

**Lesson 16**  
**John 15:18 – 16:15**  
**WHAT IN THE WORLD IS THE SPIRIT DOING?**

**Memory verse:** “If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin.” (John 15:22 NIV)

This long section, John 15:18 to 16:16, is tied together by two important themes: the opposition of the world against the church, and the ministry of the Spirit to and through the church. Our Lord had been talking about love (John 15:9–13, 17), but now He is talking about hatred, and He used the word seven times. It seems incredible that anyone would hate Jesus Christ and His people, but that is exactly what the situation is today, and some of that hatred comes from religious people. In a few hours, the religious leaders of Israel would be condemning their Messiah and crying out for His blood.

Our Lord had openly taught His disciples that one day persecution would come. He mentioned it in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:10–12, 44) and in His “commissioning sermon” when He sent out the disciples to minister (Matt. 10:16–23). In His sermon denouncing the Pharisees, Jesus openly said that they would persecute and kill God’s servants (Matt. 23:34–35), and there was a similar warning given in His prophetic message on Mount Olivet (Mark 13:9–13).

Throughout the gospel of John, it is evident that the religious establishment not only opposed Jesus, but even sought to kill Him (John 5:16; 7:19, 25; 8:37, 59; 9:22; also note 11:8). As He continued His ministry, there was a tide of resentment, then hatred, and then open opposition toward Him. So, the disciples should not have been surprised when Jesus brought up the subject of persecution, for they had heard Him warn them and they had seen Him face men’s hatred during His ministry.

Until the Lord returns, or until we die, we must live in this hostile world and face continued opposition. How can we do it? What is the secret of victory? It is the presence and power of the Holy Spirit of God in our lives. This is the key section in the Upper Room message about the Holy Spirit and His ministry. Before we study this passage and see the ministry of the Spirit to the church in the world, we must pause to remind ourselves just who the Holy Spirit is. The Holy Spirit of God is a person; Jesus referred to the Spirit as “He” and not “it.” The Holy Spirit has a mind (Rom. 8:27), a will (1 Cor. 12:11), and emotional feelings (Gal. 5:22–23).

In John 15:26 all three Persons of the Godhead are mentioned: Jesus the Son will send the Spirit from the Father. Because the Holy Spirit is a person, and is God, it means that the Christian has God indwelling his body! If we did not have the Holy Spirit within, we would not be able to serve the Lord in this present evil world. We are to walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16), worship in the Spirit (Phil. 3:3), and witness in the Spirit (Acts 1:8).

Christians can stand and withstand in the midst of the world’s hatred because of the special ministries of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture Reading: John 15:18 – 16:15

To learn in this lesson: 1) The Spirit as Comforter Encourages the Church 2) The Spirit as Reprover Witnesses through the Church 3) The Spirit as Teacher Guides the Church

**Discussion Questions:**

1) What did Jesus mean by “the world,” and how does the Holy Spirit encourage believers when they are experiencing the hatred and opposition of the world? (Refer to John 15: 18 – 16:4).

2) How does the Holy Spirit witness through the Church (16:5–11)?

3) In what ways does the Holy Spirit as Teacher, guide the Church (16:12–15)?