

**SERIES: WHAT LIES BENEATH**

How to have healthy emotions in an emotional world.

**SERMON: OFFENSE - THE GREATEST INJURY OF THE SOUL**

7-31-22

**REVIEW:**

In the third epistle of John, John begins his final letter with these words to his friend Gaius.....

*3 John 1: 2 (NIV) Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.*

God's will is for us to be well physically and internally.

As a Christian community, it is very easy to focus on external things in our walk with God.... our habits, our church attendance, our service, our giving, our ministry and totally ignore the condition of our heart. It's easy to mistake our servitude at church for relationship with God and it's easy to grow in our gifting and think we are growing closer with God.

**WE MUST ALLOW OUR FAITH IN GOD TO GO DEEPER THAN JUST SURFACE LEVEL.**

It's easy to not allow our discipleship and our spirituality to not touch the deep internal wounds and sin patterns within us. Especially those ugly ones that emerge behind the closed doors of our homes. The ones that become apparent in our trials, in our disagreements, conflicts and setbacks.

**YOU CAN'T BE A SPIRITUAL GIANT AND BE AN EMOTIONAL INFANT.**

**CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY WITHOUT EMOTIONAL HEALTH CAN BE DEADLY TO YOURSELF, YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU.**

Externally we can appear kind, gracious, patient and inwardly we are nothing like that. We can present a polished image as a good Christian and cut ourselves off from what is really going on within ourselves.

**PRETENDING SEEMS TO BE SAFER THAN HONESTY AND VULNERABILITY.**

We can be angry, bitter, depressed. We can live our lives more out of a reaction to what other people did or might do or what they thought or might think of us. And then we experience the growing tension of leading a double life. We preach love and forgiveness on Sundays and curse alone in our car on Mondays.

**IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO BE SPIRITUALLY MATURE WHILE REMAINING  
EMOTIONALLY IMMATURE.**

**OPENER:**

***Genesis 1:26-27 "(NLT) Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, according to Our likeness.....So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.***

**GOD MADE US IN HIS IMAGE.  
WE ARE CREATED IN THREE PARTS - BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT.**

**THE IMAGE OF GOD IN US INCLUDES PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL, EMOTIONAL,  
INTELLECTUAL AND RELATIONAL.**

**ILLUSTRATION:**

**Water, ice, steam. All water. Each of these are made of up of the same chemical components - H<sub>2</sub>O. They are the same thing, just in different forms. All water. It is the same with God. He is God the Father, He is God the Son and He is God the Holy Spirit.**

**We are a three part being just like God. We are triune. We are body, we are soul and we are spirit. All of these parts of us have their origin in God. All three parts are made from the components of God. All of these parts of us will live eternally. When our body dies, our spirit and our soul will travel to heaven at the speed of light and we will be given a new body that is made to last through eternity.**

***1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NLT) Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.***

**God's will is that we are are healthy and holy in all three parts - spirit, soul and body. Ignoring any aspect of who we are as men and women made in God's image always results in destructive consequences - in our relationship with God and with others and with ourselves.**

**OFFENSE - THE GREATEST INJURY OF THE SOUL**

***Luke 23:33-42 (NLT) When they came to a place called The Skull, they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left.***

***<sup>34</sup> Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing." And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.***

*<sup>35</sup> The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. “He saved others,” they said, “let him save himself if he is really God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.” <sup>36</sup> The soldiers mocked him, too, by offering him a drink of sour wine. <sup>37</sup> They called out to him, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” <sup>38</sup> A sign was fastened above him with these words: “This is the King of the Jews.”*

*<sup>39</sup> One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, “So you’re the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you’re at it!”*

## **1. OFFENSE CAN KEEP YOU FROM FULFILLING YOUR DESTINY**

*Why did Jesus feel the need to say, “Father forgive them for they don’t know what they are doing”?*

**I BELIEVE THAT THIS WAS THE DEVIL’S LAST FAILED ATTEMPT TO GET JESUS TO NOT GO THROUGH WITH HIS MISSION - TO NOT FULFILL HIS DESTINY.**

**EVEN IN THOSE LAST MOMENTS OF JESUS’ LIFE THE ENEMY WAS TEMPTING HIM TO HOLD OFFENSE AGAINST THOSE WHO NAILED HIM TO THE CROSS.**

