

Luke 17:1-6 - 1 Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come! 2 "It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. 3 "Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 4 "And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him." 5 And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." 6 So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

Introduction:

- Offense – stumbling block – the trigger of a trap or a snare
- Impossible that no offenses come
- Notice – Jesus is going to talk about someone offended you and forgiving them to a high level
- Observe – Acts 15:36-40 - Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing." 37 Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. 38 But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. 39 Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; 40 but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God.
- We need to understand how deal with born-again, spirit-filled Bible believing people offending us so there is not this separations taking place
- Imperfect people serving a perfect God

I. Don't Be Offensive

- Romans 14:15 (open Bible) - Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.
- Philippians 2:4 - Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.
- Ephesians 4:15 - speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ—
- Truth - For their good not your pride

II. Don't Be Easily Offended

- I Corinthians 13:5 AMP - It is not conceited (arrogant and inflated with pride); it is not rude (unmannerly) and does not act unbecomingly. Love (God's love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it [it pays no attention to a suffered wrong].
- Not easily offended or irritated
- Offense = Immature – I Corinthians 3:1-3 - And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men

- Word not produce – Mark 4:17 - And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

III. Don't Hold on to Offense

- I Step 1: recognize you're in the trap
 - A Stop calling the loss of a limb a flesh wound, gangrene a small infection, & cancer a cold.
 - B Pride does not want to admit we're hurt or offended.
- II Step 2: pray for your offender. Malicious witnesses rise up; they ask me of things that I do not know. 12 They repay me evil for good, to the bereavement of my soul. 13 But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer kept returning to my bosom. 14 I went about as though it were my friend or brother; I bowed down mourning, as one who sorrows for a mother. Psalms 35:11-14 (NASB)
 - A We may pray for them something like, "God, bless them with a good day. Help him in all that he does. Amen."
 - 1 V. 11 & 12: David's prayers were for those who didn't like him.
 - a We can relate: associates/people who pay our good with evil; David had men out trying to destroy him; attacked him with evil when he had done nothing to merit it.
 - b Sorrow in my soul...yeah!
 - 2 V. 13 & 14
 - a "But as for me..." what he did next wasn't determined by the actions of others.
 - aa He began to pray for them like they were close brothers, grieving as one who loses a mom.
 - bb Pray for them like you'd pray for yourself.
 - B Instead of praying for them just for your sake, pray for their sake.
 - C Pray what you'd like God to do in your life for them.
- III Step three: give forgiveness like God does.
 - A I want to ask you four quick questions:
 - 1 Has God ever done anything wrong to you? Wronged you?
 - 2 Has God ever hurt your feelings out of hatefulness?
 - 3 Has God ever injured you out of revenge?
 - 4 Had God ever offended you?
 - B God has done nothing but offer us love, forgiveness, & reconciliation. He reached out to us before we loved Him or asked for forgiveness from Him.
 - 1 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8 (NASB)
 - a I offended God, He reached out to me!
 - b When Jesus gave up a crown of righteousness for one of thorns, and throne of creation for a thief's cross, scepter in His hand for a

spear in His side, royal purple robe for the nakedness of the crucifixion, died between two thieves but dying for a murderer...

- c It wasn't Pilate, a kangaroo Jewish court, or Roman soldiers that killed Him-I killed Jesus. He died to reconcile my relationship to Him!
- d He didn't come to judge (NASB) or condemn(NIV) me (John 3:17), but to save/gain me for His kingdom (the offended reached out to the offender).
- 2 He forgave me in AD 33, but He reconciled me in 1978.
 - a He reached out from Calvary, I reached back from Odin.
 - b I love Him because He first loved me!
 - c That's God's forgiveness style! Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. 1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children Eph 4:32-5:1 (NASB)
- IV Step four; approaching someone who has offended you.
 - A NEVER go to someone until you have decided to forgive him or her from your heart...no matter how he or she responds.
 - 1 "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16 "But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. 17 "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Matt 18:15-17 (NASB)
 - a This is not a permission slip to go confront (in anger or revenge) someone who has offended you.
 - aa Our goal is not condemnation, but rather reconciliation.
 - bb "Preacher, I forgive you for being insensitive, for not being a better pastor, for not doing this or that." What?
 - cc We've all used that stick (on us or others). Intimidation, control-not forgiveness or reconciliation.
 - b Jesus tell us how to progress (alone, with a witness, to the church), but the goal never changes: reconciliation.
 - aa The one who caused the offense is involved in every step.
 - bb We like to take the offender out first & then go to the everyone with the offense. (IL) Bring 5 people on stage (offender, witnesses, church). Alienate the offender & go to the witnesses with the story.
 - cc We feel justified, comforted, our cause is strengthened. We feel good when people listen to us/agree with us on how badly we've been treated (selfish).
 - 2 Jesus is saying, "Keep trying."
 - B What if someone comes to you? (Listen, don't defend)
 - 1 Ask, "Are they right?"

- a You're right, would you forgive me?
 - b Not right
 - aa Tell them you respect their position
 - bb Tell them you'll search your attitudes/intentions.
 - cc Tell them you're sorry you've hurt them.
 - 2 Pride defends, humility agrees (you can apologize for hurting someone without agreeing with their position/assessment).
 - a But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. James 3:17 (NASB)
 - b Godly wisdom is willing to yield, not stiff-necked or stubborn when it comes to personal conflict.
 - c If you're submitting to godly wisdom, you're not afraid to yield or defer to the other person's viewpoint as long as it does not violate truth.
- C What if someone refuses to be at peace with you?
 - 1 If loving people like Jesus is our motivation, we will not fail.
 - a When we love others like Jesus we are free to love them even if the other person chooses not to be reconciled to us.
 - b If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Romans 12:18 (NASB)
 - aa There are times when others do not/will not want to be at peace with you.
 - bb OR being at peace with them requires you to make compromises in your relationship with the Lord.
 - cc Either case, it may not be possible to restore that relationship.
 - 2 Notice, "...as much as it depends on you..."
 - a We are to do everything we can to be at peace with others as long as we remain loyal to the truth.
 - b My fear is that we give up on a relationship too soon.

IV. Don't Accept a Life of Offense

- a. Hosea 1:2 - When the LORD began to speak by Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea: "Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry And children of harlotry, For the land has committed great harlotry By departing from the LORD."
- b. Hosea 3:1-2 - Then the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the LORD for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans." 2 So I bought her for myself for fifteen shekels of silver, and one and one-half homers of barley.

Conclusion:

- Luke 17:4 – 70x7 – Increase our faith – sycamore tree (sick of mine)

- Paul & Mark – II Timothy 4:11 – Mark useful