

DUDLEY'S MONTHLY MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 2025 | JOHN 15:18-19

If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. John 15:18-19, ESV

LOVED AND HATED

We live in a turbulent sea of relative truth and naivete. Even some Christians have come to believe they have a right to never be confronted, contradicted, or corrected. Perhaps most are too self-aware to actually speak it, but actually live in a state of believing: "Everyone should love me and accept my definitions without question. Otherwise, they are just mean and hurtful." After all, the psychology of today's self-esteem craze has assured us that we are perfect just like we are and deserve to be affirmed. *"Why doesn't everyone love me, accept me, and respect my truth? It is hate speech to disagree with me, isn't it?"*

Get ready for a dose of reality. You aren't perfect! But, you are loved beyond your ability to know... And you are hated vehemently. If you are a Christian, you are a threat to the powers of hell, and there is a contract out on you. Jesus said so:

If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

John 15:18-19, ESV

Let's revisit the part about being loved. God took the initiative to create us, grant us agency to choose against Him, show us mercy in forgiving our sins, give us glory by making us His children (sons with authority), and guarantee us a salvation that cannot be taken away from us. More than that, He has given us His very life to enjoy on earth. Through the indwelling Spirit, He makes His delight known in us as we share His own joy. Added to that, He incorporates us into His mission of reclaiming the world that was stained by sin. His love is unconditional and

unending. It transforms whatever it embraces and will endure as long as God exists. It captures the rebel and liberates the slave. It turns animal-like behavior in humans into Christ-like character. When we recognize that we need more transformation in our lives, we don't try harder to be good. We turn our eyes to His and soak up the love of the Father. Pretty soon we will be seen doing the works designed for us without even keeping score.

Needless to say, if we are not conscious of being loved unconditionally, we won't be successful in dealing with the hate that is aimed at us. Let's turn our attention to the matter of being hated. We have been seduced into believing that everyone desires our good. We are told that God loves us, so we determine that we are protected from hateful things. Often after being hit in the face by some hateful accusation, we are angry at God for tricking us. We think that we deserve to be treated as we want to be. **Stop being naïve!** We were born into a war. Satan hates all that belongs to God. He enjoys chaos and seeks to reduce God's world of order to utter void. He especially hates Jesus and those who are His. The apostle Paul understood this:

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ...

2 Corinthians 10:3-5, ESV

So, the reality is that we are loved by God and hated by Hell. That means that we must become astute at distinguishing the sound of love and the sound of hate. Those who hate God will hate you. There are those who, for whatever reason, hate God. They don't want to give Him control. They'd like to use Him to get what they want, but they like being god of their world and masters of their own fate. One of the primary ways hatred is expressed is through accusation. While the voice of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, is whispering affirmation as children of God, the Accuser's voice is shouting his accusations about our failure and God's displeasure with us.

The accusations come from outside and inside. Jesus said we would be persecuted. People who hate God and His purpose will accuse us with the hope of shutting us down. The anatomy of accusation is that it is a charge made with no proof. Attacks on character, exaggerations, presumptions, insinuations, misinterpretations, and disrespect are all part of the arsenal of the accuser. As we look in on the trial of Jesus we see such accusations. The persecutors charge Him with sedition and take His statements out of context to back up their claims. All the arsenal is used against Him. Expect it. You are His. Peter spoke to this:

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it

should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.

1 Peter 4:12-16, NIV

It has been alarmingly interesting since the death of Charlie Kirk to see the vitriol of those who hated him. He has been labeled a racist, a bigot, a white supremacist, a hater, a narcissist, a misogynist and more. Yet, a close look at his videos show no proof, just accusations. Not surprising. It is the pattern of the accuser. Hell's aim is to cancel the message of hope found in Jesus the Lord.

Another example of a trial and the tactics of Satan is Paul's experience in Caesarea (see Acts 24:13, 25:7). A little context: The Jews of Jerusalem hated Paul. They had sought to kill him earlier. The Roman soldiers took him under their protection and escorted him to Caesarea. There the Jews demanded that he be tried and given over to them. (Their plot was to kill him.) He stood before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa. These Roman authorities found nothing in him to condemn. The Jews continued to accuse, though they had no proof. In God's ordered world where justice is foundational, proof is necessary for conviction.

A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established. If a malicious witness arises to accuse a person of wrongdoing, then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the Lord, before the

priests and the judges who are in office in those days. The judges shall inquire diligently, and if the witness is a false witness and has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. And the rest shall hear and fear, and shall never again commit any such evil among you. Your eye shall not pity. It shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Deuteronomy 19:15-21, ESV

In the community of faith where God's Law gave order to life, it was a serious thing to bring a charge against another. Before addressing the charge, the one making the charge was examined. This is vital in any ordered society. Which means that our present culture is in chaos. We fling charges and accusations around like sand in the sand box. Truth is essential to order. Accusations with no proof should not be entertained. This should guide all our conversation, both public and private.

Both Jesus and Paul illustrated that you can make a defense without being defensive. Neither of them tried to clear their own name nor preserve themselves, but they defended the truth. Both demonstrated that they trusted God alone for their own defense, knowing that if they suffered unjustly, God the Judge would bring justice now or later, but for certain. When the enemies are unjust, they are simply building a greater weight of guilt on themselves. It will break them to repentance where they trust Jesus to take their guilt, or it will harden them for the day when God makes all wrong things right. Either way, the sufferer is working with God to bring His glory to bear:

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you;

1 Peter 3:13-15, ESV

Sadly in today's environment, the court of public opinion holds more sway than the courthouse. One's whole reputation can be soiled by one tweet whether it is true or not. So we have learned to use accusations as stealth weapons that can't be stopped. The times call for Christians to stand up in the court of public opinion and tell the truth. Social media and national news alike promote a narrative that is contrary to what we believe. It is our privilege and responsibility to stand up and speak up. (Read again Paul's response in Acts 24-26.) The publicity surrounding the murder of Charlie Kirk has shown that one man simply showing up, standing up, and speaking up does make a difference. He invited dialogue. So must we.

There is also an inner court. The internal conversation is a debate between the accuser and the affirmer. The accuser attacks our identity and character with evidence that is false. He says we are sinners who deserve rejection. The Affirmer (Holy Spirit) says we are sinners who qualify for grace, and we get what Jesus deserves. Sin, says the accuser, disqualifies us for righteousness. Sin, says the Affirmer, qualifies us for the righteousness of Jesus imputed to us. Sin, says the accuser, shuts our ears to the word and will of God. Sin, says the Affirmer, gives us an open door to grace which explains the ways of the tree of life rather than the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

When the prosecutor (accuser) in the internal court makes his charge, I must stand and face the court and declare the truth: "I am loved unconditionally; fully forgiven; a child of God. I am guaranteed justice; sent by the Lord of the universe; and safe in His hands. There is one God and Father and One Savior, Jesus Christ. There is one faith delivered to the saints. There is one body of Christ, the church, through which the gospel is being preached, pushing back darkness and claiming the ground redeemed by the shed blood of Jesus. There is one hope based on the resurrection of Jesus, the last Adam and final Israelite."

You are loved more than you will ever know.
You are hated by hell. Love wins.

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