

18 “If the world hates you, understand that it hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, the world hates you. 20 Remember the word I spoke to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. 21 But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they don’t know the one who sent me.

22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 The one who hates me also hates my Father. 24 If I had not done the works among them that no one else has done, they would not be guilty of sin. Now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. 25 But this happened so that the statement written in their law might be fulfilled: *They hated me for no reason.*

26 “When the Counselor comes, the one I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father—he will testify about me. 27 You also will testify, because you have been with me from the beginning.

16:1 “I have told you these things to keep you from stumbling. 2 They will ban you from the synagogues. In fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering service to God. 3 They will do these things because they haven’t known the Father or me. 4 But I have told you these things so that when their time comes you will remember I told them to you. I didn’t tell you these things from the beginning, because I was with you.

LITURGICAL RESPONSE

READER: **This is the Word of the LORD.**

EVERYONE: **Thanks be to God. Speak, LORD. Your servants are listening. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.**

FOUR ANCHORS...

- Prepare for Persecution

18 “If the world hates you, understand that it hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, the world hates you. 20 Remember the word I spoke to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.”

— JOHN 15:18-20 (CSB) —

*However, because you are not of the world, but I have
chosen you out of it, the world hates you.*

— JOHN 15:18-20 (CSB) —

**Opposition to Jesus will eventually mean
opposition for those who belong to Jesus.**

Spectrum of Persecution

From **social awkwardness...**

to **relational exclusion...**

to **reputational labeling...**

to **vocational cost...**

to **economic penalty...**

to **legal restriction...**

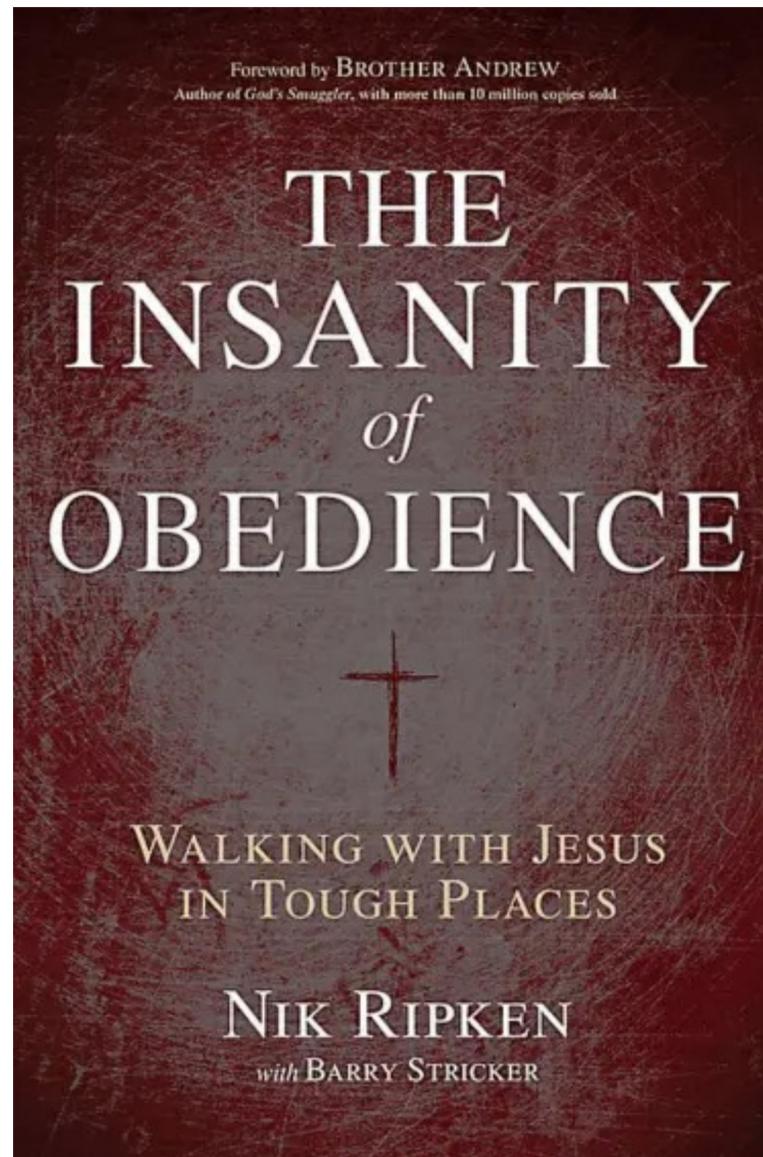
to **violence...**

to **imprisonment...**

to **even...death.**

Spectrum of Persecution

From social awkwardness...
to relational exclusion...
to reputational labeling...
to vocational cost...
to economic penalty...
to legal restriction...
to violence...
to imprisonment...
to even...death.



