

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

### **The Convicting Ministry of the Spirit John 16:1-4 Part One**

This is a time of year when many people are getting married. And when those people get married they will have certain expectations. And of course those expectations can have a great deal to say about their future marital satisfaction. If they have a fairy tale kind of expectation, that once they get married they will live happily ever after without any trial or tribulation, then they are obviously setting themselves up for disappointment; but if they understand that trials and tribulations, even in respect to their own personal dynamics, is the norm and not the exception they will be far better prepared to deal with those things when they are encountered.

The same thing can be said for people who have made professions of faith in Christ, such as us. If we have reasonable expectations of what we can expect when we become a disciple of Christ then we will be far better prepared to deal with whatever may come to us.

So let me ask you this question. What should a person expect when they, by faith, embrace Christ as their Lord and Savior? Should they expect, like some misguided young married couples, that they would live a fairy tale existence free of tribulation and trial? No! In this life no one is given a free pass. The Scriptures are clear. What does **Job 5:7** tell us? **“For man is born for trouble, as sparks fly upward.”** And this is true for everyone, whether they are a Christian or not a Christian. This world is a troubled place.

And not only is it a troubled place, it is also a hostile place and in active rebellion against God. Therefore not only should we as the followers of Christ expect the normal difficulties associated with this world in terms of its various disappointments and heartaches but we also need to factor in the additional challenges that we will invariably face as Christ's ambassadors in a world that is hostile and in active rebellion against God.

It is this consideration of what we can expect as we go into this world as a conduit for the life and message of Christ that we will begin to look at this morning as we examine **John 16:1-4**.

Hopefully you remember in our study of the Gospel of John that we are now examining what is commonly referred to as the upper room discourse. This discourse began in **John 13:31** and will continue all the way down to **John 17:26**. Jesus in this section of Scripture is preparing His disciples for His departure and this is exactly what He is doing here in **John 16:1-4**. So let me read this passage for you.

**“These things I have spoken to you, that you may be kept from stumbling. (2) They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God. (3) And these things they will do, because they have not known the Father, or Me.**

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**(4) But these things I have spoken to you, that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.**

In the verses that I have just read for you Christ shared with His disciples the very first thing that they needed to expect as they went into this world as His representatives. And I would hope that our consideration of what Christ shared with His disciples in these very few short verses will help us to carry out the mission He has given us with our eyes wide open so that we might carry out this mission with the highest level of effectiveness and perseverance. So, what was the first thing that Christ wanted them to know about what they should expect?

Christ wanted His disciples after His departure to expect mistreatment by the world (John 16:1-4).

Let us begin by looking at **John 16:1**. So how does it begin? The verse begins with these words, **“These things I have spoken to you.”**

So, what were “these things” that Jesus had spoken to them? The “things” that Jesus had spoken to them were the things He had spelled out for them in John 15:18-25 that were associated with the hatred of the world (John 16:1). And why had He shared these things about the hatred of the world so extensively in **John 15:18-25**?

He shared these things with His disciples so that they might be kept from stumbling. Let us once again look at **John 16:1**. **“These things I have spoken to you [the things about the world's hatred], that you may be kept from stumbling.”** So when Jesus told His disciples what He had told them about the hatred of the world, He was doing this in order to keep from stumbling. But what does this mean?

The picture conveyed by the word “stumble” (SKANDALIZO) is that of a trap in which a crooked stick (SKANDALON) holds the bait and springs the trap when touched.

In other words, Jesus was sharing what He was sharing with His disciples about the world's hatred so that the world's hatred would not act as a trigger to snare them in the trap of disillusionment.

And doesn't this make perfect sense? If we as the Disciples of Christ go into the world expecting one thing and then find ourselves getting a totally different thing and if that totally different thing is a very unpleasant thing then certainly it would be very easy for this totally different and very unpleasant thing to act as a trigger to ensnare us in the trap of disillusionment.

Therefore our expectations are important when we become involved in something that we believe is important, whatever that might be, whether that is a certain career path, a choice to get married or to have children and certainly in this case when we decide to become a disciple of Christ.

