love for us and the great ugliness of the hatred existing in those who resist that love! They are poles apart. The hatred of one group and the love of the other.

Jesus has told us that following him would be costly. For many of his followers, even today, hatred towards them exists, as it did for him. They love in the way Christ taught them to love. But those who cannot contain that kind of love are driven to hatred instead.

