

June 6 - Read John 15:18 - 16:4

1. What are some of the current sociological and political reasons why anyone or certain governments or ideologies oppose Christianity?

Answers will vary.

2. Jesus gave three theological reasons why Christians will face opposition. First, it is because Christians are not of the world. In other words, they are citizens of heaven and not of this world. In what ways do Christians exhibit to the world that they are citizens of heaven?

For one thing, by our attitudes in voting -- that we vote soberly and thoughtfully according to our conscience, towards the overall good and welfare of society, and that we vote not because we have placed ultimate hope in government, or party, or politician, or policy. Another is by how we spend money and consume. Yet another is how we invest our time and presence in relationships. Christians can live a countercultural way to show that we are a people of hope, not just for the future, but hope for the present, hope that God is already transforming everything even right now.

3. The second theological reason why Christians will face opposition is that they bear the Name of Jesus. That is, they carry the title, Christ, in their task to judge (i.e. to expose the darkness of) the world. How do we practise right judgement in our midst and of the world?

We do not criticise for its own sake. Criticism should not be done hypocritically or self-righteously or to signal our own virtues in front of others or on social media. Rather, we speak truth in gracious love to reveal injustice, uncover lies, and demand accountability from those who do not have it, not so to slap someone at the face, to inflict violence with our words or weapons, or to disrespect and denigrate. Our judgement should be honourable and dignified, not malicious or vindictive. And our judgement must always carry the hope of forgiveness, reconciliation, restoration, and mercy. Just as we have been forgiven, so we must also forgive.

4. The third theological reason for opposition is that we continue Jesus' mission in the world. That is, by the Spirit's power, we bear witness to the light, truth, and revelation of Jesus Christ into the darkness of the world. In what ways do we bear witness to the light, truth, and revelation of Jesus Christ in our lives?

We don't just stop at naming evil as evil. But rather, we promote and uphold what is good to replace it. We don't just stop at naming lies, but to fill it with truth. We bear witness to the Gospel as the only alternative pathway when a road towards destruction has been revealed and dismantled. We must say, "Don't do this", while also saying, "Do this instead." We must say, "Don't believe in this", while also saying, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ".