

A Challenge to All Who Call on the Name of the Lord - Part 1

by Hamp Sirmans

The sermon challenges believers to recognize and address the offenses that hinder their spiritual growth and relationship with God.

Duration: 57:08

Scripture: Genesis 12:3, Proverbs 19:11, Proverbs 27:17, Matthew 6:33, 2 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 12:1, 2 Peter 1:4

Topics: "Challenge"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of looking to Jesus in our Christian journey rather than relying on our own strength. He highlights three obstacles that hinder Christians from becoming who God wants them to be: offenses, change, and familiarity with Christ. The preacher reminds the congregation that even biblical figures like Abraham, Moses, David, and Peter had their flaws and shortcomings, but it didn't make them any less spiritual or usable by God. The sermon encourages believers to have a perfect heart towards God and to allow Him to work in their lives.

Transcript

Good morning. Hope you're doing well this morning. It's a wonderful presence of the Lord here.

I'm ready to get into the Word and be challenged today by the Word of the Lord. Matter of fact, that's the title of my message, A Challenge to All Those Who Call on the Name of the Lord. So let's pray.

Father, we love you and we worship you. We give you glory and honor. Lord, we've come into your house to be challenged.

We've come into your house, God, for you, Lord, to come in and to challenge false perceptions and ideas, to challenge issues and things, God, that encroach upon the life of God within us. Lord, we want to hear. We want you to speak to us.

We want you to come and challenge us, oh God, today and make your Spirit, Lord, known in this Word. God, that this is not the words of man, that this is the words of your Spirit, God, speaking to your church, speaking into our hearts. God, I pray today that we would leave here uplifted, challenged, God, freed, forgiven, walking in the Spirit and knowing you more and more.

In Jesus' name, amen. Brother Roger, during communion, quoted a verse of Scripture that was on my heart. Peter said that the Word of God, the promises were given to us that we could be partakers of the divine nature.

And this morning, we're going to go through the Word of God. How many of you know the plan of God for our lives is not to give us a religious framework to operate under and to give us rules and regulations and doctrines and dogmas, but the Word of God is given to us to inspire us, to lay hold on eternal life, to walk with God and allow God, the free reign in our life, to be who He wants us to be. And 2 Timothy 3.16, you don't have to turn, I'm going to read it for you.

The Bible says, All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine. Now, that's not just talking about, you know, God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, laying out all those things and putting them in a systematic order. The doctrine of God, what has been in the mind of God for eternity for His people.

And that is real doctrine. That is the heart of God. What the Scriptures, the spirit behind the Scriptures, the Word of God is to reveal that what has been in the mind of God all along.

It is there and as it presents itself to us, it is to reprove us. Paul said, as we present the Word of God, as God states it, as God desires certain things for our lives, as it is presented accurately and balanced, in balance with the Spirit of the Lord, it will reprove those areas that are hindering us from participating in the mind and heart of God for our lives. So God wants to challenge us this morning.

I look at that word reproof as a challenge, as a challenge from the Lord to us so that we can walk in the mind and the heart of God for our lives. That is what the Word of God is here for this morning, for reproof, for correction, to correct our thinking, our false concepts, our ideas. The Word of God is here for instruction, to instruct us in righteousness, to give us a door, an understanding of this is the way, walk you in it.

And this morning, I want to focus on, I just want to jump right into the Word of the Lord because I have a great deal, I think, to say this morning. And we're going to cover a lot of bases. But I want to talk about three things, if we get to the third one.

I don't know, but three things that greatly hinder the Christian from being the person that God wants them to be. Three things that greatly hinder the Christian from being the person that God wants him to be. God has a mind for you.

He has a plan for your life. In this life, you are going to face hindrances along the way that are going to be obstacles for you and I that we're going to have to overcome in order to be the people that God wants us to be. And right away, you may think already, you know where this is going.

Think about, you know, you could throw out there prayerlessness. Brother Hamm, that is the greatest hindrance, prayerlessness. Hidden sin.

Hidden sin is a great hindrance to being what God wants you to be. No life in the Word. Those are all hindrances, but those are very pertinent things.

But what I'm about to tell you, if you're not challenged and prepared for in advance, can greatly hinder you and stop you even if you have a strong life of prayer. Even if there is no hidden sin in your life. And even if you have a strong life in the Word.

Those three things are elementary things I would look at. Prayerlessness, hidden sin, and no life in the Word. Those are elementary things.

The things I'm going to talk to you about today are great weapons of the enemy. And I want to talk to you out of personal experience. I'm not going to talk to you just out of things that I've not observed in my own life.

Now, this doesn't go any further than the person that you see here this morning. This is some things that I have been challenged with in my life. And I have faced obstacles that seek to hinder me from being the person that God wants me to be.

And it will challenge you even when you have a prayer life. Even when there's no hidden sin. Even when you're strong in the Word.

These are some of the greatest weapons of the enemy against the saint. So I hope you're ready to be challenged this morning. Because we're going to think outside of the box.