**Temptations at the cross:**

*>And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.*

*> The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. “He saved others, let him save himself if he is really God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.”*

*>The soldiers mocked him, too, by offering him a drink of sour wine. <sup>37</sup> They called out to him, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!”*

*> A sign was fastened above him with these words: “This is the King of the Jews.”*

*>One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, “So you’re the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you’re at it!”*

**I believe that Jesus was being tempted to hold offense by thinking...**

**1). They don’t recognize my calling.**

**2) They don’t appreciate what I have done for them.**

**3) How could they do this to me?**

**And we think the same things and are tempted in the same way.**

**OFFENSE IS POISON TO YOUR SOUL.  
OFFENSE IS A SIN THAT WILL DESTROY ITS OWN CONTAINER  
LIKE AN INFECTIOUS, INCURABLE CANCER.**

**OFFENSE IS THE GREATEST INJURY THAN CAN HAPPEN TO YOUR SOUL.  
HOLDING ON TO OFFENSE WILL KEEP YOU FROM  
FULFILLING YOUR DESTINY.**

## **2. OFFENSE CASTS BLAME**

**Jesus said, “*They don’t know what they are doing.*”**

**IN THIS MOMENT ON THE CROSS, JESUS WAS SAYING, “THEY ARE NOT TO BLAME FOR THIS”.**

**JESUS WAS ASKING THE FATHER GOD NOT TO HOLD THEM RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS SUFFERING AND DEATH.**

**WHEN WE HOLD OFFENSE WE ARE PUTTING THE BLAME OF OUR HURT ON SOMEONE ELSE.**

**Instead of being angry we need to say, “ They are not to blame. I won’t hold them responsible for the pain I feel.”**

***Romans 5:15 But there is a great difference between Adam’s sin and God’s gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God’s wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ.***

**All of us have the same Father - Adam. His sin of disobedience, selfishness, seeking self - contentment and pleasure instead of servitude to God has been passed down to all of us. We have been born into sin. We are of a sinful bloodline. We all have these tendencies. We all have inherited that.**

***Romans 3:23 For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard.***

**Not one of us can say that we haven’t hurt someone. If you look back on your life and some decisions you have made or how you handled a situation would you do it again the same way? I’m sure there are lots of things that we would like a “do over”!**

**So, anyone who has done you wrong, you can’t cast blame on them. It was the inherited sin nature. The ultimate blame is the enemy.**

**FORGIVENESS RELEASES SOMEONE FROM THE RESPONSIBILITY OF WHAT THEY HAVE DONE.**

**FORGIVENESS DOESN’T CAST BLAME ON SOMEONE ELSE FOR THE PAIN WE FEEL.**

**THE CHOICE TO BECOME OFFENDED IS YOURS.  
YOU CANNOT BLAME SOMEONE ELSE FOR THE PAIN  
YOU CARRY.**

**BY THE FREEING WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN YOU, YOU CAN BE FREE OF OFFENSE.**

### **3. OFFENSE MAKES YOUR SERVICE TO GOD WORTHLESS**

*Matthew 5:23-24 (NLT) So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.*

**IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW GOOD YOU ARE AT YOUR CHRISTIAN SERVICE -  
HOW IMPACTING YOU ARE IN YOUR MINISTRY  
OR HOW MANY LIVES ARE TOUCHED,  
IF YOU HOLD OFFENSE IN YOUR HEART THEN IT ALL  
MATTERS NOTHING TO GOD.**

### **4. OFFENSE HINDERS YOUR PRAYERS**

*Mark 11:24-26 (NLT) I tell you, you can pray for anything, and if you believe that you've received it, it will be yours. <sup>25</sup> But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too."*

**HOLDING OFFENSE AND UNFORGIVENESS IN YOUR HEART CUTS OFF YOUR  
COMMUNICATION WITH GOD.**

**GOD DOESN'T WANT TO HEAR WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY UNTIL YOU FORGIVE  
THOSE WHO HAVE WRONGED YOU.**

### **5. OFFENSE AND SELF-PITY ARE TWO IN THE SAME**

Holding offense is pitying yourself because you have been done wrong. And the longer you hold unforgiveness then the greater your self-pity grows.

