

Series: John

Title: How Shall We Not Be Offended?

Text: John 16: 1-4

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**John 16: 1: These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. 2: They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. 3: And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. 4: But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.**

He said the Spirit of God shall glorify me. He shall bring Christ's words to our remembrance and keep us believing on Christ so that God's saints are not offended.

**Subject:** How Shall We Not Be Offended?

**Proposition:** By Christ's word kept in our new man by the Spirit we shall not be offended.

Our Savior said, "*These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.*" "Offended" means far more than simply getting our feelings hurt. It is from the Greek word "scandal." It is to be tripped up and stumble and be trapped. By the Spirit of God, Christ's regenerated saints shall not stumble at the cross of Christ nor when we are persecuted.

## **THE PREACHING OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED IS AN OFFENSE**

We preach the cross of Christ. That is, we declare salvation is entirely of Christ by his faithful obedience unto the death of the cross. But the cross of Christ is an offense—a scandal—to those not born of the Spirit of God. The following words are the same word translated different ways, such as offense and stumblingblock.

Galatians 5:11: And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the OFFENSE of the cross ceased.

1Co 1: 22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: 23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a STUMBLINGBLOCK, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24: But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

The Hebrew word is different but carries the same meaning.

Isaiah 8:14: [Christ] shall be for a sanctuary [to those born of the Spirit and kept]; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of OFFENCE to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

When the gospel is preached that salvation began in eternity by God the Father electing whom he would in his Son by free and sovereign grace alone, it offends man's self-exalting notion that God chose him due to God seeing good in him.

When we preach that sinners are dead in sins and must be born-again of the Spirit of God, given faith, made willing by the power of Christ by his grace, it offends man who boasts in his will in making his decision for Christ.

When we preach Christ is the Righteousness of God imputed to us through God's gift of faith, it offends the sinner who trust his works for righteousness.

Romans 9: [the Jews sought righteousness by the law but did not attain it] 32: Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they STUMBLED at that Stumblingstone;

When we preach Christ is our Sanctification declaring that God the Father sanctified us in Christ in electing grace sinners stumble. When we declare that by his one offering Christ perfected forever them that are sanctified—by the which will we are sanctified—self-sanctifying sinners are offended. When we preach the truth that Christ is the Holiness of the new man so that when we are born-again and Christ is formed in us then we are made meet to enter the holiest by Christ being formed in us by the Spirit those who believe they sanctify themselves are tripped up. When we declare that Christ, by the Spirit, keeps his people separated unto him, preserved and blameless in him, growing us in the grace and knowledge of Christ, this offends man who boasts in his self-sanctifying works. So they persecute us.

## **PERSECUTION RULED BY OUR SOVEREIGN SAVIOR**

The trials and persecutions that God's saints suffer are sent and ruled by our sovereign Redeemer. Note the certainty with which Christ declares trials and persecution shall come upon every true believer.

**John 16: 2: They SHALL put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time COMETH, that whosoever killeth you WILL think that he doeth God service. 3: And these things WILL they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. 4: But these things have I told you, that when the time SHALL come, ye may remember that I told you of them.**

The trial and persecution that comes upon God's regenerated, believing people are certain. But they are sent and ruled by our Sovereign God and Savior on purpose.

1 Corinthians 11: 19: For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

God assays his children like gold is assayed. One way gold is assayed is by fire.

1 Peter 1: 6: 7:...the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

Peter said there is a "need be" to the trial and persecution. The Lord declared to us the fiery trial shall come. The religious world will excommunicate some of God's children, even kill some, while thinking they are doing God's service. But God sends that fire of trial to prove those who are his and manifest those God has approved.

Those who were never born of the Spirit will be offended when pressured by men to mix law and grace. The Lord used this word "offended" to describe the stony ground hearer. He believes for a time but only by his fleshly understanding and fleshly will. When persecution comes he is offended. It is the same word as our text.

Matthew 13:21: Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is OFFENDED.