And we're going to think within the Word of God, the realms of God's Word. Now, I could come up, I'm sure, if we sat here and thought long enough, we could come up with more than three. But these are three that have greatly affected my life.

And things that I've had to overcome in my personal walk with God. Number one. One of the greatest hindrances to growth and being the God, being the person that God wants you to be is offenses.

Offenses. You can write these down if you want to. You may not be there now, but it's inevitable that you will face these things.

Offenses. Jesus says it's impossible, but offenses will come. That means that each one of us are going to face offenses at some point in our Christian journey.

It is inevitable. Inevitable that you are going to be offended. Your feelings are going to be hurt.

You are going to be distraught. You are going to be discouraged by the actions of others. Doesn't mean that you don't have a prayer life.

It doesn't mean that you have hidden sin. It doesn't mean that you don't have a life in the Word. Matter of fact, if you've got all those things, the enemy is going to raise up some of the greatest weapons against you.

And you are going to face this. When you are determined to go all the way with God, you are going to face offenses. Get ready for it.

Be challenged by this Word. Put it in your mind. Offenses.

I am going to face offenses. When I am called into this walk, I am going to face times where others offend me. I want to point out four areas of offense that are common for believers and four areas that the enemy will use in our lives to try and hinder the work of God going on in our lives.

Now remember, this is all about you and the Lord. This is not about ministry. This is not about, you know, any other thing.

This is about you and the Lord. Your personal growth, your personal walk with God. See, the enemy wants to get in and drive a wedge in there.

And these are the weapons that he is going to use to do that. Number one, or A. You could put this as A. The first one that I want to talk about is God. Offended with God.

Oh, I am a Christian, brother Ham. I could never be offended with God. Never say never.

We are going to begin at the top and work our way down, okay, to where we are. God, is it possible for a Christian to hold an offense against God? You better believe it. Offended at God.

Here are some reasons why people are offended with God. Delays in answered prayer. There is an example in the Word of God.

I want to use the Word of God. Mary and Martha. They have been praying.

They have been waiting on Jesus to come through. Jesus didn't come through in the time they thought He should. And so they are offended at Him.

They are offended. Where were you when we needed you most? We were praying. We were waiting.

And you didn't come. And now we are offended by you. We are offended by the fact that you didn't come up on our timetable.

And the delay that you, that, you know, the delay in the answer to prayer. B. God allows something very difficult in our lives. We can be offended when God allows something that is beyond our realm of reason that should be there.

We can be offended with God. And the enemy will use things that come into our life that God allows to draw a wedge between you and your relationship with God. I think about the women in Bethlehem.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Just the devil inspired Herod and he comes in and slaughters all the children, two year and older and under. God allowed it.

That's unexplainable. You can't explain why God allowed that, but you just know that He did. And the women began to be, they were offended at God.

The Bible says they refused the comfort. Now who is the comforter? But the Holy Spirit. God wanted to comfort them and say it's not without a reason.

They couldn't see behind the scenes. They couldn't see that the greatest miracle had just happened. They couldn't see that God was going to work Christ through that.

All they could focus on was the pain and sudden loss. And there was a wedge between them and their God. How could a good God, how could a holy God allow such an awful thing to happen in my life? Another way that we can be offended with God is that He can ask us to do something that we don't want to do.

And we can be offended. We can carry a personal grudge against God because God is asking us to go somewhere we don't want to go. I think about Jonah in the Bible.

His beef was not with the Ninevites, it was with God. You see that in the end. How could you? How could you? I knew this is what you were going to do.

And his offense was with God. He had an offense with God. I think about not only that, but those disciples when Jesus, they were offended with Him.

When Jesus said, if you don't eat my body and drink my blood, you're not worthy to be my disciple. And really what He was saying is if you don't yield up your rights to God, if you don't yield up your rights to me and let me take you places where you don't want to go, you have no right to call yourself a disciple. And they were offended at that saying, the Bible says.

They were offended at Jesus. And it says they were offended, that's the word that they used, and they didn't follow Him anymore from that day forward. And there are Christians that stopped serving the Lord because they were offended.

Because He asked them to give up something that they didn't want to give up. I know a police officer. I met him very early on in the stages of my life.

He was mightily used of God as a police officer. He loved the police force. He loved it.

And he had a passion and a zeal and he was giving his life up to evangelize. And many, many other men were being brought to the Lord through this man's testimony. But then the Lord started to ask him to give up himself and to do something different than what he thought he wanted to do.

And he was offended with God. And to this day, he's locked in bitterness. He's locked up in a prison house of bitterness because he got offended with God.

Because his idea went against what God's plan was for his life. And he couldn't fit that into it. He couldn't receive that word.

And we have to guard against that as Christians. When God asks us to do something that's impossible or that is not convenient for ourselves, that we don't get offended with the one that's asking us to do it. How can we be offended with him who gave everything for us? How can we be offended when he gave everything, all that he had to pursue us and come after us? But this is a tool of the enemy to work on us and make that thing that we think that we're giving up so much larger than the ultimate plan of God.