“Persecution is not an interruption of the gospel. It is the environment in which the gospel has often grown best.”

— NIK RIPKEN

“Remember the word I spoke to you: a servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.”

“Remember the word I spoke to you: a servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.”

Jesus is stabilizing their faith
before the storm hits.

Unexpected suffering can destabilize faith,
but oftentimes, expected suffering can strengthen it.

**Allegiance to Jesus places you
in a different kingdom.**

**And kingdoms always experience tension
at their borders.**

FOUR ANCHORS...

- Prepare for Persecution
- Perceive the Real Problem

The world's resistance to believers often *isn't* really about the believer. It's about who/what we represent.

**We remind the world of Christ.
Christ reveals God.
God exposes the human heart.**

“But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they don't know the one who sent me.”

— John 15:21 —

22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 The one who hates me also hates my Father. 24 If I had not done the works among them that no one else has done, they would not be guilty of sin. Now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. 25 But this happened so that the statement written in their law might be fulfilled: They hated me for no reason.

— JOHN 15:22-25 (CSB)

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— JOHN 15:22-25 (CSB)

Rejecting Jesus IS rejecting God.

Dear Caleb,

Thank you for your letter - it genuinely meant a lot to me that you'd think of me and take the time to share your heart. I really do share your concern about the state of our world. With so much unrest, division and pain, I agree deeply that more peace, compassion, and love is needed - all things that the presence of God provides. I respect your desire to help people know Jehovah and I can imagine you'd have a high value for Scripture...

Because I respect you, I wanted to share a few thoughts and questions that have been meaningful in my own faith - not to argue, but to simply share where my heart and understanding have landed as I've sought to know God more deeply through the Bible. One of the central places my mind often returns is the person of Jesus. When I read the New Testament, I find myself wrestling w/ how the earliest followers of Jesus understood Him. For example, I notice moments like:

- THOMAS says to Jesus, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28)
- Hebrews 1:6 tells us that Heaven worships Jesus
- Revelation 5:12-14 does the same, giving honor and worship to the Lamb of God
- Passages like John 1:1-3 + Colossians 1:16-17, Titus 2:13, 2 Peter 1:1 speak to Jesus being God and the Creator of all things...

Dear Neighbor,

My name is Caleb, and I wanted to share a brief, peaceful thought with you. Lately, the world can feel bad, divided and exhausting. Everywhere we look, there is uncertainty, conflict, and pressure to keep going without rest. It's easy to wonder if real peace is even possible anymore yet the message found in the bible is a quiet but powerful reassurance. God has not forgotten us, and he has a loving purpose for the future.

The bible reminds us that Jehovah is God of peace and that he never intended for humans to live in fear or suffering. Through Jesus Christ, Jehovah showed us what, compassion, and calm strength look like.

