

# The Blessedness of the Unoffended

by Mose Stoltzfus

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of refusing to be offended and mastering the strength of overcoming offense in order to follow God's will.*

**Duration:** 1:07:06

**Scripture:** Psalm 119:165, Matthew 11:1

**Topics:** "Unoffended"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of John the Baptist and his moments of doubt and discouragement while in prison. Despite having boldly proclaimed Jesus as the Lamb of God and introducing him to the people, John found himself stuck in prison and wondered why Jesus didn't come to rescue him. Jesus responded by telling John's disciples to report back to him about the miracles they witnessed, such as the blind receiving sight, the lame walking, and the dead being raised. The preacher emphasizes the importance of not being offended or discouraged in our faith, using examples from the Bible and encouraging listeners to have patience and confidence in God's promises.

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## Transcript

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A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Greetings to all in the name of Jesus again this morning. Well, Brother Don, I appreciated the opening meditation this morning and truly an often necessary reminder that we need to realize the power of the tongue and its effect on our lives.

I think many of us here have had lessons in that in the past half year, especially and know the effect of some of those things and have needed to bow our hearts before God and man in those areas. But this morning I'd like to speak about another very deep emotion that resides in the human heart often and pops up over and over again too. We would like to look at that this morning as we preach this message.

The title of my message is Blessedness of the Unaffended. Now, you have to excuse me as I get older. When I look at a message like this or I get an inspiration like this, I think about that I must have heard something, maybe someone else preach the message not, you know, in the last couple of months that used some of these phrases or scriptures or at least talked about it.

But for myself, I don't remember whether it was here or there or somewhere else. So you'll just have to bear with me if I'm repeating this message from someone else who has preached it not that long ago. Sometimes I have a hard time remembering five, six days later what I preached on last Sunday.

And so that's just part of getting older, I guess, for myself. So please bear with me there. The word offense or offend, I'd like to describe a bit here.

It comes from the word off-ended. And it really means about what it looks like or sounds like there that it simply means that someone has shifted from this point over to the other end of things. He is now thinking different.

He has pulled his heart back from the support perhaps of the group or of the individual who has offended him. And he has drawn that back and put it off at the other end. And in some case, the word means off the deep end too or off the end completely because we can be offended to the point of stumbling.

Because one of the words that is synonymous with offend is to stumble. We have that in the Old Testament and also in the New where we have a rock of offense, a stone of stumbling being used numerous times in the New Testament and some in the Old that is referring to this whole thing about being offended. So it's a deep inner emotion that seems to rise up in the human heart when somebody has been hurt or confronted or spoken to or maybe it can often come in money matters where a brother doesn't pay his bills or we are slanted or just not treated what we think would be the way we should be treated and therefore we take this emotion, rises up inside of us and we draw back and go to the other end is often what's happened.

And truly it is the reason many people break friendships, break relationships and in the world break marriages and in the church leave churches and all those things and hold off times hard feelings or grudges against the individual who has caused the offense. Now, a little bit more on the word. A New Testament usage of these words deserves special attention.

This comes from ISBI, International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. The word most frequently translated, offend, in the King James Version is scandalizo which I would guess is where our word scandal comes from too but it's a word scandalizo or scandalon. Offense, very frequent in the Gospels.

If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off. If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out. This is if thy right hand or eye scandalon or scandalize you then you get rid of it so it doesn't drag you to hell is what it means there in Matthew chapter 5. Whosoever offends shall offend one of these little ones that believe on me.

That's another way that the word is used. Matthew 13, 41, all things that offend. And then also Luke 17, 1, it is impossible but that offenses will come.

In our interaction with one another, we cannot totally avoid this emotion to occasionally rise up because we rub shoulders with one another and we treat each other in certain ways where we wouldn't have any idea or any intention that any of this happens but it does happen and so we know that it is something that we must deal with. Romans 16, 17, mark them which cause divisions and offenses. We are to mark those

that cause them unnecessarily, we should say.