Offended because God asks us to do something that we don't want to do. I've been there. I've been there.

Humble yourself. I don't want to humble myself. I'm right in this.

Humble yourself. No. And you get locked in your own thoughts and your own mind.

And then you get, and we'll talk about this a little bit later, but you justify yourself and you make yourself more righteous than God in your own arguments. I told you we're going to be challenged this morning. I hope you're, listen, this is not condemning.

We're going to be challenged because these are the weapons, the very real weapons of the enemy against us. Another way that Christians can be offended, spiritual people can be offended, is that the Lord doesn't allow us to have something that we desire. It's not a, maybe the Lord says, no, and we're offended at that, but I've served you all my life, but I've given myself up to you.

And the Lord says, no, I'm not going to allow you to have this. It's out of the realm of my will for your life. And we can be offended with the Lord and we can walk around with this offense towards God, not even realizing we can still pray.

We can still go to the word. We can still say that there's no hidden sin or not, but really secretly there's an offense towards God. Now, the example I have for that is Cain.

Cain, look at Cain. He desires, what he wanted to do was he wanted to offer God his way, his plan, his desire. And I said, no, that'll never do here.

That'll never do. Cain was offended and was very angry. God became very angry because it didn't line up with his desire.

And he became offended at God, became very offended. Now, it's important that we recognize this as a tool of the enemy. And when we recognize it to turn from it, as soon as we begin to recognize it.

And it's important that we do not settle down into a position where we begin to justify ourselves with an offense against God. You made me thus. You made me the way that I am.

This is really your fault. That's what Adam really sought to do when Eve failed. He failed instead of taking the blame on himself.

He said, the woman you gave, it wasn't about Eve. It was about God. You gave her to me.

He had an offense in his heart against God. And we must be careful. When we go through the dealings of the Lord and when God is dealing with us.

That we don't carry an offense towards the very one that is trying to help. And has the best, our best interest at stake in our lives. Another area that we can be, or another area where we can be offended is with leadership.

We go down the line, we go from the Lord, we go to his leadership. God appointed leadership. One of the worst things that can happen to a Christian is that they can be offended by someone in spiritual authority.

It can be spiritually devastating and very hurtful to be offended by someone that is counted to be a man or woman of God. And I've been there. Many people have a difficult time recovering from the wounds that have been afflicted either intentionally or unintentionally by a true shepherd.

It can be very difficult dealing with hurts caused by spiritual leaders. Many questions arise in our hearts and minds that are difficult to understand. How could someone so godly do something so wrong? How can God still anoint them and bless them? Does this error mean that they were wrong in everything they said and did before the hurt they caused? What should my response be to the pain that they have caused? These are all questions that arise when we are offended.

And I'm talking about legitimate offenses. I'm not talking about dreamed up things that generally happen that can generally be a genuine hurt in someone's heart. Even if they go unrecognized by a leader.

Genuine hurts that have been caused either intentionally or unintentionally. Let's address this first question. How could someone so godly do something so wrong? And these are all questions that you'll go through when you have been offended by someone in spiritual leadership.

And the simple answer to them, these are very simple answers to these questions. But we must remind ourselves of this. Let's the enemy get a foothold in our hearts and begin to drive a wedge between us and the body of Jesus Christ.

And ultimately, remember the attack is against you and God. Because if, you know, it's one thing, okay, I don't have any offenses of God, but I am offended by spiritual leadership. Whether you realize it or not, there's a wedge between you and God.

Because you are harboring an offense in your heart. How could someone so godly do something so wrong? Simple. Those in spiritual authority are human too.

Very simple. They're human too. And the same grace and the same, you know, the same grace that they give you to grow, you've got to give them to grow.

You've got to allow them the ability to be human. We fall into error when we do not allow leadership to be human. When we make them some sort of spiritual giant that is above any type of failure.

We are setting ourselves up to be hurt and to be wounded. Here's an example. Here's Noah.

I got a few examples. Noah, spiritual leader. God chose him to be the progenitor and the protector and the preserver of the human race.

God chose him. He was a spiritual leader. It said, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

God raised him up, chose him. And as soon as the flood abates, he plants a vineyard. He goes in and drinks wine.

Now, that doesn't mean that that was right. It just meant that he was human. Think about Abraham.

He lied. Twice. Two different occasions to two different kings.

He lied. That didn't mean that he wasn't spiritual. It just meant that he was human.

Think about Moses. Moses struck the rock, displayed his anger and wrath and misrepresented God to that whole people. David is a good example of someone that was human, that was put in spiritual authority.

Not because he was perfect, but because he had a perfect heart towards God. Peter. Think about Peter.

Think about what he did. You know, we don't like to maybe talk about this, but brother, that's Old Testament. Nobody behaved like that in the New Testament.

What about Peter? Harboring racial prejudice in his heart. Imagine if you were a Gentile sitting there at the meal with Peter and he jumps up and runs away from you like you're a leper. Because Jews come down and they see you eating with them.