If we have reasonable expectations we will have very little or no chance of becoming disillusioned. But if we have unreasonable expectations we will have a very good or perhaps even a certain chance of becoming disillusioned in matters that we deem important.

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Jesus did not want this to happen to His disciples. He did not want them to become disillusioned. This is why Jesus in **John 16:1** reminded His disciples of the things He had told them about in **John 15:18-25** concerning the world's hatred. And of course the importance of this could not be emphasized too much in light of the fact that very shortly He would be sending His disciples into the world.

Jesus therefore will now continue to build on this theme of the world's hatred by detailing for His disciples what they in the near future should specifically expect in terms of various expressions of the world's hatred.

Let us now read **John 16:2**. And what does it say? This is what it says, **“They [or in other words, the world as an expression of their hatred] will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God.”**

Jesus in this verse details for His disciples two of the worst forms of persecution that they should expect as expressions of the world's hatred. So, what was the first form of persecution that Jesus mentions?

Let us look at the very first part of **John 16:2**. **“They [or in other words, the world as an expression of their hatred] will make you outcasts from the synagogue.”** What did this mean?

To be made an outcast from the synagogue (APOSUNAGOGOUS) meant that they would be excommunicated or banned from the synagogue (John 16:2). For a Jewish person living in that day this was no small thing. All social, economic, and religious life focused on the synagogue. For them to be put out of the synagogue would be interpreted by them to mean they as followers of Christ would be viewed by their former friends as worse than pagans, that they as followers of Christ would most likely lose their jobs, that they as the followers of Christ would most likely be exiled by their families, and that they as the followers of Christ would even lose the privilege of an honorable burial

Therefore when Jesus told them that they as His followers should expect to be put out of the synagogue this was no small thing. But this is what Jesus wanted His disciples to expect. And again why would He want them to expect this? He wanted them to expect this so that when this very thing happened it would not act as a trigger to ensnare them in the trap of disillusionment. But being put out of the synagogue was not the worst expression of hatred that Jesus told them that they should expect in this verse.

Let us once again go back to **John 16:2** and continue to read the verse. **They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God.”**

Clearly Jesus, in these final words in **John 16:2**, has upped the ante. Yes, being put out of the synagogue would have been a terrible thing for the disciples of Christ but the world in their hatred of Christ's disciples would not be satisfied with just putting them out of the synagogue. They in fact would not be satisfied until they had in fact killed them.

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This is what Jesus wanted His eleven disciples to understand. This is what He wanted them to expect, lest when they witnessed the crucifixions of Peter, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Thaddeus and Simon the Zealot; or when they witnessed James being beheaded; or when they witnessed Matthew and Thomas being slain with spears, or when they witnessed James the son of Alpheus being beat to death with a club that these vicious and painful deaths might not act as a trigger to ensnare them in the trap of disillusionment.

Jesus obviously believed in the expression, “To be forewarned is to be forearmed” and this is exactly what Jesus was putting into practice here when He outlined for His disciples what they should in fact expect in the near future when He would send them into the world as His ambassadors.

Now let me make this very clear to you. The sufferings that Christ is speaking of here that He told His disciples were going to come to them were not the sufferings that they shared in common with the world: the loss of a job, the loss of a career, a loss of a business, the loss of a spouse, a loss of a child, a loss of dream, a loss of one's health. These sufferings were rather the sufferings that come to those who faithfully, as the disciples of Christ, seek as His ambassadors to represent Him, in a world that is hostile to Him.

And doesn't this make sense. If we as Christ's ambassadors continue His work of seeking to expose the sinful condition of men and their need of salvation while presenting Christ as their only hope pleading with them to transfer their trust from themselves and their good works to Jesus Christ alone for their salvation, I can guarantee to you that we will find ourselves at times not being well received. It is a fact and we need to embrace this fact as part of the price of becoming a disciple of Christ and seeking to follow Him. It comes with the territory.

And really this should be no problem for us at all here in America in light of what we may suffer in contrast to what Christ told His disciples that they would soon be suffering. Whatever we may suffer will be far less than what Christ told His disciples that they would suffer.