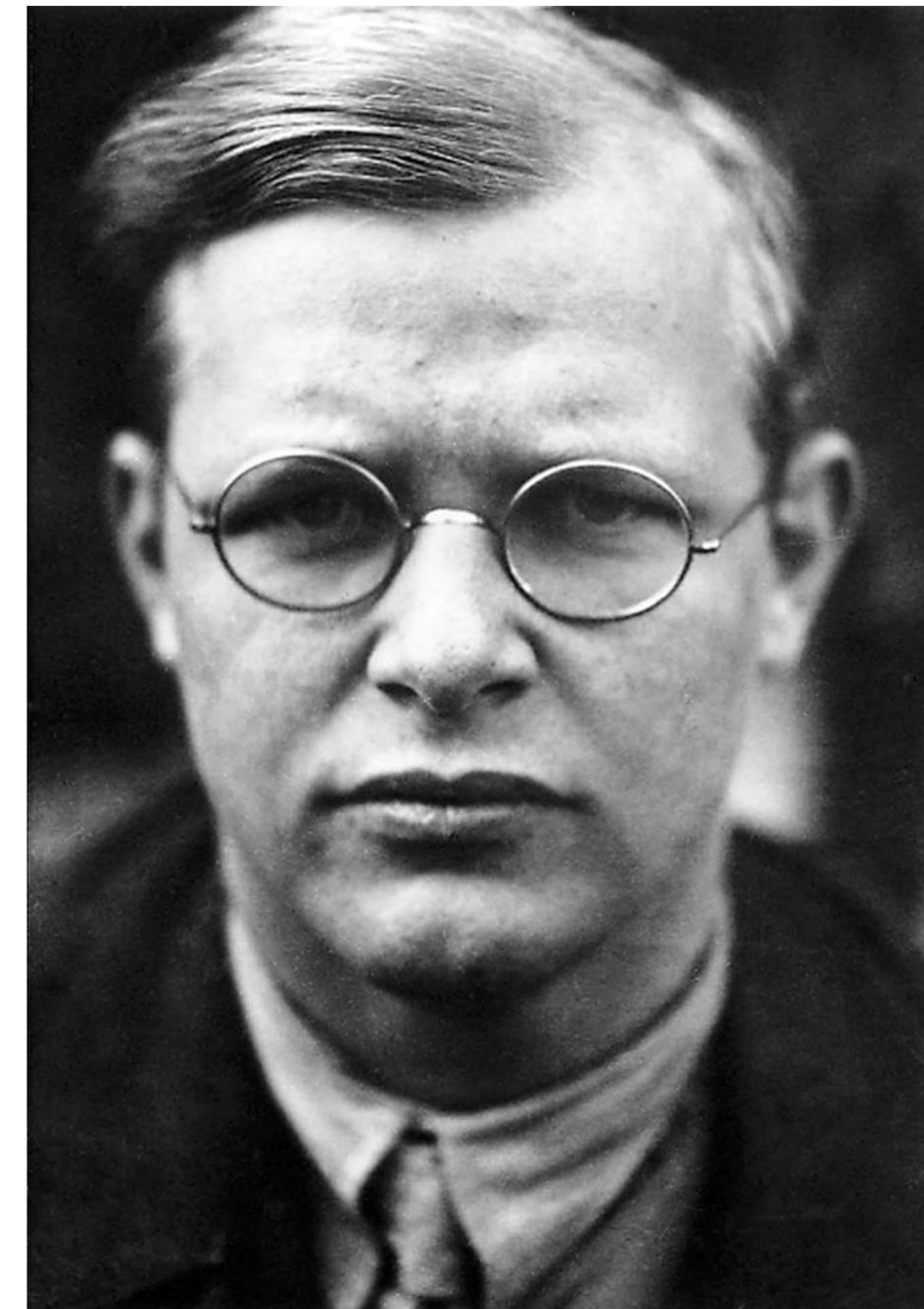
We are also given a beautiful hope for the future. At Isaiah 33:24 it says "No resident will say, 'I am sick'. The people are dwelling in the land will be pardoned for their error. This promise assures us that Jehovah plans a time when sickness and suffering will be gone.

If you would like to learn more about this hope and other comforting promises, you are warmly invited to visit www.jw.org. It offers helpful, free information that has brought comfort for

With care,
Caleb C.

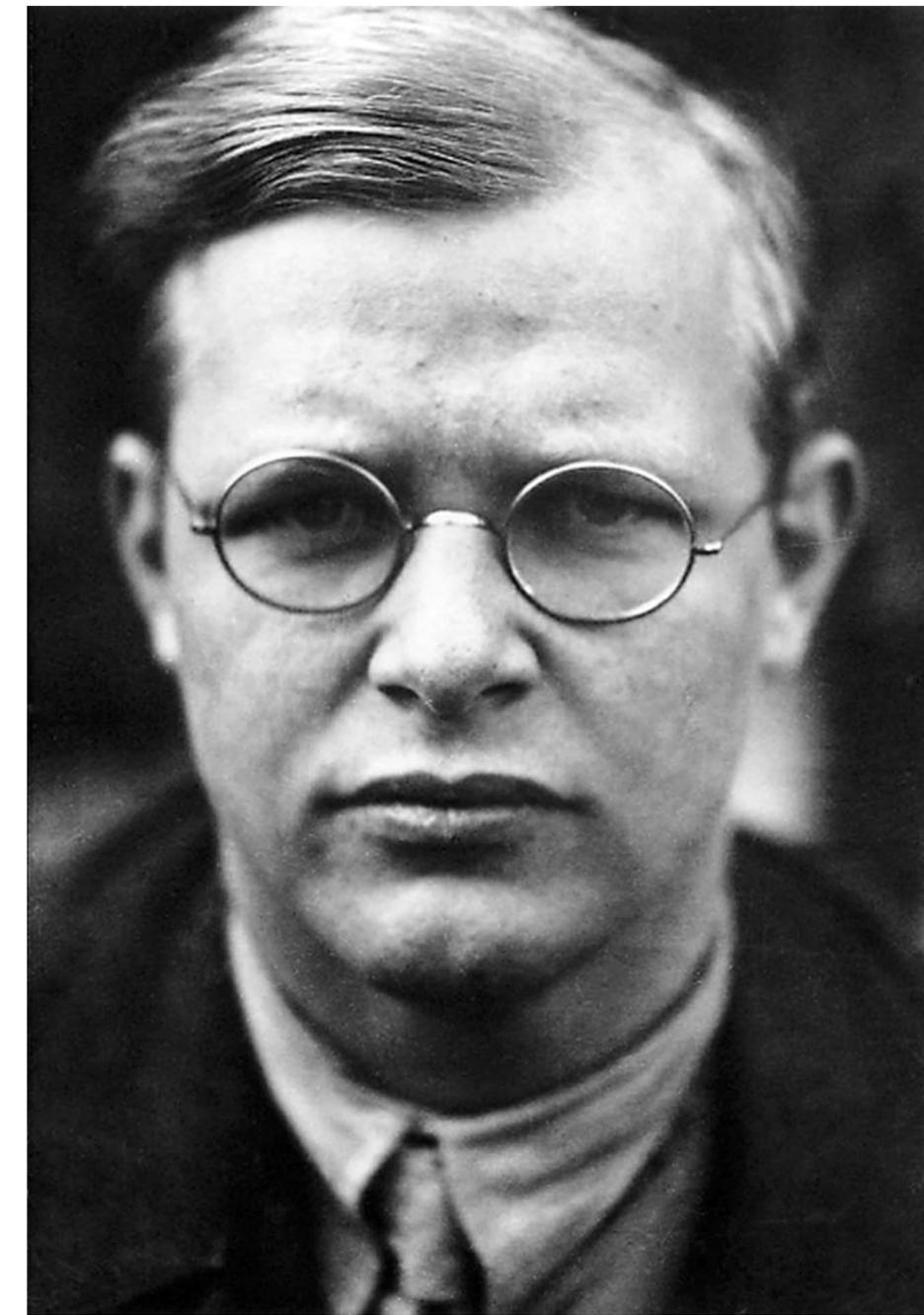
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— JOHN 15:22-25 (CSB)