You would be offended. You would be hurt. You would be wounded in your heart.

If someone displayed something that is uncharacteristic of Christ in a moment of weakness and hurt you, you could be offended. And if you're not careful, you can allow the enemy to drive such a wedge between you and God that you will never recover. We must remember that no leader is above human failure.

No leader is always right. No leader is perfect. We must recognize that no one in spiritual authority is perfect, though they may be given a position by God.

Position by God does not mean spiritual perfection. It means it is God's divine choice. That's God's choosing.

It's God's will. Doesn't mean they've arrived to some stature. And on the flip side of that, if we are put in a position of leadership, it does not mean that everything we say and do is God.

We must be open to be wrong. We must be open to the Word of the Lord. So it goes both ways.

But now we're talking about being on the receiving end of it. How can God... Here's another question. How can God still anoint them and bless them? Simple.

It is only by the grace of God that men and women are anointed. It's only by the grace of God. It's only by the grace of God.

I don't care how much they look like they have it together, even how much they may think they have it together. If there's any anointing or any godliness in that person's life, it's by the grace of God. It's by the grace of God.

Now, going back to Noah, it said Noah found grace in the sight of the Lord. That is what prepared him to be a leader or to be used of God. It was grace.

By grace we stand. By grace we serve in the church. By grace we lead in the church.

Only by grace. And when we begin to put false expectations under the people, we are not realizing that it's only by grace that that person is there. The grace of God.

David was still anointed king after his very bad decisions that affected others. How much... How would you like... Not just Bathsheba. I mean, that's an obvious one.

But what about 75,000 people dying because you make a wrong choice? How would you like that on your conscience? But yet it did not take away from the fact that by grace he was anointed to be king. God didn't rip him off of the throne because he made a bad judgment call. God still used him.

And God still uses and anoints those that are walking in that grace. It is hard to explain, but that's the grace of God. You're used of God because the grace of God is on your life.

There's nothing you can do about it. It's the same thing with leadership. Another question.

Does this error mean that they were wrong in everything they said and did before they caused hurt in my life? No. Human error does not negate any truth that was or is practiced or believed. When a leader hurts you, it does not mean that the word is wrong.

It means they are wrong. Right? Oh, that person that walked in truth and everything, they hurt me. It must mean that everything I've believed and built my life upon is wrong.

That's not so. It means they're wrong. It means, and that has happened.

They can preach it. They can tell it like it is truthfully, rightfully, and still make wrong judgment calls. This does not excuse them for their wrong, but it simply shows you can believe and say the right things, but not always practice it perfectly.

Right? Does that make sense to you? And so we have to remove ourselves and take a look when we're offended by those in spiritual authority and recognize just because that person does wrong doesn't necessarily believe everything that they believe and practice is wrong. It just means they're wrong. Maybe it's a false perception that they have, but not everybody all the time is going to practice perfectly what they believe.

Because we're human. Being a leader is not a sign of perfection. And we said this already.

Sometimes we put too much expectation on leaders. We must be careful not to lean too heavily upon them that we think they are flawless. Because God will show you their flaws so that your eyes will not be on that person, but they will be on the Lord.

What should my response be to the pain that they have caused? And I think this is the most important question that we can ask ourselves. The most important thing that we need to focus on when we are offended by a leader intentionally or unintentionally is making sure we respond correctly. I can't affect their decision.

I can't change what they've done. It's been done. But I can sure sweep around my own back door.

I can sure address the issues in my heart that arise when I'm hurt. And that is my responsibility. My responsibility is not to seek to change that person and do different.

My responsibility is to make sure that I honor God and be obedient to him. Firstly, we must recognize the enemy's devices to try and undermine spiritual authority in our lives. The enemy will try and bring a wedge between you and spiritual authority.

Bible says, smite the shepherd and the sheep will scatter. He will continually seek to smite the shepherd in your mind and heart to bring about confusion and chaos. If he can cause you to question spiritual authority through an offense that they have done, then he can bring confusion and chaos into your life and wreak havoc.

I've seen it. I've seen it. Wreak havoc and chaos in your life.

And you've got to recognize that as a tactic of the enemy. You have to. Or else you'll be taken away with it.

And your response will be wrong. So firstly, you need to recognize that the enemy is always moving against spiritual authority. Especially when they do wrong.

Secondly, we must understand that whether right or wrong, a leader's failure does not leave room for reprisal or revenge. Whether they were right or whether they were wrong. There's no room in this kingdom for reprisal or revenge.

We must remember that we are accountable to God for our own selves. And there is no excuse why we cannot forgive, even if the wrong done to us has brought us into a very dark time. Why? Because there's enough grace and strength found in the Lord to forgive.

There is. There's enough grace in God to forgive. I don't care what it is.

There's enough. There's enough grace in God to forgive. Let me give you an example.

The example I'm going to give you is. One where we'll see how far someone that has been anointed the Lord can go. And I'm going to use an extreme situation to bring out the fact that no matter how extreme the situation may be between you and someone in leadership, there is no justification for taking vengeance or harboring anger and bitterness.

