



The Voice of Truth



August 26, 2012

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 accept 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 cause you displeasure, 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 disloy-

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alty to God's law, called them "hypocrites" and pronounced their religion vain. Yes, they were offended! The apostles 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).*" ♦

"My People Love To Have It So"

By Jarrod Jacobs

Jeremiah, the weeping prophet proclaimed, "*An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule on their own authority; And My people love it so!" (Jer. 5:30-31, NAS).* As Jeremiah warned God's people of their sins, and of the coming captivity by the Babylonians, he found that his own people ignored him. Therefore, he ended this chapter by asking, "*But what will you do at the end of it?"* What would they do seeing that the people loved engaging in wicked things, and loved seeing others engaged in wicked practices as well? They refused God's warnings, and were content to live in sin, enjoying earthly, filthy, and lewd pleasures.

Unfortunately, this attitude is still prevalent with men. Just like in Jeremiah's day, people do not consider the consequences of their actions, but are striving for that which makes them "happy," "content," or "comfortable" and "*love to have it so" (Jer. 5:31, KJV)*! Consider the following "modern-day" examples of this problem:

"Faith Only"

Some believe and teach that man is saved at the point of faith alone or "faith only", even though the Bible teaches no such thing. James said, "*Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (Jas. 2:24).* Christ requires a man to believe in Him, repent of

his sins, and be baptized in order to be saved (**Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38**). Faith alone is dead (**Jas. 2:26**)! Sadly, people "*love to have it so*" in regards to this false doctrine. Where is the outrage from godly men who know there are so many lost because of the false doctrine of "faith only"?

"Once Saved, Always Saved"

Some believe and teach that once a man is saved from past sins, he can never act in such a way as to forfeit the promise of a home in Heaven. Such will admit that a man may sin from time to time; yet they claim this has no bearing on the soul of that man. The Bible doesn't teach this doctrine! Consider the words of the apostle Paul in **I Corinthians 9:27**. Why would he be concerned about his being a "castaway" if he could not sin and ultimately be lost in Hell? He also told Timothy, "*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (I Tim. 4:1).* The Hebrew writer penned, "*Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12).* Friend, we cannot depart from a place we have never been! The Bible's plain declaration that some folks had departed from "*the faith*" and departed from "*the living God*," imply they were in that relationship at some point! Yes, man can so sin as to fall from grace (**Gal. 5:4**) and be

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**Truth is truth even if no one believes it.
Error is error if everyone believes it.**

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lost in eternity. Do not fool yourself, nor allow others to fool you on this most important truth!

"No Difference Between The Individual's And The Local Church's Work"

There are those today who teach that there is no difference between the work of the church and the work of individual saints. They say things like: "Whatever the individual can do, the church can do". The Bible does not teach this. In fact, Jesus made a distinction between an individual, a group of individuals, and the church (**Matt. 18:15-17**). We need to do the same. Paul told Timothy, "*If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed*" (**I Tim. 5:16**). Yes, the responsibilities of the individual and church are separate. It is not "what one can do, the other can do"! The local church has a responsibility to preach the truth, help needy saints, and edify the saints (**I Thess. 1:8; I Tim. 5:16; I Thess. 5:11**; etc.). This is the limit and scope of what a local congregation can do. Why would people want it any other way? Why do people today wish to drag the local church into works in which she was never to be engaged? (I.E., distributing funds to any and every one, providing for social and recreational activities, etc.?) These are responsibilities of the individual, not the local church! Sadly, so long as God's people "*love to have it so*," there will be apostates in this world!

"The Authority Of Christ"

Christ has all authority today (**Matt. 28:18**). He is the One that we follow, doing all things by His authority (**Col. 3:17**). Why then do we find those who are promoting the idea that man is his own authority, and we are only answerable to ourselves? Yes, there are those who say that once this life is over, our existence is over; therefore we may live as we please without eternal consequences. Unfortunately, this type of thinking is wrong. This makes for a life based upon the worst; when Christians are supposed to strive toward the best! We must have our eyes on Heaven (**Col. 3:1-4; Matt. 6:19-21, 33**)! Paul said, "*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*" (**Phil. 1:21**). The only way one can say his death is "gain" is if his life has been "Christ"! In other words, all our ambitions, aspirations, and activities are summed up in the One who died for us and sits at the right hand of God (**Mk. 16:19**).