And then also we have in Peter talking about the stone of stumbling and the rock of offense in 1 Peter 2. Now let me clarify from the beginning that this whole matter is both a good thing and a bad thing. That's why I mentioned that we should not offend unnecessarily, especially not in the brotherhood. We should try there and protect each other in a loving and gracious way so that we don't unnecessarily cause offenses to one another and have people withdraw from the church or from us or go to the other end as it says, offended.

But on the other hand, we recognize that there are many right and just offenses caused in the word of God. Jesus had people offended by the thousands around him. He fed 5,000 one day and they all walked away from him the next because of things that he would say that they didn't like and so they would go to the other end when they were all for him as long as he was feeding them and giving them fish and bread to eat and taking care of their hunger.

They came to his end but as soon as he talked to them about eating his flesh and drinking blood, they went to the other end and they were done with him and wanted to walk away. And so we have a real thing and today I'm sensing, I guess it's due to the psychological effect that is upon us in our society. We are often made to feel that if an offense occurs, we are guilty automatically and everybody is looking for the individual quickly to go and patch it up or make it right or apologize for it so that the offense can be removed and be cleared out.

But that is not what we're talking about here. We say there is a right way, in other words, truth can be given and facts can be given at times about each other or to the world, especially so to sinners and they are offended because of the facts, because of the truth, because somebody told them that they have no hope if they continue walking in the way that they're walking and that they're going the wrong way and they are offended at that and therefore draw back and as it says, they become off-ended, they go to the other end. They don't want to talk to you anymore and they walk away and they don't want to visit you anymore because of some of the things that were talked about.

And so, somehow the only way to, we want to look at scripture here and try to take some direction from that but the only way I can say to know the difference between the two, between the right and the wrong of this emotion in our life, we need the Holy Spirit of God, I think, to help us to get through it and to help us find. Many times we are offended when we're convicted. When conviction comes, we hear something we actually need to hear and we're a bit, we bristle at it, we're offended, we start drawing off to the other end with the thing but it's actually a message that we need to hear and so may God help us not to be offended.

Now, let's read some scriptures here. I'd like to read out of 2 Kings chapter 2 and I'd like to speak about two different men's lives who certainly could have easily been offended by godly men and men with good intentions. 2 Kings chapter 2, verse 1 And it came to pass, when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee, for the Lord hath sent me to Bethel. And Elisha said unto him, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel.

And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head today? And he said, Yeah, I know it, hold ye your peace. And Elisha said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee, for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho. And

he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.

So they came to Jericho. And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head today? And he answered, Yeah, I know it, hold ye your peace. And Elisha said unto him, Elisha, tarry, I pray thee here, for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan.

And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And the two went on. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood to view afar off.

And the two stood by Jordan. And Elisha took his mantle and wrapped it together and smote the waters. And they were divided hither and thither, so that the two went over on dry ground.

And it came to pass, when they were going over, That Elisha said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing.

Nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee. But if not, it shall not be so. And it came to pass, as they still went on and talked, That, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, And parted them both asunder.

And Elisha went up by a whirlwind into heaven. Over in Psalms, as we go past here on our way to the New Testament, I will stop at Psalms 119, 165. Great peace have they that love thy law, And nothing, nothing shall offend them.

And then if I could turn over to Matthew chapter 11, And I want to read a very precious scripture that I have, Has become a very enjoyable scripture to me, And I've appreciated so much the lessons learned from it, In the years, latter years here of my Christian life. Chapter 11 of Matthew. And it came to pass, verse 1, When Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, He departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

And when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, He sent two of his disciples and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? And Jesus answered and said unto him, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, And the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, And the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed, notice this verse, Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.

And then over in, I want to read yet a portion in Hebrews chapter 10, Verse 32 through 36. Hebrews chapter 10, verse 32 through 36. But called to remembrance the former days, In which after ye were illuminated, Ye endured a great fight of afflictions.

Notice the willingness here to suffer and to bear the cross In the early days of our conversion. Partly whilst ye were made a gazing stock, Both by reproaches and afflictions, And partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, And took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, Knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven A better and enduring substance.

Cast not away therefore your confidence, Which has great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, That after ye have done the will of God, He might receive the promise. It's hard for me to stop there, But he says, yet a little while, He that shall come will come and will not tarry.