Don't look at Saul and David. Now, this is an extreme thing. I mean, I don't know of any leader that's been anointed the Lord that has sought to kill another person.

It's under them. Maybe defamed them, maybe wound them, maybe ruin the reputation. But I've never found this.

I don't know of anyone that this has happened to other than in the context of God's word. This is an extreme situation. And the reason I'm doing that is to show you in an extreme situation, the most extreme that you can think of, there's grace to forgive.

Because the Bible says so. Saul was pursuing David and in his pursuit, he pressed David so sorely that David wound up in a place of darkness. Saul's persecution of David drove him into a wilderness where he felt alone and confused.

First Samuel 24, and he came to the sheep coats, by the way, where was a cave. And Saul went in to cover his feet. Now, David is pressed into a cave at this point.

This man is so jealous and envious, so demonically inspired that he is pushing. And this is an extreme case. But yet we'll see the outcome.

And David and his men remained in the sides of the cave. And the men of David said to him, Behold, the day of which the Lord said to thee, Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it shall seem be good to you. Then David arose and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily.

Saul didn't even know about it. And it came to pass afterward that David's heart smote him. Do you see the integrity? Do you see the integrity of a heart that is truly after God? This man was hunting his life.

He was persecuting him, pressing him sorely. And this man of God that had a heart after God went and cut off his skirt. And he didn't even notice it.

And took away something. And David's heart smote him. And that's the heart of the godly.

That when we begin to go in that realm of revenge and reprisal, we know we're stepping on unholy ground. We know that we're going apart from the character of God. And your heart smites you when you begin to go that way.

I've been there. I've been wronged. I've been hurt.

I've just cut a piece of their garment nobody'll even know. In my mind and in my heart, I just cut that piece off of them. And I can justify it because they've hurt me.

Least I can do is just, you know, uncover them just to let other people see his nakedness. Let other people see it. Maybe he won't see it, but I'm going to expose him.

I'm going to expose the weakness. And David's heart smote him. David understood that even God's anointed made mistakes.

And he refused to let his anger and hurt trump his responsibility before God to forgive. The enemy works against those that have been offended to vindicate themselves and even justify it as the Lord. And this is the voice of the enemy.

Listen to what these men said. Verse 4, it says this, And the men of David said to him, David, and in the cave you're going to hear if you've been offended and you've been put in the darkness, the devil's going to come to you. And he's going to say to you, go ahead.

It's okay. They've offended you. And in their moment of weakness, now's the time to act.

Now's the time to uncover them and expose them for who they are. And the voices come and even justify it. The Lord has delivered them into your hand.

God's using you to expose this person's weakness. God's using you to bring this person to change. And that's exactly what the devil does.

When you're offended by anyone, the devil will speak into your heart a list of reasons why you should be angry and bitter. David determined in his heart not to lift his hand against Saul and God honored him in the end. We must be careful to honor those that God has put over us, even when they hurt us.

Forgiveness does not mean that you agree with them. It means that you honor God in the position that God has placed them in. Whether they realize it or you feel like they're... My position with God, my walk with God is much more important to me than carrying around a list of litany of things that people have done to me.

If we're living there, we're living far below what God has for us. We are to walk in forgiveness. We are to walk in a place of forgiveness.

And this is challenging because this goes against our nature. It goes against who we are. And especially when someone in spiritual authority offends us, we feel like we have a right to respond.

But God takes the right of response out of our hands. Thirdly, we must not seek to uncover their faults and failures before others. And what I'm going to show you is God's view towards leadership.

Because sometimes when we're in the fray, we can think that we're totally justified in what we're doing. And we wind up fighting against God. I want to show you this.

Look in Genesis 9 through 23. Here's a leader. His weakness is made apparent.

And it says, And Noah began to be in husbandment, and he planted a vineyard, and he drank of the wine and was drunken, and he was uncovered within his tents. He was naked. And I just think about that at a time of weakness.

A time when this person has failed. A time when this person has failed God even. And not been or lived up to certain expectations.

And he's naked. He's in a vulnerable place. He's in a vulnerable place.

Everybody knows he's naked. Everybody... But look at this. Look at what happens.

And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brethren without. Here's the temptation. The temptation that if we're not careful we can fall into is to find pleasure in disclosing the faults and failures of leadership.

I knew he was in awe that he said he was. Look at him. And he comes out and he tells his brethren.

He comes out and he says, Dad's in there naked and drunk. Instead of covering him, he dishonors him. And he exposes his faults again.

And the temptation of the devil is to rehearse the things that leaders have done to you. And if we're not careful, that's what our pain will do. It'll cause us just to rehearse it over and over like a broken record.

And they did this. And over and over again to many different people. Over and over again.

And to have an ear for that. Over and over again. Over and over again.

And you get on the devil's treadmill. And all of a sudden it becomes about what they've done to you. All of a sudden it becomes about their nakedness and their faults.

And that's all that your spiritual conversation. But this is what they've done to me. And I've seen this happen.

