

These notes suggest ways you can prepare for the sermon that will be preached on October 10, 2021 at First Evan. Feel free to use them for class or small group discussion. Feel free to pick just one question or use them all.

1. Before jumping into John 15:18–25, Pastor Jim looks at two passages, Daniel 2 and Romans 1, to get some context on where history is headed. In the case of Daniel 2, Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s vision provides insight into the rise and fall of world powers. This vision suggests that the kingdom of God will be a total replacement, not just an improvement of the world system. Why do you think God will put an end to the kingdoms of men? In what way is this sobering? Encouraging?
2. Romans 1:24, 26, and 28 feature the expression “God gave them over.” The verb in this phrase is often used of an act of judgment. In what ways could these three appearances of the phrase introduce a form of divine judgment on human society? If you had to evaluate where we are at as a culture, what category of judgment best describes where we are?
3. Although you may have a positive relationship with a non-believer, Jesus is pretty clear in warning us that the default position of the world system is one of hatred toward believers. In what ways do you see this hatred being expressed toward believers in our world? In what way have you personally experienced hatred or rejection for your commitment to Jesus?
4. Since our earthly mission requires us to make intentional contact with non-believers for the purpose of sharing Christ, how does hatred from the world often affect our efforts at doing so? Can you recount a personal experience in which you sought to share the love of Jesus and reaped hatred?
5. In Acts 5:40–42, we read about some saints who were flogged for their testimony? If this happened to you, how would you react? Compare your response to what is recorded in Acts 5:41? Why did they respond this way?
6. Jim will mention several ways in which persecution can serve a beneficial purpose. Can you think of some? Have you actually experienced any of these benefits as a result of being persecuted or criticized for Christ?

7. Jim will say, "Persecution is a grace trigger" based on 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. What does this mean? Have you ever experienced God's grace when you have been insulted or persecuted for Christ? Do tell!

STRENGTHENING YOUR CORE

One Heart One Way One Truth One Life One Mission **One Peace** One Hope