And the just shall live by faith, But if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them which draw back on the perdition, But of them that believe to the saving of the soul. And here we have a description of a full offense.

Now if we go back to our original text in 2 Kings chapter 2, And we want to look at the situation here with Elisha and Elijah. Now Elisha was a man that I, as I studied this, I began to think of him in light of the scripture where the Bible teaches Jesus saying that the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force. That's how I view Elisha.

He was a godly man and he looked up to Elijah, which I believe was older and was a mighty prophet in the land at that time. And he was enamored, more than enamored, probably even to the point I would say called of God, that he should follow in that man's footsteps. And it was revealed to him, or he believed the word that came from the sons of the prophets or from other, maybe from Elijah himself, that he was going to go away and that he was going to go to heaven that day.

And it seems like all the sons of the prophets and everybody around there that was a godly man knew that at that time. That Elijah was going to leave. And Elisha purposed in his heart that he would have wanted a double portion of Elijah's spirit.

Elijah told him it was a hard thing. But as you go down through this, you know, he was tested to the very core of this emotion that we're talking about here this morning. The fact as to whether we allow ourselves the luxury or the privilege of becoming offended at something that humanly in brotherhood relationships would normally offend people very easily.

Because the first thing that happened here as the two got together and Elijah came, Elisha came to Elijah and they had this little discussion here that Elijah said to Elisha, Terry here, I pray thee, he says, and the Lord has sent me to Bethel. And now you know how many people would respond to something like that. He wanted to be with him.

He wanted a double portion of his spirit. He had hope, perhaps, to maybe get the mantle or maybe that was just a fringe benefit later on, I'm not sure. But he was desiring to enter into prophecy a double portion of what Elijah had.

And Elijah looks at him and says, you stay right here. The Lord wants me to go over to Bethel. I just want you to stay here.

And the normal response for men in that situation would have been, all right, if that's the way you feel, then I'm going to go away. Maybe, who was it? Elijah that was plowing with twelve yoke oxen or was it Elisha? Maybe he would have said, well, I'm going to go back to farming. Or maybe I'm going to go back to hunting or fishing or some other thing, you know.

If that's the way you're going to act. But no, like I said, the kingdom of heaven suffered violence and the violent took it by force. He pressed on and said, as my soul liveth, and as God is alive, kind of a form of swearing here, he said, I'm not going to leave you.

I'm going with you. Well, he talked and walked for quite a distance and got over there to Bethel. And when he got to Bethel, he said, now I want you to stay here.

I'm supposed to go over to Jericho. And what? You're trying to get rid of me again? You're pushing me away? You don't want me to go with you? What's with you? You know, those are the kind of reactions and emotions that come up many times in the carnal human heart. But he wouldn't have it.

And of course, Elijah accepted the pressing on real easily. And he said, as my soul liveth, and as I soul liveth, I'm not going to leave you. I'm going to go on with you.

Well, okay, he took him along over to Jericho. And when he got over to Jericho the third time, he said, now I want you to stay right here. And I'm moving on.

I'm going over to Jordan. And I don't know the distance of these, but I know it was some distance between these places. If you look it out on the map, I should have checked it out, that I could give the approximate miles.

So they walked and talked. And when they got over there to Jordan, then he wanted again to have him stay there. And he was going to cross over Jordan and go his way.

And once again, Elijah wouldn't have it. He wouldn't accept it. He wouldn't accept the apparent rejection.

Now, as I view this matter, I believe this was a test, as a test upon Elijah's life, excuse me, a test upon Elijah's life to see whether he had the endurance, whether he had the violence or the pressing in to the kingdom of God. Or, as I read over in Psalms 119, 165, that he absolutely refused to be offended. And it's just a wonderful picture here, I believe, of a Christian life and how it ought to be in our brother's lives.

You know, things come up. We have financial dealings. We have personal dealings.

We have visits. Words get said sometimes where we violate the Scripture or what Brother Don said. And the next thing we say, well, I guess if that's the way it is, I'm not going back there again.

