

## The Away Team

John 15:18-16:4

Some of you who watch sports know that there are many advantages to being the home team. It plays in his home court, it gets the cheers of the crowd; the atmosphere favors it. When the OKC Thunder could not win game 6 at home, everyone thought they would lose because they would then face the Golden State Warriors in their home court where they were truly dominant.

You see when you are the away team, the atmosphere in the building is hostile towards you; you truly have to set your mind to play well because no one will be cheering for you.

“Today people are on a totally different path. Our culture is now defined by tolerance and permissiveness. People no longer engage with faith in order to accept or reject it. They simply reject it out of hand. The church is now the visiting team in our society. The crowd is not cheering for us” Jim Tune, president of the 2015 ICOM

As a church, we are the away team. We are not the away team because of all the things happening in our society, but we must understand that the moment Jesus established the church two thousand years ago, the church has always been the away team. Some of us have a tough time viewing ourselves this way, but this is what Jesus said we are. We are the away team in this society, in our community and it's ok to be the away team.

### John 15:18

In chapter 14 Jesus encouraged his disciples to trust him and not to let their hearts be troubled (disturbed). Jesus tells them he is leaving to prepare a place and then come back again to get them. He promised to leave them his peace, which is different from the peace this world can give. (v27). In Chapter 15 we read about Jesus telling the disciples to remain in him in order to produce fruit; here in this chapter he also commanded them to love one another in the way he has loved them. On verses 18 through the end of that chapter, Jesus tells us why we are the away team.

### Being the away team means.

**-Hostility in the world. (The world would hate you). (v.18) // John 17:16**

The moment you say yes to Jesus, you join the away team. If Jesus was persecuted, then his followers will be also. It also means that just as some believed Jesus's message; our message about Jesus will also be believed by some in this world. (v.20)

**-Rejection, death is a possibility (John 16:1-3)**

### Being the away team requires us to remember our game plan.

Jesus expects us to continue to testify about him for as long as we are in the world. To tell others about him. We are to recruit others to join Jesus' team. We do this now empowered by the Holy Spirit who lives in us. Jesus had said to his apostles that “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on them and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8) This is the game plan as the away team. Jesus had prayed

for those in the world that would believe in him through the disciples' message. (John 17:20)

### Being the away team means (16:1)

*To remember Jesus's words (his commands, his warnings, teachings) so you don't lose heart.* Jesus had given his followers instructions right before he left them on their own. He said, **trust in me (14:1), remain in me and I will remain in you (15:4); love one another (15:12); All this I have told you so that you don't go astray. 16:1 So that you remember that I warned you (v4)**

**So that you don't quit in spirit of facing a hostile opponent.**

### Being the away team means to have peace and courage in Jesus (John 16:33)

I have told you these things (the hostility you will have in this world because you are the visiting team) so that in me you may have peace. You will have trouble, but you can have peace in the midst of those trouble.

*-We have peace in the midst of the troubles in this world.* This peace is not the absence of trouble, it is in the midst of the struggles we have this peace. **What is the source of our peace? Jesus Our captain, manager, coach. (16:33)**

*-We also have courage because Jesus has overcome the world.* In him we are overcomers.

It's ok to be the away team as Christians because the victory is guaranteed in Christ.

As the away team, stick to the game plan, keep on remembering the words of Jesus so you don't quit when it gets tough. Be brave because our Lord has conquered, we belong to the winning team. **Yes we are the visiting team right now, the away team, but very soon we will be going home to be crowned champions.**