

John 15:18-16

Ray Stedman

I. Introduction.

A. Text: John 15:18-John 16.

B. Subject: our witness before a watching world.

II. We are sent out as sheep amidst wolves.

A. The Lord is speaking of the context that we are to expect.

B. Believers are expected to live in the midst of the world—the monastery mentality has proven ineffective.

III. Three attitudes that the world can have toward believers.

A. An open acceptance.

B. Rejection.

1. The gospel is good news, not bad news.

2. If your message is being received as bad news, then you may not be preaching the gospel.

3. The first word of the gospel is one of assurance.

4. If one is rejected, it is because Jesus is rejected and the world always hates nonconformity.

5. Rejection is a sign that you do not belong to the world.

C. Persecution.

1. This will happen on Jesus' account because the persecutors do not know God.

2. The world does this because of ignorance.

3. We are not warned against knowledge but human wisdom—a world that leaves God out has left out the answer to the major problems of life.

IV. We are to witness to Jesus' words and works.

A. No one spoke like Jesus—He left men no excuse for what they were.

B. The people saw God's power manifested through Jesus, but they did not believe them either.

V. In the face of trial believers can take comfort because Jesus will be with them through the Spirit.

A. The access to Jesus would be greater when He left because of the Spirit.

B. The disciples appeared to have almost no access to Jesus while He was there. This was much different after the Spirit arrived.

C. Witness must always be Spirit empowered. (John 7)

VI. The nature of one's witness.

A. It is dangerous to believe that power lies in the form of one's witness.

B. Power lies in testifying to what one has experienced personally—there is an authenticity to this that can be recognized.

Application questions:

1. To what are we witnesses? How have you seen this effectively done? Are words required? Explain.

2. How have you heard the gospel preached as bad news? What are some of the many ways that demonstrate that the gospel is really good news?

3. How would you respond to someone who says that he does not need the Spirit to witness effectively?
