

Matthew 16:21-23 “How NOT to Offend Jesus”

6.25.17

As you are turning in your Bibles this morning, I want to ask you a question that you probably wouldn't want to answer out loud. The question: Has God let you down lately? Or to ask it another way: Has God disappointed you lately? How's that for a hand grenade right out of the gate?

Sincerely, has there been a period of time or season of time in your life, (and it could be right now), that you feel the Lord has let you down or not kept His end of the bargain? Now as you ponder your answer to those questions, might I say this about my own life... WHEN I DO FEEL THAT WAY...and I believe we all have experienced that feeling in our lives at some point, I've grown to understand that when I feel the Lord has let me down and not kept His end of the bargain...the bargain is MY BARGAIN with Him...not Him with me. It's mine and that's where I've gotten off course.

We all know that God's ways aren't our ways and His thoughts our thoughts and because of that there will be seasons of time in our lives where we might be left shaking our heads and asking: Lord, what are you doing? Or, we might even want to help the Lord by giving Him some advice. (Yes, I've done that...and I shake my head...admitting that to you.)

But, I'm in good company, because the Apostle Pete did the same thing. He thought He could give the Lord some good advice that would keep Jesus from death... But, the advice was so offensive, that Jesus told Peter: "Get behind me, Satan!" What in the world could Peter have said to have garnered such a response from Jesus? We're going to see the answer this morning as we talk about: "How NOT to Offend Jesus."

Matthew 16:21-23

²¹ From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." ²³ But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

Now, if you have been with us, you will remember that Jesus is only a few months away from His death on the cross outside the city walls of Jerusalem. Jesus is a long way from Jerusalem. He's not in Galilee anymore. He's in the pagan, Gentile town of Caesarea Philippi. See the top of the map...



CP is about 25 miles north of Capernaum, which is the northern most town on the Sea of Galilee. Now, do you remember why Jesus has gone so far north?

Remember...there's two main reasons: #1 He knows He's only got a few short months to live and He needs to make sure His disciples truly understand who He is. That's why He asked them: Who do you say that I am? Peter, answering as the spokesperson for the group, said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!" And (as we saw last time), that answer was the rock foundation on which Jesus would build His church.

#2, the second reason was because He was being dogged by the Pharisees. They hate Him and they are trying to kill Him because Jesus has torn the mask off of their hypocrisy as leaders and exposed them for who they really were: Hypocrites who only sought to fleece and rip off the people.

So, Jesus is pouring everything He's got into His disciples because He's going to be leaving them in a matter of months, and return to His throne in Heaven. So, all is well, right? Everything is good, right? Peter speaks for the group and says, "Yes...we've got it...you're the CHRIST...you're the One we've been praying for and hoping for all of our lives...you are the Messiah...you are the Son of the Living God.

Not so fast!

What we must never forget is that these disciples were Jews and their idea of who the Messiah was going to be was ANYTHING but a "Suffering Servant." NO! Jesus told them He's going to die and this was counter to everything they believed. You see they believed the Messiah would be the conquering King and He would go to Rome and overthrow the Romans and then return to Jerusalem where He would rule and reign in the Temple on the Throne of David.

You see, these disciples wanted a Kingdom on Earth...right now...they couldn't fathom what Jesus was telling them He's going to die. You see, it didn't fit with their bargain! They had an understanding of what they thought Jesus should be and do and when He started to talk about dying...well...that was absurd to them! The Messiah reigns...He doesn't die! 1 Corinthians 1:22-23 sums up this sentiment well...

1 Corinthians 1:22-23

²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles.

You see, for the disciples, their understanding was still incomplete. That's why Jesus said in verse 20...

Matthew 16:20

²⁰ Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

They still didn't have a correct understanding of who He was and Jesus didn't want them confusing people by announcing Him as the Messiah...the Christ...but, giving the wrong idea that He was here to set up His kingdom. No! That's not going to happen this time...but, when Jesus returns to the Mount of Olives, He will set up His Kingdom and He will rule and reign on this earth for 1,000 years (that's known as the Millennial Reign). **Now look at verse 21.**

Matthew 16:21

²¹ From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

Don't miss the FIFTH word in that verse: "BEGAN." After the disciples got the confession correct that He was indeed the Son of God, Jesus drops the bombshell on them: I'm going to die! Now, he had hinted at this back in Matthew 12:40 when the Pharisees wanted a sign that He was the Messiah, and Jesus said, "I'll only give you the sign of Jonah... He was three days in the belly of a fish, and I'll eventually be three days in the heart of the earth." Perhaps that could have been called a "veiled reference" to His death...but, now there's nothing veiled whatsoever about what Jesus is saying: **"I'm going to Jerusalem and I'll be killed."**

You see, Jesus didn't mince words. He said, "I **MUST** go to Jerusalem." There was no plan B! This is it! And folks, I'll tell you, this is a MUST that comes thundering out of eternity past. This is a MUST that comes from the plan God set in motion as soon as Adam and Eve were wiping the juice off their chins from eating the forbidden fruit! The plan: Set in a motion a way for mankind to come back to God and be delivered from our sin! And thus, in the same chapter of Scripture that we find the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, in Genesis chapter 3, we find the first Messianic Promise when God said to Satan:

Genesis 3:15

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

So, this is a MUST...the journey to complete the plan of salvation...Yes...that plan would lead Jesus to Jerusalem and a Roman cross. Can you imagine living as Jesus did...knowing this awaited you?