And you hear people make those statements. Or they'll visit a church and they'll say, I'm not going to set foot in that place again. You know, and I'm not here, I'm not talking about, there aren't apostate or churches that are off, they are truly off the rocker and away from Scriptural truth where we have to draw away.

But I think even all of us should never make the statement, you know, that we will never set foot anywhere again. Because we believe in change. We believe in the ability for God to teach us lessons.

And we believe in the ability for us to repent and heal relationships and then go back and visit them again or set foot in that church again and so on. So, I think we should be very, very careful that as this emotion from the flesh would want to arise in our heart, that we are man enough to say, no way, I'm not going to give place to this. I'm going to do what's right and I'm going to follow the Lord and I will refuse to be offended in life.

I think it is a choice that we can make. It is not something that we just have to give in to this emotion that is so strong and so overwhelming that we just allow it to overtake us and say, alright, I've had enough of that. And we act so carnal and so in the flesh at times and allow that emotion to take place in our life.

In this case with Elijah and Elisha, the possibility of being offended was great. I mean, he laid all kinds of a test here that if he would have allowed that emotion just to take over, it would truly take over many where the opportunity is there. And temptation to Elijah was not sin.

We need to remember that. Did you know that? Temptation to do wrong or to allow an emotion like that to come forth is not sin. It is the committing of it.

We can see the temptation. We can actually have the feelings starting to come a bit. And we feel them and we think, my, it doesn't sound like he really loves me.

Or he doesn't really want me along. Or he doesn't want me to go to the mission field. Or on and on we could go, you know, and we can become offended because we're not included or we're not chosen or we're not voted for or we're not ordained.

All of these things can happen in church life. But blessed is the man or blessed, as I said in my title, are the unoffended, the ones who will not go to the other end and take and nurse that attitude and therefore begin to make strong derogatory statements concerning the individual, which here would have been the great prophet Elijah for being offended. And I believe that to master that is a strength that we need in life to be able to overcome that.

I think, I remember, a brother had given me that way back in my fairly early married life. I met him somewhere and he told me, I simply refuse to be offended. And it became something that I looked at and considered and realized that that is a right thing to refuse to be offended at how I am treated or neglected or not counted, not invited to be along or all of those things that happen in brotherhood relations that we just refuse that.

But the other thing also that is very, very necessary in this whole matter that we do not think it wrong to offend, that we become so careful that we can't witness, we can't preach the gospel, we can't say what needs to be said, we can't preach on sin because we're so afraid that somebody's going to be offended and won't like it and stomp out of there or give us a piece of their mind and humiliate us and make derogatory comments concerning how mean we are to tell somebody what they need to hear. We also must be very, very careful on that side of things that we do not try to live a life that never offends anyone. I've tried to describe that different times and I realized that an individual who tries to live that way and walk that tightrope never says anything.

He never confronts people with the truth. It's about the way it seems to come about if we are so extra careful never to make any statements that will bring an offense. How many Christians lose the divine will of God and give up altogether because of these kind of things? They are so easily offended.

And we often have in church life used the comment or the statement be careful, you have to walk on eggshells around that one or the other one, you know, or you have to handle them with kid gloves, we'll say. And these are statements sometimes or comments we make because someone is so easily offended and is so quick ready to not have anything to do with you anymore. Now let us turn to the one over in Matthew chapter 11.

And this is a very, very interesting one too. It has to do with the Lord Jesus Christ and John the Baptist. Well, you remember my reading here.

I don't have to read it all again. But here, Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples. He was ready for his earthly ministry.

And basically, he was finished with John the Baptist. And through divine providence, he allowed John the Baptist to get into prison. Now, I know the Lord Jesus could have prevented that just like they came after

him and he just would go through the midst and blind their eyes or whatever and they wouldn't catch him before his time was to be taken to Jerusalem to die.

Even though they tried it many times to cast him down a steep hill or off a cliff somewhere or they tried to catch him at other times and he would just somehow mingle through the crowd and blind their eyes that they wouldn't be able to see it. And I'm sure that the Lord could have done that if he wanted to save John the Baptist. But he allowed John the Baptist to get into prison.