Matthew 24: 9: 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. 10: And then shall many be OFFENDED, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. 11: And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 12: And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. 13: But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

The Pharisees did not have Christ the Root formed in them so Christ was a scandal to them because they saw Christ save publicans and sinners. Christ had fellowship with those who the Pharisee's put out and would have nothing to do with. When they accused Christ's disciples of defiling themselves by eating with unwashed hands, Christ preached that it was not what men put into their mouth that defiles men. Man is born with a nature defiled in sin. Every word that comes out of the mouth is sin because the sin-nature is sin. Every good work is sin and reprobate, that is, rejected of God because the Spirit of God did not produce it. When Christ declared this it caused the Pharisee's to be offended.

Matthew 15: 12: Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were OFFENDED, after they heard this saying? 13: But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. 14: Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

And the Pharisee's disciples were also offended. Why? They were terrified of falling out of favor with their religious rulers because they sought honor that came from men rather than from God. Christ said to them,

John 5: 42: But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. 43: I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. 44: How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that *cometh* from God only?

Natural religion does all to please men. They cannot believe on Christ alone because they covet honor from men rather than the honor that comes from God alone.

John 12: 42:...among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: 43: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Persecution comes in many forms. It does not mean that men will necessarily harm us physically. Persecution first comes in the form of pressure from men. When the Pharisee's pressured their disciples to mix law and grace, they rejected Christ for the law of Moses, that is, for their own works. Later, they said that it was all right to believe on Christ but except ye be circumcised and keep the law of Moses you cannot be saved. Those he preached this were not willing to suffer rejection for preaching Christ and those who succumbed to their pressure did so for the same reason. Paul said,

Galatians 6: 12: As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

For those not born of the Spirit, they will succumb to peer pressure and turn back from Christ to mix in their works. But is God frustrated? Not at all.

1 Peter 2: 6: Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7: Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8: And a stone of STUMBLING, and a rock of OFFENCE, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

They were appointed to this because they rejected Christ and relished in God smiting Christ on the cross in place of his people. They do the same, putting their hand upon God's children when it is God who has chastened his child. They speak to the hurt of those God has chastened. We hear Christ declare this in Psalm 69.

Psalm 69: 20: Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked *for some* to take pity, but *there was* none; and for comforters, but I found none. 21: They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. 22: Let their table become a snare before them: and *that which should have been* for their welfare, *let it become* a trap. [the scriptures, their religious works, all is a trap to them] 23: Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. 24: Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. 25: Let their habitation be desolate; *and* let none dwell in their tents. [why?] 26: For they persecute *him* whom THOSE hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom THOU hast wounded.

God may use a brother in Christ to speak a word of rebuke to another brother in Christ but let us never persecute and speak to the grief of those God has chastened. It is what the Pharisee's did to Christ when they nailed him to the cross and wagged their heads at him in scorn. They judged that because Christ suffered the cross, God had rejected him and smitten him for his sin. But Christ was smitten in the place of his people and with his stripes God's elect are healed.

Isaiah 53: 4: Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5: But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

So Christ being the Righteousness of his people—Christ being the Author and Finisher of Faith—Christ being all our Salvation is an offense to natural sinners. When we declare that righteousness is by Christ obedience alone freely by God’s grace through faith through the preaching of the gospel of Christ alone, it is scandalous to naturally religious men. The Jews rejected Christ for their will, their means, and their works. So God made their religious works a snare from which they cannot escape.

## **GOD’S SAINTS ARE PROVEN FAITHFUL**

Christ declares in our text that those born of the Spirit of God shall pass the test when the trial comes. It takes the Spirit circumcising our heart to make us desire the honor and praise that comes from God alone rather than men.

Romans 2: 28: For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29: But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose PRAISE IS NOT OF MEN, BUT OF GOD.

2 Corinthians 10:18: For not he that commendeth himself is APPROVED, BUT WHOM THE LORD COMMENDETH.

This is amazing grace! God does all the works for us and in us. It is only by Christ’s righteousness that we are righteous. It is only by the Spirit of God that we believe and continue in faith. God does all the work for us and in us. But then God praises—approves—commends—those who do the will of God the Father, that is, who believe on his Son and rest in Christ until the end.