*“The world
hates Christ,
not the
Christian —
unless the
Christian bears
Christ.”*

— **Dietrich
Bonhoeffer**



*“The world
hates Christ, not
the Christian —
unless the
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*“The gospel
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**— Gardner
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*When Jesus is revealed clearly,
He disrupts the systems, assumptions, and loyalties
people cling to.
And DISRUPTION often produces RESISTANCE.*

**In this world,
people will resist us because
they resist the Christ we carry.**

FOUR ANCHORS...

- Prepare for Persecution
- Perceive the Real Problem
- Promise of Power

FOUR ANCHORS...

- Prepare for Persecution
- Perceive the Real Problem
- Promise of Power

26 “When the Counselor comes, the one I will send to you from the Father — the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father—he will testify about me.

27 You also will testify, because you have been with me from the beginning.

— JOHN 15:26-27 (CSB) —

We are not the *source* of witness.

We are participants in it.

Which means:

**We never carry Christ
without the Spirit carrying US.**



*“Eighty-six years I have served Him, and He has done me no wrong.
How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?”*

— Polycarp, c. AD 155



*“Those who lock me up will one day be locked up by angels...
When I think of this, the Lord fills me with compassion
for those who are imprisoning me.”*

— Wang Yi, Declaration of Faithful Disobedience, 2018.

**The Spirit who empowered believers across history
is the Spirit Jesus gives every disciple.**

FOUR ANCHORS...

- Prepare for Persecution
- Perceive the Real Problem
- Promise of Power
- Persist through Pain

“I have told you these things to keep you from stumbling. 2 They will ban you from the synagogues. In fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering service to God. 3 They will do these things because they haven’t known the Father or me. 4 But I have told you these things so that when their time comes you will remember I told them to you. I didn’t tell you these things from the beginning, because I was with you.

— JOHN 16:1-4 (CSB) —

**Jesus names hard realities before they arrive
because, throughout Scripture,
FORE-WARNING IS FORE-ARMING.**

**How do we practically then
live this out in the world?**

**Many of us are not ashamed of Christ *inwardly* —
we are **SELF-CONSCIOUS** *outwardly*.**

**Following Jesus publicly in a resistant world
requires **FREEDOM** from *human approval*.**

***“... never to be self-conscious in the
presence of the Lord...”***

— Pete Hughes, Pastor/Author

**What is one visible way I will NOT HIDE
my allegiance to Jesus?**

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

Free us from *hiding* You

and from *performing* You.

(Matthew 6:1; John 12:42–43)

You were never ashamed of us —

not in our *sin*,

not in our *weakness*,

not even *at the cross*.

(Hebrews 12:2; Romans 5:8)

And You **call us now**

to **live unashamed** of You.

(Romans 1:16; Mark 8:38)

Give us the **quiet courage**

to **belong** to You

without *fear*.

(Acts 4:29–31; Galatians 1:10)

Where we are **self-conscious**,

make us **God-conscious**.

(Colossians 3:1–2)

By your grace,

may our lives bear **simple, visible**

witness that we are *Yours*.

(Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:15–16)

In the precious name of Jesus, Amen.