Now, here John was sitting there. And I'm not able to say how long John sat in prison. Does somebody know? Do you have any idea? Has anybody ever studied out as to how long John the Baptist sat in prison? I don't know either.

But it doesn't seem like a long time. It seems like he prepared the way of the Lord and he was a voice crying the wilderness. He baptized Jesus.

Jesus began his earthly ministry. Called his twelve disciples. Began to do all kinds of miracles everywhere he went.

And John was put into prison. And as he sat there unfulfilled. Nothing happening anymore.

Not part of the crowd. Not seeing the fulfillment of that which he introduced. You remember how he saw Jesus coming and said, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

He actually boldly proclaimed to him who he was and introduced him to the general populace around there. And he had told people to repent of their sins. He had baptized them for their repentance.

And he got everything ready. And now he gets stuck in prison. If there ever would have been a man who could have been offended at the whole situation, it would have been John the Baptist.

When his disciples came to him there in prison and told him some of the things that are happening and all the miracles that are taking place, he actually wavered a little bit. It seems we see his humanity there. And he sent his disciples over to where Jesus was working and doing miracles and preaching the gospel to the poor and all those things.

And he said, Art thou he that should come or do we look for another? There was just that little bit of doubt that probably had to do with sitting in the dungeon of a prison. Maybe he was on bread and water or at least not a very good diet. And he got a bit discouraged, maybe a bit heavy there, thinking here I introduced all this and I'm not sure anymore.

I wonder if this, I mean why doesn't he come and get me out of here? Or why doesn't he, why didn't he prevent this from happening so I could also be included and see the wonderful works that were being done in all the various cities around Jerusalem and Judea there. Jesus answered and said unto them in verse 4, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see. The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear.

The dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. And I believe the Lord Jesus knew all the possibilities of that happening to John the Baptist.

There he sat, like I said, with nothing to do day after day and then yet awaiting his execution which he knew of course why he was in prison is because he had offended, he had rebuked sin in the life of Herod who had his brother Philip's wife and he told him it is not legal for him, not right for him to have her and that ended up getting him in prison and then of course when Herodias danced for him just because of that dance and she pleased Herod. Herod asked what she would like and she said she would like to have John the Baptist's head on a platter and therefore they took and beheaded him. But can you imagine the thoughts that would have come to him when maybe one of the guards would have told him you know John I think from what I'm hearing I believe tomorrow is your day and what he would have went through that night just stop and think of who he was and how he had the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb and how he had lived such a sacrificial life eating locusts and wild honey and living in the wilderness in rough clothing.

He never had a fancy set of clothing maybe in his life or a nice decent set of clothing but he lived a very coarse and rough life and he lived out there in the wilderness and yes people come to him and he ministered to them and baptized them but he never got to see who he was pointing to. He never got to really see even though he saw Jesus you know and had a little connection with him but it seemed like he never got to see the fulfillment of that ministry come into fruition and the wonderful powerful miracles being fulfilled because the first 30 years I do not believe that Jesus did miracles because the beginning of miracles started there when he turned water into wine in Cana and so it was extra necessary.

If you think of him sitting there in that prison cell that last day or last night that he was before his execution and realized that the word is out there that they are going to come for him and all the things that could have went through his mind he could have thought why is this happening to me John after all that I did I announced his birth or rather I announced his ministry I led the people to repentance I did all that and now I am left out I am just totally forgotten and here I sit languishing in prison and I hear they are going to kill me and as they come to get him even the next day and took him out those steps slowly opened the gate for the last time there to let him out of prison and led him to the place of the execution and he saw the axe and he saw the man standing there ready

to take his head off and all that took place and Jesus had warned him blessed John blessed are those that will not be offended in me and I believe John took that scripture to heart and I believe he settled in his heart and like in Psalms 119 Mark 19, 165 says and he determined by God's grace not to be offended knowing that all of eternity he believed in heaven he believed in eternity everything was in order and I believe he knew that all that would be put in its rightful place in that day Jesus even talked to him of men born among women there never was a greater than John the Baptist but yet he said he that is at ease in the kingdom of God is greater than he we were just having a discussion on that on the phone the other night and what that may mean and that might be an interesting