And I've almost been there on that treadmill. Thank God. God has lifted me off of it.

But then we become so focused on that, that it just becomes everything we talk about. It's all that we're consumed by. The connotation in this verse is that Ham delighted in finding fault with his father and received a great deal of pleasure from disclosing to his brethren his father's weakness.

It's interesting that God reproved Ham instead of Noah. God never reproved Noah in this. Isn't that something? God reproved this man because he did something.

He took advantage of a weakness and began to disclose that to his brethren. And I like what his brothers do. They go in.

And instead of shaming him, they bring in. They bring. I know that my father's drunk.

I know that he's a leader. I know that. But right now he's weak.

He's made some bad choices. And instead of exposing him, I'm going to go in. And I'm not even going to look at his nakedness as that brother did.

I'm going to go in. I'm going to cover because the Bible says love covers a multitude of sins. Love covers.

Vengeance uncovers time and time again. And we can even disguise it in spiritual words. Oh, I love that person.

But they've done this, this and this and this. And I've been there. And I've done that.

But there really is no justification for it in the sight of God. We must, as long as we do that, we're never going to receive the grace from the Lord to forgive that person and to walk in unity. As long as we're on that treadmill.

And remember, keep in mind, it's the devil against you because that person can go on. Noah can go on. His life will go on.

God will use him and he'll go on. And you'll be stuck on the same treadmill. But you did this to me.

But I've hurt this way and I've been this way. And you've done that. And you're running on the same treadmill.

And God is using that person. Remember, the slyness and the slickness of the enemy is to bring you onto that treadmill away from God. You can see that also in Abraham and Abimelech.

I'm not going to go into that story. But Abraham told a bold-faced lie. He lied.

It's not pretty, but it happened. In his fear and in his weakness, he lied. And he lied to a man named Abimelech.

And he said, this is not my wife, this is my sister. He even justified the reason that he did it. Totally self-justified.

And in this, he made a grave mistake out of fear. And throughout Abraham's life, he was a very fearful person, even though he was a great man of faith. And that sometimes can be hard to understand, of how someone can be such a great person of faith, but at the same moment, there's very much fear operating in their life.

It was fear that caused Abraham to offend Abimelech. There was no evil intent in his heart. But Abimelech had a choice to make, and he made the right choice by blessing Abraham.

He made the right choice. He does go to him and say, why did you do this? You know, it was wrong. But God's spoken to me in it.

He got with God. And the Lord said, I know that you've been offended. I know that you've done that.

And the proper thing to do is to bless them. And he blessed them. And it says, and Sarah was reproved.

So even in our blessing and our giving, and our going out of our way to cover and to show the life of Christ, it can begin to open the eyes of those who operate in such a thing. God will not move. And then the other thing, we must have the heart of God.

Now, that's leadership. Let's talk about others, not only spiritual leadership, but others. And we may not even get through one today.

Others, offenses, offenses, others. Proverbs 27, 17 says, iron sharpens iron. So a man sharpens the countenance of his friends, right? Sometimes the Lord uses others to challenge us in areas that we need to grow in.

Iron sharpens iron. This means that sometimes the sparks are going to fly, right? Intense fellowship is going to ensue with that brother, sister, and the Lord. There's going to be contention.

There's going to be the opportunity there to either grow or to be hardened in a position of obstinance and disunity towards that person. And that the choice lies at our door, not at theirs, but at our door. What are you going to do with this offense? Where are you going to carry it to? This means sometimes the sparks are going to fly in our relationships as we are sharpened in the image of Christ.

And we must be careful how we handle our attitudes. We must be careful in the sharpening process that we do not become doiled to the prodding of the Holy Spirit when he urges us to forgive. Even when we ourselves are not the ones at fault.

Did you know that forgiveness is not predicated on who's at fault? Forgiveness is a biblical Christian principle that we all must operate by. Not because it's convenient, not because it's easy, but because it's the way of the Lord. It's the way of the master.

The danger in continuing to hold on to wrongs done to us by others is that we can very easily become self-justified in our position and refuse to see our wrong and not being willing to forgive and forget. And I've been there. The warning in Ephesians 4, 26, don't let the sun go down on your wrath is a very serious warning.

This is a very simple command. Don't let the day pass you by with unforgiveness in your heart. I want to look beyond just the practical application of that, but I want to look even further to that because this is more than an admonition to forgive anyone that has wronged us before nightfall.

This is a warning to the believer that we are to forgive in the light lest we be left in the dark. You carry that unforgiveness in your heart. You go on and carry that offense in your heart while God continues to pour out His grace and continues to speak to it.

There'll come a time where you will ease into darkness and your eyes will be blinded and you won't even know you'll become so self-justified. And I've been there and I've been here and I've had to deal with this that we can become so self-justified that we don't see our own part in the issue or in the matter. And the list of everything that that person has done to us drapes over our head and shuts our ears.

And locks us in. And if we're not careful, we can fall into darkness. We can be deceived into thinking that God is on our side.