John 6: 28: Then said [the multitude] unto [Christ] What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? [plural] 29: Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God [singular], that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

Due to all the carnal bickering going on the Corinthian church, the fear of the apostle Paul was that the Corinthians would be beguiled from the simplicity, the singleness, of believing on Christ alone. Paul wrote,

2 Corinthians 11: 1: Would to God ye could bear with me a little in *my* folly: and indeed bear with me. 2: For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ. 3: But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the SIMPLICITY that is in Christ. 4: For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*.

Heresies are choices. God declares they must enter to test his people. But the Spirit takes away all our choices when he makes us know that “of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor 1: 30). The Spirit of God reveals that we are in Christ by God’s electing grace. It is only by the Spirit that we are given life and believe on Christ. The Spirit of God makes Christ all unto us: Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption. It is only by the Spirit working this in us that Christ ceases to be an offense. Only by the Spirit do we cease glorying in our flesh and glory only in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is by the same Spirit that we are not offended when persecution comes but continue believing on Christ alone.

The multitude heard Christ say they except they believe on him alone then they did not have life. They said, “This is a hard saying. Who can hear it?” They were offended. And as the leaders departed, their disciples succumbed to the pressure and departed. But by Christ’s word, the apostles were not offended.

John 6: 67: Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? 68: Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. 69: And we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Christ said, "Have not I chosen you? Flesh and blood did not reveal this to you but my Father in heaven." That is how Christ assured his disciples the night he was betrayed. He declared,

John 15: 16: Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain:

In our text, Christ said, "*These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.*" The Spirit shall bring Christ's words to our remembrance. Christ said the Spirit shall glorify Christ, "*For he shall receive of mine and show it unto you.*" Therefore, by the Spirit keeping Christ's words in our hearts, we shall endure persecution.

The Lord used Paul to preach to Lydia and others who the Spirit called to faith in Christ. Shortly after that, Paul and Silas were arrested and beaten and thrown in prison. The Lord saved the jailor and many in his house. But think of being a new believer and seeing your preacher beaten and arrested and thrown in prison for believing and preaching Christ, who you just openly confessed. How were they kept believing? By the gospel of Christ by the Spirit of God working in our hearts.

Acts 16: 40: And [Paul and Silas] went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when [Paul and Silas] had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

Later Paul wrote to the church at Philippi and said,

Philippians 1: 6: [I am] confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:

By the Spirit we shall bear up under persecution even as the Spirit gives us faith to believe on Christ.

Philippians 1: 28: And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. 29: For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; 30: Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me.

Perseverance in faith, especially in the face of persecution, is due only to the sanctifying work of the Spirit of God preserving us in faith. Child of God, you have the word of God in you, the love of Christ within you, and you shall be kept by the Spirit of God. Therefore, you shall seek the honor that comes from God alone by continuing believing Christ to be your Prophet, Priest and King. By the Spirit we are and shall be approved by God. Christ declares it in our text. By the Spirit we shall be kept rooted and grounded in Christ.

Ephesians 3: 16: That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17: That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18: May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19: And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20: Now UNTO HIM THAT IS ABLE to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the POWER THAT WORKETH IN US, 21: Unto HIM *be* glory in the church BY CHRIST JESUS throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Colossians 2: 6: As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk ye in him: 7: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. 8: Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. 9: For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10: And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

The Spirit of God will keep his people united and believing Christ alone. We are kept by one Spirit, with one hope, one faith, believing one Lord, with one God and Father of us all being in you all. Therefore, we shall not be offended and stumble and be separated from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8: 35: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36: As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37: Nay, in all these things we ARE more than conquerors through HIM that loved us. 38: For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39: Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

That is how we shall not be offended! It is by Christ who loved us and makes us more than conquerors. When Christ comes he shall crown us with glory with him forever. God shall work in you and keep you believing him. Then in that day—amazing to think—every believer shall have praise of God.

1 Peter 5:4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Paul said, ‘Then shall every believer have praise of God’ (1 Cor 4: 5).

**Amen!**