subject for our testimony time but he didn't see all those things come to pass he didn't hear Jesus declare who John was to the public when John, the disciples of John came back and then he said he just declared openly to the people who John the Baptist was and how he was a burning and shining light and how that he was the greatest of all the prophets in history those kind of things so it's just a lesson to me again so much how an individual like that would have had so many opportunities to be offended and Jesus was kind enough to warn him not to go down that road now look at our own life and we have so many opportunities to do the same because there are simple times when we can establish it in our hearts we have not been treated right we can establish it over and over again we have not

been done right in a business deal it's a fact I could go and take him to court and probably win the case we even have lawyers telling us that sometimes oh you'd win hands down you know and things like that yet we have determined not to go to court and not to sue a man of the law who has mistreated us and so all those opportunities come up and that emotion is there to be offended and to go off the other end to the other end of the situation and try to get even or try to get righteousness done to us but no that is not what Jesus told John but rather gave this blessedness that we should not be offended in him now we know that the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ has promised us and that we should suffer for his name's sake and that we should be misunderstood by family and may at times have to

bring about a separation between husband and wife and parents and children and uncles and aunts and houses and lands have to be left behind we look back at our Anabaptists and Waldensian brothers in Europe when they left their properties it was a common thing to confiscate the property and to chase them out and to exile into the Alps or into the woods in the winter time or else just to confiscate the property and chase them into another area or confiscate the property and take the children away from them and put them in prison all these things are part of the Christian life and have happened over and over again to Christians this verse was not only spoken for John the Baptist this verse is spoken to all of us and I would have to say even in our situation in our time in our day these

things can be real and we think we have the right to suffer an offense and to go to the opposite end because of it but the Bible clearly says blessed are those that will not be offended in me we say sometimes life isn't fair you have to look at Matthew 15 verse 12 there are many scriptures on this subject then came his disciples and said unto him knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying this is of course again just referring to the fact that people also get offended at us not only do we have a struggle with the emotion at times wanting to rise in our lives but we hear through the ears many times you know you offended the disciples came to Jesus you know you offended those the Pharisees were offended when you told them what you told them yesterday you know

those kind of things happen over and over again if we are a Christian and we preach the word of God and we tell men the truth and we tell them what they need to hear we take a risk all the time that men will be offended and they'll never come back and then we feel like we made a big mistake and the relationship was broken because of us and today modern Christianity puts us on a guilt trip for it and we despair over the thing that has happened and maybe quickly try to patch it up and sometimes we do do wrong and we do handle people in a wrong way and need to apologize and we know that's true but there are times when we don't there are times when they need to hear the truth even though they couldn't handle it and walk away from us and so I just want to underscore that that that is also true

we are made to think offense is in itself a big offense over in Matthew 24 we have another scripture there Matthew 24 10 and then shall many be offended and shall betray one another and shall hate one another now they're talking about the end times let us go back there to verse 9 one verse back and says then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted and shall kill you and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake and then shall many be offended and they shall betray one another and shall hate one another and false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many and so on it goes down the line of some of the end time things that will happen there but part of that is men and women will be offended if you preach the gospel and I see the time is coming where you know now and then you

have a student in high school that opens up a commencement and gives their little speech you know and quotes the scripture and many of the people in the room are offended at an open bible or at giving

testimony or using the name of Jesus in a prayer we have many of those things but does that mean we should quit? does that mean we shouldn't use that name anymore? absolutely not we have to prepare our hearts that there are times when people will be offended and will not like what we have to say and so we have to have a lot of wisdom and a lot of discernment I had to think of that wisdom from above brother Don that is so needed in this and so many shall be offended in that day they'll go offended they'll go to the other side they will draw away from us or really the time will come when they

