

## 27. John 15:18-27

### Getting started

What do you think about when you hear the phrase, 'the persecuted church'?

### Observations

1. Where is Jesus when he speaks these words and who is he with?
2. What happens next? [*he prays (chapter 17) and then he is arrested, tried and killed.*]

### Interpretation

1. When did the world start hating Jesus? [*Genesis 3, Herod's persecution of Jewish male babies, or when Jesus started teaching?*]
2. Why does it help to know that Jesus was persecuted first?
3. What does 'belonging to the world' involve? [*Keep this in mind for when we get to chapter 17*]
4. We may expect persecution, because our Lord was persecuted, but do you expect people to obey your teaching because people believed Jesus' teaching (or is Jesus only talking to the first disciples and not us)?
5. What would people have to know about the one who sent Jesus, for them not to persecute Jesus' followers? [*They would not only have to know that 'One' is God Almighty, creator and judge of the world, but 'know' here probably includes a sense of 'trusting' or 'believing' God.*]
6. Why do those who oppose Jesus no longer have an excuse? [*Because Jesus has revealed who he is and who has sent him. Ignorance is not an available excuse.*]
7. Do you think that those who opposed Jesus had 'no reason' for doing so, or 'no good reason'? [*They had lots of reasons (e.g. concerns about blaspheme and self-interest) but none of them stand up to the revelations of Jesus.*]

8. What role does Jesus say the Counsellor (the Holy Spirit) will have in testifying? *[Make sure you know what it means to 'testify'? It is usually used in a law court setting, but here it probably means giving evidence or proof that something exists or is the case.]* How does the Counsellor do this?

9. Does the statement in verse 27, that 'you must also testify', apply only to the first disciples, or to all believers? Why?

### **Implications**

1. Have you been persecuted for your faith? How, when, what did you do? What helped?
2. How do you face the future knowing that you can expect persecution for your faith?
3. Do you ever find it difficult to judge whether you or others are seeking persecution to prove a point?
4. Is it OK to avoid persecution, as long as that does not involve betraying Jesus?

### **Prayer suggestions**

1. That God will sustain all Christians through whatever persecution they face? *[Here you might like to broaden things out to consider the specific suffering Christians face around the world]*
2. That people will listen to the testimony of the Holy Spirit, and believe.