



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – April 24, 2022

To Know Christ...

How much do the religious or even Christians hate God? (Isn't that an odd sentence?) Can you imagine having unity with God and being outright hated for it? Jesus understood exactly this point. Follow closely here. In John 10, Jesus tells religious Jews (who were in Jerusalem at the temple for "The Festival of Dedication", aka "Hanukkah" or "The Festival of Lights") that **"I and the Father are one"**. (v30) The religious Jews at the temple then picked up stones, aiming to stone Jesus to death (v31) because He claimed unity with God, the Father. And Jesus, who rightfully said to His eleven apostles a few months later, **"He who has seen Me, has seen the Father."** (John 14:9) They heard the truth of what Jesus said. I find it simply amazing that "religious" people who claim God as theirs, but do not see the value of those who actually want to keep the commandments of Jesus, which He spoke from God. Jesus shared that He is ONE with the Father; they found this to be so egregious that it compelled them to seek Jesus' life.

Welcome to life with Christ, the Son of God! When we seek to imitate and obey the commands of God and Jesus, some religious Christians may want to destroy us as well. Try forgiving hated people, your religious "Christian" co-workers, neighbors, or families may verbally abuse you by saying, "I can't believe that you would condone such behavior!" When did we say that we did? We recognize and forgive the failures. Is this not the love Jesus calls us to live? Did Jesus not command us to **"Love your enemies"**? (Matthew 5:44) And what should be our response beyond love? Jesus went on to say, **"and pray for those who persecute you."** Do we pray for "Christians" who stand in opposition to following the commands of Jesus? Jesus wanted us to pray for them. Then, in verse 45, Jesus shows us the parallel, **"so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven."** God adopts those who love as He perfectly loves.

Did Jesus follow His own command? The Son of God was crucified because He had the exact same character as God, His Father. (Hebrews 1:3) Jesus showed how deeply He loves His enemies by willingly sacrificing Himself on the cross. (Read Romans 5:8-10 for insight.) And what was His prayer for those who were persecuting Him? **"Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."** (Luke 23:34) Would you pray this for your enemies? These religious Jews who cried out over and over again, "CRUCIFY, CRUCIFY HIM!" (v21) And Jesus loves His enemies and prays for them. Oh, ... if we would simply stand with HIM, keeping His commands, and bearing the brand-marks of Jesus' life in ours. (Paul did ... Galatians 6:17) The enemies did

not win ... Jesus raised from the dead. And we'll overcome the world by following His commands by being ONE with God, a child of God and a sibling of Jesus by His Grace. Otherwise, we will be misguided while seeking to kill His children. Be careful of the example you choose to follow.

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