will they think that they will do God's service by arresting or having us arrested or having us put in prison or even our life taken away because we have offended them or maybe sued at the law I have said different times it seems like we are not very far away of some of the things we may say in a public place out on the street witnessing probably first that there will be fines have to be paid or greater problems will come just simply for opening our mouth and so that's what we have this morning I think there is a blessedness in the Christian life if we determine by God's grace we will refuse to be offended even though we are misunderstood even though the rumor mill goes down through and says things that we don't believe ever took place or that we ever did all those things can happen in

life but we need to refuse as it says in Psalms 119 verse 165 great peace have they which love thy law and nothing shall offend them they will not let it happen they will refuse to be offended and put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and believe in Him and follow Him may God help us here at Ephrata Christian Fellowship and all those who are visiting today to attain onto that life to that we are not easily offended but that it's going to be almost impossible for us because we accept the cross in life, we accept rejection, we accept false reports that may be said about us and because if they have treated the Lord Jesus this way remember some of the rumors that they put out about Him being born of fornication He had to bear that all of His 33 years I believe I can imagine in

the village where He grew up that He had to hear those kind of things but He was never offended by it He went on and did what was right and served the Lord and bore the cross voluntarily and triumphantly may God bless the service this morning Moose has a little different makeup than what I do he doesn't get too bothered when someone is offended by him but it's difficult for me if I well the other evening we were out here sharing the gospel with some folks here in the little mall over here on 272 and a fella comes up to us and he was offended that we had asked some pretty pointed questions and challenged some of those people as to where they're at, are they ready to face God on the judgment day and some of those people didn't like to hear those things and you know I always think well you

know how else can we say it, can we water it down a little bit, you know how but you know I like being around someone who's just able to say it as it is and and we walked into the McDonald's to get a free coffee there and and as soon as we got in there a fella come up to us not somebody that worked there someone that was there at one of the tables and he said I want you to know don't you talk to anyone in here he said he started talking about you offend people and you know so it's difficult for me then you know is it okay to tell someone about Jesus in here but it hit me here again this morning that Jesus did offend people and and does also say there in in Luke Luke chapter 6 Jesus said woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you for so did their fathers to the false prophets and

also was reminded that offending people has been as been around a long time it says here for so did their fathers to the false prophets well that's that's the opposite I guess I was thinking of Hebrews 11 when we have the list there of all of these men that were killed because they offended people you know I think of prophet Micaiah there he stood up to 400 false prophets there and he offended the king and he got put in

prison for it so I guess the point is we do offend people if especially someone who doesn't want to follow the Lord and is saying no to the Lord in his heart guess that's that's where my heart went with it here this morning and I guess as brothers we do want to be careful and not offend unnecessarily and the apostle Paul said he was very careful to not offend his brethren

and he didn't want to do something that he knew would be a stumbling block to his brother and so in regards to eating that meat sacrifice to idols anyone else have something to say yes there were two things that the Lord really spoke to me on this morning the first was in the opening message about taming the tongue he specifically talked about passions ruling ruling the tongue and you know sometimes I've seen in my own life to where something inside of me just gets a hold of my tongue and I just let it loose and afterwards feel terrible about it but that's something I really want the Lord to work in my life about is taming those things that rise up and I think even you know preaching the gospel and things like that sometimes you can get in the flesh even though we're speaking the truth

and I guess I want to be led by the Holy Spirit if he wants me to say something that's offensive and great but I don't want it to be the passions that are inside of me offending people and that's something I see a real need in my life and also also the second message about offenses thinking of relationships between brothers and sisters and things like that I don't know how many times that you know if you didn't get invited to something or something happens like that you begin to fabricate a story in your mind as to why that happened and you know sometimes I think it's a whisper of the devil in your ear and you begin to believe that story and then right away you think oh well they don't like me anymore you know I've done something to offend them they don't want me around anymore and I

guess maybe both a confession and also just a help to all of us that let's not listen to the devil when he comes to whisper in our ear about you know brother so and so doesn't like me anymore or something like that and you know God help us in these areas Brother David?