Consider this: "For to me to live is _____ and to die is _____." If we do not put "Christ" in the first blank, we

cannot put "gain" in the last blank! We may place anything in the first blank, but if our life is not "Christ," then our deaths will not be "gain"! Yet, people place things other than Christ in the first blank and "*love to have it so*." Why? Why waste our lives in activities that are not conducive to our going to Heaven? Are we waiting for something better?

"The Church Of Your Choice"

Many people belong to denominations of various names. It may be the Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, Pentecostals, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Wesleyans, or a thousand other groups. They "love" to say, "Join the church of your choice." They "love" to say, "We're on different roads to the same goal." However, the Bible says that Christ built only one church (**Matt. 16:18**). Paul taught that Christ shed His blood for only one church (**Acts 20:28**). **I Corinthians 3:11** declares, "*other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*." Peter uses Isaiah's prophecy to show that Christ is "*the head of the corner*" and Christians are "*lively (living) stones*" (**I Pet. 2:5-7**). The Lord adds Christians to "the" church (**Acts 2:47**). In fact, in a discussion of Christ and the church, we find a comparison between the husband-wife relationship (**Eph. 5:22-33**). Now, does man have the right to have more than one wife? If not, why say that Christ has more than one church? Even though there are false teachers spreading lies, and even though some "*love to have it so*" when it comes to choosing "their church;" this is as wrong as it can be! We need to get back to following the Lord's word and will concerning this and all other subjects!

Conclusion

What about you, friend? What do you love? What do you want to hear from the pulpit? What do you want to read in publications such as this? When one comes as Jeremiah, pleading for men to return to the "*old paths*" and to "*walk therein*," do we say "*we will not*" (**Jer. 6:16**)? Are we as those in Isaiah's day who, "*say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits: Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us*" (**Isa. 30:10-11**)? Are we so enamored by men's doctrine (**Matt. 15:9**) that we "*call evil good, and good evil; ... put darkness for light, and light for darkness; ... put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter*" (**Isa. 5:20**)? Yes, too many are like this today. The question is whether or not we have become like the world, or like Christ.

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Knowing that *"it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"* (Jer. 10:23), who will we follow? What do we "love"? A better question would be WHO do we "love"? Remember John 14:15? Are we still appalled at the prospect of false doctrine among God's people? Does it still bother us to know that there is a lost and dying world that does not know what it means to be a Christian? Have we become complacent? I hope not!

Jeremiah's question comes to all of us, *"What will you do...?"* Every day this question is before us, and every day we answer. We answer through complacency and laziness. We answer by yielding to temptations. We also answer by

living as God's peculiar people, zealous of good works, confessing Him through our actions as well as our words (Tit. 2:14, 1:16). How will you answer this question today? This week? This month?

Don't allow Satan to have another day, but make sure that you are living in a way that is pleasing to God. Be a Jeremiah! Be a Moses! Be a Joseph! Be a Joshua! Be a Paul! Be a Jude! Be a John! Let us not be satisfied with what Satan has done to this world; but let us fight against the sin and error that abounds and show people *"the way, the truth, and the life,"* Jesus Christ our Lord (Jn. 14:6; Col. 1:28-29)! Friend, what is stopping you from doing that which is right? Don't delay! *Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com* ♦

God is in the Room By Jonathan L. Perz

Consider that last obnoxious or profane statement, those disrespectful gestures, that heated and angry argument, those unkind words, or some other sinful activity. Would you have done or said those things if God were in the room?

The fact we often forget is that GOD IS IN THE ROOM!

- *"For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He ponders all his paths"* (Prov. 5:21).
- *"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good"* (Prov. 14:3).
- *"Does not God see my ways, and count all my steps . . . For His eyes are on the ways of man, and He sees all his steps"* (Job. 31:4; 34:21).
- *"For my eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity hidden from my eyes"* (Jer. 16:17).
- *"And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account"* (Heb. 4:13).

God heard those profane and corrupt words come from your mouth and saw you make those disrespectful gestures (Eph. 4:29; Col. 3:8). God heard every word of that heated and angry argument (Matt. 5:21-26). God witnessed you utter those unkind words (Eph. 4:31-32). God saw that sinful activity (Prov. 5:21). Whether done in fun or anger, God saw your folly. Whether you wanted Him to or not, God witnessed your shame.

If it is any consolation, I doubt that God, in His absolute holiness, stayed around long enough to witness all of your un-Christ-like conduct. I imagine He simply left the room with a tear in His eye over another unregenerate soul who professes to love Him, but in works denies Him. *Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com* ♦

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Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com