

## Taking Offence at Truth

Have any of us ever been offended? I've come across people who had been offended by someone else years back and still won't speak to them. Sometimes they can't even remember what the actual offence was but they still refuse to put the issue behind them and move on with life. Sometimes the person who has offended us doesn't even know it and so it hasn't affected them at all while we live under a dark cloud. Taking offence can affect our whole life – present and future.

John 6: 60 – 71

### 1) Taking offence leads to bad attitudes

- The disciples were grumbling about Jesus' teaching.
- Grumbling is a sure sign of a bad attitude
- Proverbs 18:19 An offended brother is more unyielding than a fortified city, and disputes are like the barred gates of a citadel.
  - Once a person has been offended it is very difficult to bring reconciliation in a relationship.
  - This is true whether the person who offended the other intended to do so or not.
  - The saddest thing is when relationships are broken due to unintended offence.
- A person may have been offended at work. He comes home and snaps at his wife and children.
  - When we have taken offence at someone our attitudes will affect others around us.
  - It might affect our relationships in the home, at church, at work, at college, at school.
  - It doesn't only affect our personal relationships but also the way we do things. If we have been offended by our boss the quality of our work often declines. People take offence at the Pastor and stop serving the church.
  - This is a very immature attitude.
- A person who has taken offence will not bear fruit in the kingdom of God until he deals with it. We cannot bear fruit in the kingdom with a bad attitude.

### 2) The truth is offensive by its nature

- We live in a world that promotes relativity and shies away from absolute truth.
- However, even by saying that there is no absolute truth is making an absolute and not a relative statement.
- When we make statements of the absolute truth of Christ we will get opposed because we will offend people who disagree.
  - Some years back when I was in Spain we had a table with literature in a pedestrian street in the city. My friend had made a chart called "which is the true church?" with a clear depiction of Christ. People were offended by it and some make statements like "you're the guys who think you're right and everyone else is wrong".
  - When such statements are made these days many Christians shy away of standing on what they are preaching and try and explain that that isn't what they mean

- It is time to stand up for what we believe even if we offend people in the process.
- Jesus never apologised for offending people.
- Jesus wasn't crucified because of His love and mercy that He showed people. He was crucified for making statements of absolute truth concerning Himself.
  - The prophets were all persecuted because they spoke the truth.
  - People who live in darkness are offended by the truth because truth exposes their lives, the lies by which they live and hypocrisy.
  - Truth also challenges our paradigms with which we have lived for so long.
  - An example is the paradigm that the Jews lived with that God is transcendent and relates to man from afar. Jesus came and challenged that paradigm saying that God sent His Son.
  - This truth offended the religious people of Jesus' day and still offends religious people today.
  - Paul was persecuted for preaching the offence of the cross - Galatians 5: 11 Brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished
- We need to be sure that people are offended by the truth and not by idiosyncrasies in our lives.
  - When we offend someone by constantly interrupting when they are speaking
  - By offering pork to a Muslim or beef to a Hindu
  - Taking someone else's things without asking their permission
  - And many other ways

### 3) Dealing with offence

- When Jesus asked His disciples if they don't want to leave Peter replied by asking, "To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." (v. 68 – 69)
- We tend to react to things that are said or done before analysing them to see if they are true or not.
  - Some people react first and then analyse the situation afterwards.
  - The more prudent way is to be as the Berean church in Acts 17. where it states of them in verse 11: "Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true."
- Whatever the situation is that we may take offence to we need to analyse the truth of the situation.
  - We often take offence at someone not because they have done anything wrong but because we have misunderstood what they said.
  - We remain offended when we are too proud to admit that we have misunderstood the situation.
- We need to ask ourselves whether the other person intended to offend us or offended us unintentionally.
  - So often we have taken offence and the other person does not even realise that they have offended us.
  - Maturity allows us to approach the person to find out the truth of the situation.
- When we believe the truth – spiritual or situational – we will be able to release the offence and move on with our lives.