Yeah the thing I heard in your message this morning Brother Moose I was pondering the two camps that are represented one being the offended camp and the other that blessed camp of the unoffended and I was pondering what the difference is between the two and what you said there about the end just in passing about how John had to trust Christ I think that's a big part in my life between offense and unoffended if there's a surrender, a life that is surrendered to the will of God and penitent then there isn't an offense can't rise in that kind of a heart if you're living a repentant life then what someone says to you only brings repentance and if somebody crosses your will in the way you think it ought to go and you're surrendered then offense doesn't rise in the heart I thought it was

interesting just to peruse some of the people that have been offended and men have died at the hands of the offended John actually died at the hand of an offended woman because he said it's not lawful for you to have her Elijah said the Lord he is God and Jezebel said tomorrow I will make your life like one of theirs and I think down through history if we just think of our history in the Bible the camp of the offended is very clearly a camp it's a side and it's an unrepentant side and an unsundered side and isn't it almost couldn't we say that the sword Jesus talks about that he would place in families is also the sword of offense because if you were to repent and if you would be surrendered to the will of God then you wouldn't be offended but because you're unrepentant and you're not

sundered to the will of God then it puts a sword in the relationship and you either have to kill me or repent or I have to change where I stand and I don't think Elijah was going to change where he stood and

John Baptist wasn't going to change where he stood and that's my heart that's what the Lord was speaking to me this morning I want to be in a camp where I'm easy to be entreated because my heart is penitent and surrendered to the will of God and if he has something to say to me I want to hear it Amen Thank you brother Go ahead brother Ephraim I'm looking back at when I gave my life to the Lord Jesus Christ and some of the major changes that I had to walk through and the divisions and things that it caused in the family and all that and just the accusations that flew through the air

sometimes and the blessing that it was to realize that I'm not trying to support my own agenda this is the word of God I didn't have to be offended because they weren't trying to wash my own agenda away I had the word of God and also we were at a funeral yesterday of a grandfather and it was just a very fresh reminder of the ritualism and bondage or depression that I was in and such a refreshing refreshment to be here this morning again Praise God There was one more thing that I had wanted to share and I didn't forget but something else as far as offenses is between husband and wife just yesterday I myself was offended at something that my wife had said but I didn't listen to her and I should have and the whole day went by with just this offense in the air and finally I guess

it was this morning that we finally talked about it and if I would have just heard her out I wouldn't have been offended if I would have just listened to what she had to say but I guess I just wanted to make that confession that I don't want to be easily offended even at what my dear wife has to say in my life It says there also in James be quick to hear and slow to speak so maybe you just weren't quick enough to hear Thank you for sharing that brother Brother Lawrence I appreciate the message this morning I believe there is a good balance given between the two I believe there are some times we certainly can help to offend people if we say the truth and I thought about there is a verse in Proverbs I believe is that I feel that Paul has spoke to me is love is not easily provoked if we have

the love of God in our heart it takes a lot it should take a lot to really provoke us and I appreciate that I believe that is important to flow among the brotherhood especially that way that love is not easily provoked I do appreciate the message this morning Arthur Dace back there in the back yeah this is definitely a balance to these two messages I can see one aspect in rattling the tongue and being very careful in how we present the gospel and convey Christ Jesus to the world then the other side the other message I got out of it the righteous offenses offenses through wrong motives and sin in our own lives and then I got those who are offended so there is three different offenses that God is speaking to me about this morning and I confess that I have a tendency to take offense very

easily and so I just thank God for this message definitely as I work through these things in my own life I hope and pray that I can bring proper balance into my own life so that I can be an effective minister of God and use this word rightly and also be that man that nothing shall offend me and I think that as brother Lawrence said there he says love is not easily provoked and so I just pray that God would bring those things to bear on those needs in my life so that I can walk in his spirit Amen love the word of God brother ok down here Ben just remembering in Matthew where it says blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God and then right after that it says blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you

falsely for my name's sake rejoice and be exceeding glad and those two verses meet together at a junction where our opening and our main message both met you know blessed are the peacemakers and then blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely it seems like we are to not be easily offended we are also to be peacemakers and those two are not

in opposition to one another those two are both complimentary and together we are to love peace and we are also to not easily be offended and to speak the truth it's still kind of a mystery to me in some ways how that all fits I understand but I really appreciate both messages

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