When God's not taking any side, He said, you're both wrong. You both need to get right. Because this isn't the way that it should be, right? That's the heart of God.

Unforgiveness births a very dark cloud of spiritual darkness upon the soul. It blackens the heart the longer it stays and robs the heart of true fellowship with God. True fellowship with God.

It robs the heart of true fellowship with God. We must be careful not to let the wrongs done to us become a list of reasons why we can't or shouldn't forgive. Stay away from self-justification.

Be open to the Holy Spirit. Am I wrong in this? What are you saying to me in this? What is my part in this? If we're not careful, we can insulate ourselves with our arguments and then the Lord can't even reach us. You can be so insulated with your arguments that God can't even reach you.

It's true. I've seen it. It's happened to me.

I'm talking about me. This message, if it doesn't go to you, it's for me for sure. But we can be so insulated.

David said, my enemies are insulated in their own fat. And what he means by that is they are so insulated and they're so justified in their own cause that God can't even reach them to turn them around. And if we're not careful, we can become the same way.

Insulated in our own. But he did this. But they did this.

But, but, and we get insulated and more and more until the Lord can't even pierce through. Another area where offense can come. Another person that we can be offended with.

We're going to bring this right home now as we close. I'm not even going to get to number two. Sorry, Pastor Tim.

But I promise we'll close on time. It's self. How many of you carry an offense with yourself? I mean, God is one thing.

Leadership. I've never dealt with that. Some of you may say other people I've really never, but self.

Here's some areas where we can have offended, be offended in ourself and carry an offense or a self-hatred. A self-hatred that is unhealthy. Now there is a certain agreement with God that we despise the evil that we find in our own hearts.

And every godly person, godly heart will despise that evil. But it's not to the point that we become to hate ourselves. To where we discredit all the work that God has done in our life.

The first area of offense that could come with self is personal failure. One of the greatest areas of offense comes from our own lives. We find it hard to forgive ourselves for things that we have done and mistakes that we have made.

We can get frustrated with ourselves because all we see is our own inability and frailty. There are some Christians that have no problem forgiving others, but they walk around under a self-condemning voice and cloud. There may even be some here today that need to find the grace of God to forgive yourself.

If you are born again, you have no right to hold anything against yourself because God has forgiven you. You have no right. You don't even belong to yourself.

Who can condemn you? You can't even condemn yourself. Your heart can't even condemn yourself before. You're not your own.

You cannot discredit what God has done in your life. You can't even be offended by your own failure. And I think a lot of times when we're offended by our own failures because we have a self-inflated view of ourselves.

And when we fail, we just act like it's the end of the world and we hate ourselves. But it all comes out of a wrong view of self. It's either self-inflated or self-deflated, either one.

It's not a proper view of what God has done for us. When you have a proper view of yourself, you can fail. Get up and dust yourself off and continue to walk with the Lord.

And you're not offended. And you have no problem receiving the grace of God to walk with him. God says, you're holy.

Yes, Lord, I'm holy. I'm not arguing with God. I hate myself.

What right have you to hate yourself? If God has made you holy, you're holy, right? The second area of offense, lack of spiritual growth. We're going to close with this one. Oftentimes, Christians can settle down into a place of grace and discouragement when they do not see their own growth.

The devil is a master at making you feel small and insufficient. You can become self-loathing when you focus too much on your own spiritual lack and get caught in a whirlpool of unbelief. The devil will always be pointing out someone that seems to have it all together.

How do we escape that? Firstly, we must remember that it is unwise to compare ourselves with others. When you go down that road, you're going to get some bruises. And you begin to look at some, well, Pastor Tim, and he is such a meek man.

And I am just so proud. And I've just got all these issues. Oh, my God, you know, on and on and on.

I'm looking and I'm constantly comparing myself with him. But that is unwise, the Bible says. It does detriment to the work of God in your life.

Secondly, we are not the best judge of whether we are growing or not. Because when you think that you're all that, you're not all that. Sometimes when you think that you're not growing at all, you're making leaps and bounds in God.

Sometimes it's very difficult to determine from where we stand if we are truly growing in grace. Thirdly, we must see that God is the author and the finisher of our faith. God didn't ask you to write your own story.

He didn't ask you to, this is not an autobiography. This is a biography. This is God writing on the pages of this book, not you.

And we're to trust him to write the story. From the beginning to the end, it says he's going to write the beginning. He's going to complete it all the way to the end.

And we must trust him to do that. Fourthly, spiritual growth is not our focus. Amen.

You know, we go in the mirror, you go to the gym, you go there, oh, they got mirrors all around. Why? Because people want to see how they want to encourage themselves by the growth. And that's the focus, self.

But it's opposite here. The more you focus on self, the less you grow. The more you focus on Christ, the more you grow.

So our focus is not on how much I'm doing this and how much our focus is on Christ. And the more we love him, the more we grow. Christ is the focus.

A runner cannot get so focused on his performance that he forgets what he is running for. Hebrews 12, 1 and 2. Wherefore, seeing also we are compassionate about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us. Let us run with patience the race that is set

before us, looking to Jesus.

