

“SOULed OUT”
Session 6: The Bait of Satan: Offense
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INTRODUCTION

Luke 17:1

Jesus said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come! (NKJ)

Q: What kinds of things tend to offend people the most these days?

Offense comes from many sources

Psalm 31:11-14 (NIV)

Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbors; I am a dread to my friends-- those who see me on the street flee from me. I am forgotten by them as though I were dead; I have become like broken pottery. For I hear the slander of many; there is terror on every side; they conspire against me and plot to take my life. But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, "You are my God."

Psalm 55:12-14 (NIV)

If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him. But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the house of God.

Mark 4:16-17

And these are those which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

The Greek word for offend is “*Scandalon*.” The part of the trap where bait is attached.

Offended people get stuck in a trap

I. The downward spiral of a disagreement

- a. Complaining: addressing a specific action
- b. Criticism: negative words about a person's character or personality
- c. Contempt: using sarcasm and cynicism
- d. Stonewalling: tuning each other out.

Q: How have you seen hurtful words do damage far beyond a specific disagreement?

- Contempt as Gossip
- Contempt as Boasting
- Contempt as Blameshifting

II. Jesus and Offenses

The Pharisees

Matthew 15:10-14

Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen and understand. What goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean,' but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean.'" Then the disciples came to him and asked, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?" He replied, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

Those in his hometown

Matthew 13:55-58

"Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor." And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

Family members

Mark 3:20-21

Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."

Jesus' disciples

John 6:58-61

This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever." He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you?"

Q: Why were so many people we're offended with Jesus? What does this say about them... and us?

1 Peter 2:6-8 (NKJ)

"Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense."

III. Godly offense

Jesus offended some people by obeying his Father, but he never caused an offense in order to assert his own rights.

Q: What do you think about this statement?

Matthew 17:25-27

When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak. "What do you think, Simon?" he asked. "From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes-- from their own sons or from others?" "From others," Peter answered. "Then the sons are exempt," Jesus said to him. "But so that we may not offend them, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours."

Romans 12:17-18

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Offense blocks spiritual growth, but suffering and obedience take us to a deeper relationship with the Lord and with others.

Three natural responses to rejection:

- **Perfectionism**
- **Introspection and self condemning**
- **Rebellion and irresponsibility**

1 Peter 2:17

Show proper respect to everyone.

Proverbs 19:11

A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.

Proverbs 17:9

He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.

The way forward:

- a. Focus on responsibilities, not rights**

- b. Disciplining behavior is our job. Judging character is God's job.**

- c. Express needs without denigrating other people**

- d. Make a commitment to not go to "criticism" and "contempt" in your words**

- e. Remember to let God be your defender.**

Isaiah 25:4-5 (NIV)

You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat. For the breath of the ruthless is like a storm driving against a wall and like the heat of the desert. You silence the uproar of foreigners; as heat is reduced by the shadow of a cloud, so the song of the ruthless is stilled.

For Personal Reflection

A: List the names of five people who have offended you

B: What comments or actions in particular have “scandalized” you or made you stumble?

C: Have you built any walls against these kinds of offenses? How much are you defending them, and how much are you letting God defend you?

D. Have you identified any lies in these offenses, and what might God have to say about these?

Coming up...

October 31 The Power of Human Shame

With more to come...

This talk is partially based on *The Bait of Satan* by John Bevere

The audio and notes for this and previous sessions of this series are available at www.sequimcommunitychurch.org in the Sunday Seminar section