I know that sometimes you may wait to share with a family member or friend for perhaps the “right time.” This certainly is not entirely a bad thing to do but if this is simply an excuse to not share at all lest you suffer some kind of negative response you have not yet come to fully understand or appreciate the words of Christ to His disciples here in **John 16:1-2**.

So, what were the two expressions of the world's hatred that Christ in **John 16:2** told His disciples that they should expect? They first of all should expect to be put out of the synagogue and secondly they should expect to die for their faith.

Certainly these expressions of the world's hatred that Christ outlined for His disciples in **John 16:2** are in indeed shocking but not nearly as shocking as why the world would feel that they needed to do these things.

Let us once again read **John 16:2**. “**They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God.**”

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Those that would later become responsible for putting the disciples of Christ to death actually thought they were offering service (LATREIA, 'worship') to God (John 16:2).

Obviously people like this are profoundly deluded which Paul himself acknowledged in **Acts 26:9-11** when he said, **“So then, I thought of myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. (10) And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. (11) And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.”**

Did Paul prior to his conversion believe that he was offering service to God in his persecution of Christians? Absolutely! And why did he believe he was rendering service to God? He believed that he was rendering service to God because he felt that when Christians embraced Christ as their Lord and Savior that they had in effect blasphemed God by agreeing with Christ that He was God's Son, sharing the same essence with His Father and worthy of the same praise, adoration and worship. So, of course, prior to his conversion Paul would have thought he was serving God when he persecuted and destroyed Christians.

But the sad fact for Paul prior to his conversion and everyone else who would later persecute Christians was this: Not only did those who persecute Christians not know Christ, they did not know His Father as well (John 16:3).

Let me read for you **John 16:3**. **“And these things they will do [the things he had just outlined], because they have not known the Father, or Me.”**

There have been people throughout the centuries who have persecuted Christians believing that they in fact were serving God but the truth is they neither served Him nor knew Him (John 16:3).

So why did the disciples need to know all of this about the world's hatred and about how it would be expressed and why it would be expressed? They needed to know this so that when all these things came to pass they would be prepared so that these things would not act as a trigger to ensnare them in the trap of disillusionment.

This is once again reinforced in **John 16:4**. Let me read this verse for you. **“But these things I have spoken to you [the things about the world's hatred], that when their hour comes [or in other words the hour of these things], you may remember that I told you of them.”**

And after Jesus said this He goes on to say something very interesting. He goes on to say, **“And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.”** What do we learn from this? We learn that Jesus up to this point had not spoken to His disciples much about how much the world would hate them after He was gone from them. And why was this? He had not spoken to them much because He tells them that He had been with them.

Jesus felt compelled to speak of His disciples' future suffering at this time because things were changing. Up until this night He had taken the brunt of the world's hatred but now they would (John 16:4).

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So let me ask you a question. Is it important that we have reasonable expectations of what to expect as a disciples of Christ? The answer is obviously yes! It is extremely important.

When we came to Christ and embraced Him as our Lord and Savior He did not take us home to glory to that place He has promised that He is even now preparing for us where there will be no more pain, tears, sorrow or death. He left us here in this troubled world.

But there is a reason why He has left us here. We have a mission. And that is to continue His work. This is why we are here.

But we should not be so naïve as we seek to carry out this mission to think that we will be eagerly embraced. We will not. And we will not be eagerly embraced for the simple reason that this world is not only troubled but it is also hostile to God and in active rebellion against Him.

But hopefully in being forewarned, we will be forearmed, and will count it a privilege to draw upon His strength, His comfort, His love, His compassion, His endurance, or in other words, His life as we deliver His message.

Christ went to a great deal of effort on the last night of His life to make sure His disciples had a proper expectation of what was coming lest what was coming would act as a trigger to ensnare them into the trap of disillusionment. So, what should our prayer be in light of all that Christ shared with His disciples here in **John 16:1-4**?

May God give us the grace to expect that if we go into the world with the gospel of Christ that we will be mistreated.