

FEARLESS

How to live courageously for Christ in a chaotic world.



Pastor Hugh's new message series each Sunday, 10:00am

You Are a Target Jn. 15:18-27; 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 4:7-12
Sept. 28, 2025

John 15:18-20 (NKJV)

¹⁸ "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.

- A. Last Sunday we began a new series about living fearlessly for Christ, and I asked this question:

How do you live courageously for Christ in a chaotic world?

How do you live for Jesus in a world that rejects the ministry of Jesus, the morals of Jesus, and the message of Jesus?

- B. Jesus wants you to live a fearless life.

Jesus doesn't make you a WIMP.

Jesus makes you a WARRIOR.

He doesn't make you a fearful follower of Jesus. He makes you a fearless follower of Jesus.

- C. So, that breeds this question: How do you live fearlessly for Jesus in a world that wants you to be very afraid?

Last Sunday I said living fearlessly for Jesus begins with BELIEVING.

You gotta believe Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father but by Him.

When you have 100% belief Jesus is the way to God, the true God (and there is no other god), and gives you the life of God, you are on your way to living fearlessly for God.

Let me say it this way:

The facts about Jesus plus faith in Jesus produces a fearless life for Jesus.

- D. And believe me, if you're going to live in this world for Jesus, you are going to need fearless faith.

So, this morning, Jesus gives you 3 more thoughts about living a fearless Christian life, but we are only going to get to 1 of them.

1. You Gotta BUCKLE Up

¹⁸ “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.

- A. If you are believer in Jesus, get your seatbelt on!
You better buckle up.
Because you are in for a ride while you are living in this world.
- B. When you believe in Jesus and you place your faith in Jesus, did you know that you got assigned to a club?
- Not a Social club
 - Not a Gaming club
 - Not a Sports club
 - Not a Fitness club
 - Not a Music club
 - Not even a Church club

When you believe in Jesus and place your faith in Jesus, you get assigned to a HUNT CLUB!

And listen, it's not you who's HUNTING. It's you who is being HUNTED.

- C. You got assigned to a HUNT CLUB, by the Enemy of this world.
The Enemy of this world (Satan/the devil) has put a target on your back. And he has assigned you to a demonic hunt club.
- And all the forces of darkness are on a mission to hunt you down.
- D. Why are you being hunted?
Jesus gives you the answer:

Jn. 15:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

- E. The reason you are being hunted/targeted, is because you're no longer playing on the devil's team.

You're no longer on Satan's Team. You're playing on Jesus' Team.

You're no longer on Hell's Team. You're on Heaven's Team.

You're no longer playing with the Sinners. You're playing with the Saints.

And Satan ain't happy.

- F. See, you used to play on Satan's team.
In fact, did you know, you were BORN on Satan's team?

You may have been taught everyone is a child of God, but that's not what the Bible says.

The Bible says you are born a child of the devil, and only when you truly believe in Jesus do you become a child of God.

Jn. 1:12 (NKJV)

¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

- G. The Bible says you were born not spiritually alive (having a relationship with God). You were born spiritually dead!
You weren't just a little sick.
You were deathly sick (spiritually)

Eph. 2:1-2 (NKJV)

dead in your trespasses and sins (born with a sin disease)
² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air

Who is the "prince of the power of the air"?
Satan, the god of this world; the devil.

- H. So when you were born, you were born with a deadly sin disease on Satan's team.
And the devil was your Coach.
- He taught you how to live by the ways of this world.
 - He taught you how to live by his ways.
 - He taught you how to do your thing and not God's thing – to live independently of God.

Eph. 2:3 (NKJV)

we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

- I. In other words, the devil taught that this world is all about who? YOU and not God.
And instead of you making God look good.
Guess who you made look good? The Devil.
- J. So, you were born on the Devil's team.
But when you got born again, Jesus put you on His team.

Col. 1:13 (NIV)

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus took you out of the kingdom of darkness/Satan and put you into the Kingdom of Jesus/God.

And the devil ain't happy about that.

You don't belong to the devil anymore. You belong to Jesus FOREVERMORE!!

- K. So what do you imagine the devil wants to do about you?
He's on a mission to get you.

Now, let me say this. The devil can't get you back on his team. That ship has sailed.

(Once you are on God's team, you are forever on God's team; Once truly saved. Always saved.)

But **the devil will put a target on your back.**

And he will assign his demons the mission to shut you up, shut you down, and shut you out.

And not only that, he's on a mission to make you give up and give in.

Give up to changing people's behaviors & beliefs, and give in to approving their behaviors & beliefs.

- L. And how does the devil do that?
The apostle Paul gives you the answer.
Guess who all the demonic spirits are working through?

Eph. 2: 2

according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,

Guess who the demonic spirits are working through to get you?

ANYONE WHO REJECTS JESUS

ALL WHO REFUSE TO FOLLOW JESUS.

- M. And here's how the spirit of disobedience works in them and through them on you:

2 primary ways:

(1) The world HATES you.

Jn. 15:18-19

¹⁸ "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

(a) As much as you wish it were true, the world is not your friend.

The world is your enemy.

And the world hates you.

Why?

Because the world hates Jesus.

¹⁸ “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.

And the world hates the ways of Jesus.

Why?

Because they don’t want anyone telling them how to live.

They don’t want anyone telling them about God’s Way, because they are all about their way.

And it’s their way or the highway.

It’s really their way and the Hell Way and no other way.

- (b) And when you take a stand for God’s way, that’s when you will see and experience their hatred.

Not only does the world hate you, but their hatred will lead to harm.

(2) The world will HARM you

Jn. 15:20

²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.

Jn. 16:1-2

These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. ² They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.

