

## REFLECTION GUIDE

### JOHN 15:18-16:11 | HELP FOR A HATE-FILLED WORLD

#### KEY TERMS

**The world** - In John's Gospel, *the world* does not simply refer to the physical earth or all people everywhere, but often describes humanity opposed to and apart from God. It represents a system of values that resists Jesus' authority and rejects his message.

**The Helper** - Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the Helper, which is a word that can mean advocate, counselor, or "one called alongside to assist." In the ancient world, the term carried legal overtones, often describing someone who spoke on behalf of another or provided support in a difficult situation.

**Convict** - When Jesus says the Spirit will *convict* the world (John 16:8), he uses a term that means to expose, bring to light, or prove wrong. The Spirit's work involves revealing the reality of sin, the righteousness of Jesus, and the certainty of God's judgment.

#### SYNOPSIS

As Jesus continues preparing his disciples for life after his departure, he turns to the reality that following him will bring opposition from *the world*. Because the world rejected Jesus, it will also reject those who belong to him (vv. 18-20). Jesus reminds his disciples that this hatred is rooted in a rejection of God himself (vv. 21-25). Yet in the midst of opposition, Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will come from the Father and *bear witness* about him, helping the disciples to do the same (vv. 26-27). Jesus tells them these things ahead of time so they will not fall away when persecution comes (vv. 1-4). He acknowledges that his departure will bring sorrow, but explains that it is actually for their good, because his going away makes way for the Helper's coming (vv. 5-7). The Spirit's work will be to *convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment*, meaning Jesus will expose true belief versus unbelief and will ultimately defeat *the ruler of this world* (vv. 8-11). Through both warning and promise, Jesus prepares his disciples to live faithfully in a world that may oppose them, confident that the Spirit will continue his work among and through them.

#### GOING DEEPER

Read 1 Peter 4:12-16 and Acts 5:27-32. Jesus prepares his disciples for opposition, reminding them that the world rejected him first (John 15:18-20). How do these passages help you understand suffering or resistance as part of faithful witness? What might it look like for you to remain faithful to Jesus even when following him is misunderstood or unpopular?

#### DID YOU KNOW?

When Jesus warns that his followers will be put out of the synagogue (John 16:2), he is describing more than being asked to leave a religious gathering. Synagogues functioned as the center of Jewish social, economic, and legal life, and expulsion meant loss of community standing, relationships, and livelihood.

## **REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

### **JOHN 15:18-16:11 | HELP FOR A HATE-FILLED WORLD**

#### **LEARNING THE WORD**

1. Read John 15:18-16:11. Make 5 or so quick observations. What is most difficult for you? What is most hopeful to you?
2. In verse 20, Jesus says, "no servant is greater than his master." First, what is the lesson Jesus wants them to accept in this verse? Second, when has Jesus made this same statement earlier in John 13:16, what was the lesson Jesus wanted them to accept then? How are these two lessons related?
3. In 16:1, Jesus says, "I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away." In light of this passage, what are some reasons why believers might be tempted to fall away? How might Jesus' warning to believers in this passage also be a comfort to us?
4. What specific things do you learn about the Holy Spirit in John 14:15-16:15? What does this tell us about the importance of the Spirit's work?

#### **LIVING THE WORD**

5. In what ways do you feel at home in the world? In what ways do you feel at odds with the world because of following Jesus?
6. Have you ever experienced persecution or lack of acceptance because of your faith? If so, how did you feel about this experience? If not, why do you think this is?
7. In John 15:26-27, we see the importance of bearing witness about Jesus – both the Spirit and believers are supposed to do this work. Why is Jesus the focal point of the Spirit's witness? Are you comfortable sharing the truth about Jesus? Why or why not?
8. As you seek to walk as an ambassador of Christ in the world, what is one way that you can rely on the help of the Spirit to live for Jesus, even when it's difficult?