#### **ILLUSTRATION:**

Holding offense is like having an exposed wound. No one sees it. No-one knows that you have offense in your heart. They hit that wounded area and the response that they get is far greater than the action that was taken against you. Because that offense is like an open wound. It is easy for people to hit that thing. If you interact with people, if you get close to people, if you choose to do life with people, if you open up with people on a heart level (that is the level we are to operate) then someone will hit that wound.

The only way that you can keep that from happening is to pull away, close yourself off, stay to yourself. And do not have anything to do with anyone. We don't trust anyone. Everyone is going to hurt us, they have ill intentions toward us. And that's what we do.

Because you are wounded you need primary care. You need attention and healing, you respond to others out of that hurt and woundedness and self-pity.

..... Expecting them to pay attention to you more than is normal, to be more sensitive of your feelings than is healthy. And to cater to you.

## **HOW DO HEAL THE WOUND OF OFFENSE? FORGIVE**

*EPHESIANS 4:32 (NLT) be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*

### **THREE THINGS ABOUT FORGIVENESS**

#### **1. FORGIVENESS IS NOT A FEELING**

If you are waiting to forgive when you feel like it, you will wait forever.

Forgiveness is divine. Forgiveness originated with God. He was the one who first practiced forgiveness in the garden of Eden. Forgiveness is birthed of the Spirit. So it comes from the Spirit of God in us. **FORGIVENESS IS A CHOICE**

Letting go of offense is making the choice - making a step of faith to forgive. That choice releases the Spirit to give you the strength to forgive and let go of the offense.

#### **2. FORGIVENESS IS A LIFESTYLE**

*Colossians 3:13 Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.*

**GOD OUR FATHER MADE AN ALLOWANCE FOR US TO OFFEND HIM BEFORE HE CREATED THE WORLD.**

*Ephesians 1:4-5 Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. <sup>5</sup> God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.*

God decided to forgive us before we needed to be forgiven. He made a choice to forgive us before we did anything wrong, before we turned our back on Him.

#### **3. FORGIVENESS IS BIRTHED OF THE SPIRIT**

*Matthew 6:14-15 "If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. <sup>15</sup> But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.*

Remember, Forgiveness originated with God. He forgave first. Forgiveness is an action of the spirit. Therefore it is birthed out of the spirit. It originates in your spirit man.

**SINCE FORGIVENESS IS BIRTHED OF THE SPIRIT, TO HOLD OFFENSE IS TO CUT OFF THE SPIRIT'S WORK IN OUR LIVES.**

**The way I would put it is like this: If the forgiveness that we received at the cost of the blood of Jesus Christ, is so ineffective in our hearts that we are bent on holding grudges and bitterness against someone, then we don't cherish HIS forgiveness. We don't trust in HIS forgiveness. We don't embrace and treasure HIS forgiveness.**

**We are hypocrites. We are just mouthing. We haven't ever really felt the piercing, joyful wonder that God paid for by the life of his Son. Maybe we have some self-righteousness that says I really haven't done that much wrong. I don't need as much forgiveness. So the forgiveness we have received does not have as much value.**

**HOW IN THE WORLD CAN WE HOLD A GRUDGE AGAINST SOMEONE WHEN WE HAVE NOT BEEN OFFENDED NEARLY LIKE GOD HAS BEEN OFFENDED?**

**CLOSING:**

**I WANT TO ASK YOU A QUESTION: AM YOU BORN OF THE SPIRIT OR ONLY BORN OF THE FLESH?**

**WE ALL KNOW A TREE BY ITS FRUIT.**

**(Fruit is your Words and actions)**

**IF YOU ARE REBORN AND PLANTED AND ROOTED IN THE SPIRIT OF GOD,  
IF YOU ARE GRAFTED INTO THE VINE WHICH IS JESUS, THEN THE LIFE GIVING MERCIFUL POWER OF GOD IS FLOWING FROM AND US AND BEARING BEARING FRUIT IN OUR LIVES.**

**IF YOU HAVE BEEN REBORN OF THE SPIRIT THEN FORGIVENESS FLOWS FROM YOU.**