- (a) Around the world, Christians (our brother and sisters in Jesus) are being persecuted, displaced, tortured, abducted, imprisoned, and slaughtered.

Ex. Nigeria – on Fathers Day, 210 Christians (men, women, children) were massacred by Muslim extremists – burned alive and shot to death.

Ex. India –In June, a mob of Hindu nationalists brutally attacked a group of Christians for being unwilling to convert to Hinduism.

Ex. China –

Police routinely arrest, detain, and harass leaders and members of “house churches” for refusing to join the officially recognized churches.

- (b) In America, over the past few years, we have seen the escalation of hate crimes and shootings in churches and Christian schools.

Ex. April 3, 2025, an Arizona man was found guilty of a hate crime after he targeted Christian churches with bomb threats.

Ex. On June 22, 2025, Brian Browning attempted a mass shooting at CrossPointe Community Church in Wayne, Michigan, but was stopped before he could harm anyone. Church security shot and killed the would-be attacker before he could reach the inside of the facility.

Ex. Aug 27, 2025, a shooter opened fired during Mass at Annunciation Catholic School killing 2 children and injuring 17 other people.

Ex. Aug. 10, 2025 Charlie Kirk assassinated on the campus of Utah Valley University for his strong stand for Jesus.

N. None of us like the idea of being targeted for our faith.

But Jesus never said that being a Christian was going to be all sunshine and rainbows.

In fact, Jesus said in the last days (before His coming), you won't just be hated by some. You'll be hated by all.

Mt. 24:9 One of the signs of His coming will be hatred and harm of followers of Jesus by most people on the planet.

"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.

And such hatred and harm will cause a great falling away.

Mt. 24:10

¹⁰ At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another.

(An apostasy; a desertion from the Christian faith)

And those who desert will turn on their fellow Christians – proving they were never Christians themselves.

O. The disciples never knew "easy street" Christianity.

PICTURE: Every one of the disciples (except John) was martyred for their faith.

- 1 Andrew - Crucified
- 2 Bartholomew - beaten then crucified
- 3 James, son of Alphaeus - Stoned to death
- 4 James, son of Zebedee - Beheaded
5. John - Boiled in oil, but when that failed he was exiled for his faith; died of old age
6. Judas (not Iscariot) - Stoned to death
7. Matthew - speared to death
8. Peter - Crucified upside down
9. Philip - Crucified
10. Simon - Crucified
11. Thomas - Speared to death
12. Matthias - Stoned to death

- P. And the apostle Paul, he wouldn't know ministry without opposition, persecution, riots, stoning, and imprisonments.

2 Cor. 11:23-28 (NAS)

²³ Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. ²⁶ I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; ²⁷ I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. ²⁸ Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.

And we think we're living faithfully, fervently, and fearlessly for Jesus.

Q. 2 Cor. 4:3-12 (NAS)

³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵ For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; ⁸ we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. ¹¹ For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. ¹² So death works in us, but life in you.

- R. Can I tell you how Paul lived his life and how he changed the world?

He lived dangerously.

He lived with a willingness to experience danger and death for Jesus, so people will believe in Jesus.

You might say it this way:

When Paul met Jesus, he had his funeral.

He died to himself, and he lived every second for the rest of his life for Jesus.

- S. God gave us a modern-day Paul - **PICTURE: Charlie Kirk**
- Paul debated people wherever he had opportunity – the marketplace, on Mars Hill in Athens, in the school house, in the public square. Paul was always willing to debate the ideas of life and religion.
 - He always preached truth to the people.
 - He always called out their lies.
 - He always proclaimed the Gospel – that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father except by Him.
 - And oftentimes the debates would turn into a riot and they would run Paul out of town or throw him in jail.
 - And finally, after preaching to Nero in Rome, they killed him.

Same story of Charlie Kirk.

Different day than the apostle Paul. Same demons.

- T. And those same demons are targeting you and me today.

What's the enemy's tactic?

- **Indoctrination** – brainwash people into believing you're the enemy; Universities – many not teaching students HOW to think; teaching them WHAT to think.

AI and ChadGPT – students don't have to think; AI will do it for them.

Social media – kids are being indoctrinated by social influencers.

What's their message: America is not a Christian nation founded on the teachings of Jesus; Christians want to take away your freedom; Christians are racists; Christians are the problem in America.

- **Agitation** – get all the haters worked up (gaslight them); so, they will speak out against you.
Ex. Plane – woman objected to couple wearing MAGA hats.
Turn their agenda into an emotional agenda.
They don't want to hear the truth.
That's irrelevant.
It's not about what's true; it's about what true for me.
- **Intimidation** – make you feel threatened; make you fearful so you will not stand up or stand out.
- **Cancelation** – end all debate; we're right. You're wrong. Now sit down and be quiet.
- **Elimination** – Take you down. Take you out.

And the question is how do we respond?

Mt. 5:10-12

¹⁰ "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

U. Mt. 5:43-45

⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous.

Application:

1. Don't take offense by those who hate you and harm you.

Mt. 5:10-12

You are blessed. You have the backing of God.
You're doing the Lord's work. You're speaking the Lord's Word.

2. Rejoice and be glad by those who hate you and harm you.

You were given the privilege to deliver God's mail to them.

3. Know it's not you they're rejecting. It's Jesus they're rejecting.

You are really NOT the target. Jesus is the target.

4. Love them with the love of Jesus.

5. Pray for them to believe in Jesus.

You can't save anyone.
Only Jesus can save.

And only Jesus can shine the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God in their hearts.

And prayer is what God used to open their hearts to Jesus.

So pray for those who hate you and would harm you.

Conclusion:

I don't want to live an easy Christian life.

I want to live a life-changing Christian life to the glory of Jesus.

And if you're going to change lives, you better buckle up.