



The Voice Of Truth

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Oh, You Offended Me!

By Jimmy Pettigrew

In our society people are taught to get along with everybody. Don't rock the boat, don't stir up trouble, we should "agree to disagree." We are told that we shouldn't say anything that might offend someone in some way or another. That we shouldn't preach or teach anything that might offend someone either to our brethren or people in false religious groups. We don't want to hurt anybody's feelings, let us all just get along. Well, that might sound good, but what does the Bible say concerning this subject?

First, the Greek word for offend is *skandalizo*, and it means to stumble or to sin, or cause displeasure. Keep this meaning in mind as we go through this article. Now, let us look what the Bible says on this subject "Oh, you offended me!"

Question, did Jesus Christ offend those He came in contact with? Yes He did! Why were they offended? Remember that the word offend means to stumble, to sin or cause displeasure. So, why were the people Jesus came in contact with caused displeasure, to sin, or stumble? Well, let us look at some examples.

In Matthew 13:54ff, Jesus departed for "His own country," which would have been Nazareth. Here, He taught in the synagogue, and the people were astonished at His abilities and His wisdom (vs. 54). He taught them (from Luke's account 4:21) that the

Scripture which He had quoted was fulfilled in Him. The concept that Jesus might be more than merely one of them was unthinkable to the people of Nazareth. Hence, "they were offended in Him" (Matt. 13:57). Now what caused these people to be offended, what caused these people displeasure, to sin or stumble? The Truth! Jesus didn't offend them, cause them displeasure, to sin or to stumble, the Truth did! The Truth caused these people displeasure! The Truth caused these people to harden their hearts, the sin of unbelief! If these people had believed that the Scripture which He quoted was fulfilled in Him, then what would they have done? They would have done everything that Jesus had asked of them, but they did not believe. The Truth caused these people to stumble! They were pierced with the Truth, rebelled at Truth, and were offended because of Truth! The Truth causes displeasure in one's life because they don't want to change their life, or they don't want to except the Truth, so they sin, stumble because they don't do Truth (Jas. 1:22-25), they are deceiving themselves, fighting against God. So, what happens? They tell the person who told them the truth, "Oh, you offended me!" Well, how did I caused you displeasure, caused you to sin or to stumble? You

have displeasure because you won't change, you deny the Truth. You sin because you won't accept the Truth on any given subject. If you were fully convinced that God's Word is just exactly that, there wouldn't be any problem with any subject; you could mold your life to the teaching of the Truth. The sad thing about this is the fact that there are many unbelievers even in the church. You, yourself is where the fault lies. Sadly, when many brethren hear something that offends them (something that causes them to wiggle or whisper in their seats!) they leave! They go to congregations where they can get their ears tickled and won't be offended anymore.

Another example is found in Matthew 15:1ff. Jesus was teaching on the inconsistency of the Pharisees. The scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem came to Jesus with a question. "Why do thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread" (Matt. 15:2). Jesus said that they "transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition" (vs. 3). He called them "hypocrites" (vs. 7). He said to them "In vain they worship Me . . ." (vs. 9). We must realize that the Pharisees were standing there listening to Jesus when He said these things. And notice what the apostles said: "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" (vs. 12). What offended these Pharisees? What caused them displeasure, to sin or stumble? The Truth! They were offended by the things He (Jesus) had said to them and about them. He exposed their disloyalty to God's law, called them "hypocrites" and pronounced their religion vain. Yes, they were offended! The apostles they were more concerned with the feelings of a pack of wolves (Pharisees) than with Truth. They were worried more about projecting a favorable "image" in the eyes of the opinion-makers of the day than they were about pleasing God. They were actually suggesting that Jesus "tone down" His message so that it might not offend those men of repute from Jerusalem. Jesus' response to the disciples concerning the offended Pharisees is most instructive. Instead of

running to the Pharisees saying, "Oh, I'm sorry for the Truth I had spoken!" "Please come back!" This is what many so-called brethren want us to do. Notice what Jesus said in response to what the apostles said: "But he answered and said, "Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit" (Matt. 15:13-14). If they were going to be offended, then let it be so! "Let them alone," not in the way of ceasing to expose their errors, but in the sense of making no effort to appease them. If people become our enemies when we tell them the Truth (Gal. 4:16), it is because they do not love the Truth, they don't want to see the Truth, because they refuse to see it (John 9:40-41). Truth is truth, and most don't want to obey it. The reason the Pharisees were offended was because they knew what Jesus said was true. They couldn't deny it, and it made them mad. Truth is more important than hurting someone's feelings! Brethren, you can't stand for the Truth and never offend anyone at the same time. Jesus said, "And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me" (Matt. 11:6).

"Reasons Why I Don't Wash"

(The following are listed to Mock excuses for attending services.)

1. My parents always made me wash as a child.
2. People who wash are hypocrites; they think they are cleaner than other people.
3. There are so many different kinds of soap; I could never decide which one was right.
4. I used to wash, but it got so boring, I stopped.
5. I still wash on special occasions, like Christmas and Easter.
6. None of my friends wash.
7. I'm still young - when I get older and need it more, I might start washing.
8. People who make soap are only interested in your money.
9. I'm so busy; I just can't find time to wash.
10. I'm so tired; I just can't wash today.