Didn't say looking at your legs, how strong they are. Didn't say looking at your cardiovascular system and flexing your spiritual muscles and I need to work on my biceps. I need to work on this.

I need to look to Jesus. Because if you're running for your own performance, you're going to trip and fall. But as you focus on him, you're going to be strong in the race.

Because it's all about him and running to him. Stand with me this morning. We didn't even get to the second part.

Maybe we'll have some time. Would you like to hear the other ones? Or maybe we will, Pastor Tim. I don't know if we can arrange that.

Praise the Lord. These are obstacles that we face. Offenses is the first one.

Second one, we're going to talk about change. And the third one is familiarity with Christ. Those are some of the challenges that we face that the enemy will use to hinder you.

Remember, it's not about a person. It's not about it. It's about you and your walk with God.

Hallelujah, Jesus. We're going to pray together. We all do.

It's time to lay your burden down, your sword down. Think about what rejection can do to a people. Think about Ishmael.

And I know you've used this before, but he was rejected by Abraham. That's another good example. Abraham was rejected by Ishmael.

He made a mistake. Had to put him out of his house. And the Bible says that he was an angry and a wild man.

And his sword was against every. And there may be something against every man, the Bible says. And the world is still reeling from that rejection with radical Islam and all.

They trace their roots back to Ishmael. So you see the danger of continuing to harbor offense. It's just a cycle over and over again.

It's time to break the cycle. I don't care what it was in your life. But I've been through some things in my life.

Thank God by His grace, He's given me the ability to forgive. Different things, different hurts by family, by parents. It'd be very easy to just continue that cycle.

Continue that cycle and get angry at people. And put up walls against people. And use the swords so nobody gets close to your heart.

It's time to lay your swords down this war and no more. The Bible says when you come to this kingdom, Jesus' kingdom, it says they beat their swords into plowshares. In other words, God says you're going to lay down your offenses.

And you're going to become productive and fruitful. Instead of an element of war, instead of an implement of war, excuse me, you're going to be an implement of fruit bearing and change. And you're going to help others.

So this morning, just lay down your sword. When you leave this altar this morning, just picture your sword on the altar. No more.

Even against yourself. No more self-loathing. Put that devilish, filthy spirit out of your life.

God, what God has cleansed, no man can call him clean. No man, including yourself. Hallelujah.

God looks at you and says you're clean. I find no spot in thee, the Lord says. Hallelujah.

Put down the sword of self-loathing. Put down the sword of offense. But if you're angry at God, put down the sword of anger.

That you shake in the heavens. The questionings and everything that goes with it. Put it down this morning.

And ask for the grace of God to forgive. Let's pray. Father, we come before you in the mighty and holy name of Jesus.

This is a challenging word because this is what we deal with every day. And God, every person at this altar is a person of the word. They're a person of prayer.

There's no hidden sin. God, they may deal with things in their heart that only you know about. But they're not harboring secret sin.

They're not living in secret indulgent iniquity. But God, they're dealing with some sort of offense. Something that the enemy is magnifying to cut their supply off with you.

Whatever it is. Father, today we cut the enemy off by faith. Lord, we lay down our swords and say no more.

No more war. I'm not going to study war anymore. I'm not going to figure out this thing with God.

I'm yielding my rights up to the Lord. And God, we want to begin with you. Forgive us if we've been angry at you.

Because you've allowed things into our life. You've taken us down a pathway that may not be what we had thought you should. Or where you thought we thought you should take us.

Lord, we give you the right today. We lay that down. We give you the right to direct our life.

And to take us into those hard areas. And give us grace, Lord. To walk with you.

Even when we don't understand sometimes. Lord, we know your nature is good. And we receive everything at your hand.

That it comes through much mercy and grace. And Father, those that have offenses towards spiritual leadership. Father, I pray they would hear this word.

And they would lay down their weapon. They would never pick it up again. Not even rehearse anything that's been done to them ever again.

God, rid us of this thing. It's a plague in the body of Christ. Father, rid us, God, of petty, petty fault finding.

Of enumerating time and time again everything that's been done. Lord, teach us to be mature. Teach us and help us, God, to be mature.

Even with others. Not even in spiritual. Sometimes we just rehearse the faults of others.

God, that's petty. Help us, Lord, to keep our mouths quiet and to forgive. And to build bridges of reconciliation with those, God, that have offended us.

And to love beyond even their ability to recognize the wrong they've done. God, give us that kind of grace at this altar. And help us to forgive ourselves.

Show us the plan. Help us to relax, God, in You. And to focus once again on You, Christ.

Because You're the author and the finisher of our faith. Lord, we leave at this altar every sort of offense. And we stand, God, empty-handed to praise and worship You in Jesus' name.

Let's stand together. Lift your hands up to heaven. Nothing in your hands any longer.

By faith. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/18/SID18913.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/hamp-sirmans/a-challenge-to-all-who-call-on-the-name-of-the-lord-part-1/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net