That's what Jesus did for you and for me and He told His disciples...I'm going to suffer and die!

And you see... this is what made no sense to Peter. SUFFER...that means HUMILIATION... DIE...that means DEFEAT! NO! NO! NO! This is not how it's supposed to end... It's supposed to end in Exaltation and Triumph **NOT** humiliation and death! Peter couldn't fathom a suffering Messiah...who dies!

But that's NOT how it's going to end, is it! Listen...they missed the last part of what Jesus said in verse 21. See it...

Matthew 16:21

²¹ From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

“And on the third day be raised.” They missed that! They heard it, **but they didn't hear it**...do you know what I mean? Has that ever happened to you? Sure it has...somebody is telling you something and it's got good news and bad news in it and all you can hear is the BAD NEWS. That's exactly what happened to the disciples and Peter! All they heard was: “go to Jerusalem and BE KILLED!” The part about “and the third day be raised...” well, it didn't compute.

When Jesus said, “be killed” in the Greek that word is: (A-pok-TAIN-o), and it means to “snuff out or extinguish.” It's what happens when you blow out a candle. The light is gone...snuffed out! And when Peter heard that he snapped! I mean Peter had just proclaimed: “You are the Christ...the Son of the Living God,” and now He's hearing...that the LIGHT OF THE WORLD is going to be extinguished...snuffed out! No way!!! And so Peter grabs Jesus by the arm...

Matthew 16:22

²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.”

Can you see this scene in your mind? “Peter took him aside...” Literally, Peter (according to the Greek) took Jesus by the arm and PULLED Him to the side to seek to INSTRUCT Jesus...in essence to SET HIM STRAIGHT.

It's as if Peter was saying: Come here Lord...WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT... You don't understand what you're saying! This will NEVER HAPPEN TO YOU!!! No way! You're the Messiah! This is NOT how it's going to end!

Church family...do you see what's happening here? Peter is trying to instruct God. Don't ever forget that Jesus is God in the second person, and Peter is trying to tell GOD that he knows better! PETER IS REBUKING God! But, don't we do that too?

Don't we do it when we say to the Lord, **"Sorry Lord, but I don't like the way things are going in my life and I don't think you are being fair with me...and this is the way it ought to be and you're not keeping your end of the bargain! So get with the program Lord...my program!!"**

You see, Peter couldn't fathom seeing a dead Savior! It didn't compute! That's not the way it's supposed to be! So, he's trying to get Jesus back on track (His track)! *"Suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and scribes..."* SUFFERING! Are you kidding! No Jesus...**DON'T DO THAT TO YOURSELF!** That's what Peter said... See it again... VERSE 22...

Matthew 16:22

²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, **"Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you."**

That phrase: "far be it," is translated in some Bibles as: "Be merciful to yourself, Lord!" The Greek word is: **"he-lee-os" (hileos)** and it literally means: "have mercy or pity."

Peter was saying, *"Come on Jesus...have some pity on yourself, Lord! Why in the world WOULD you want to make this harder than it has to be?"*

Well, that did it! Jesus stops Peter mid-stream... Did you see in verse 22 where Matthew said, that Peter **"began to rebuke him..."** Jesus said: Enough! Watch...

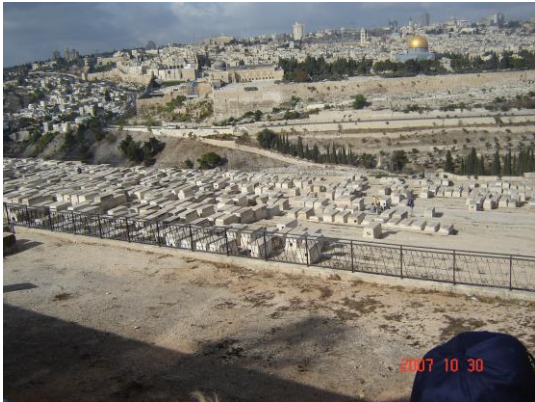
Matthew 16:23

²³ But he turned and said to Peter, **"Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."**

Oh my! Did Jesus call Peter, "Satan?" No! But, Jesus knew the source of Peter's thinking and he identified it for Peter. Peter was thinking "Satan-inspired thoughts." And Jesus knows all about Satan's schemes. Jesus had seen all this before. Remember Matthew 4 when Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness right after His Baptism by John the Baptist?

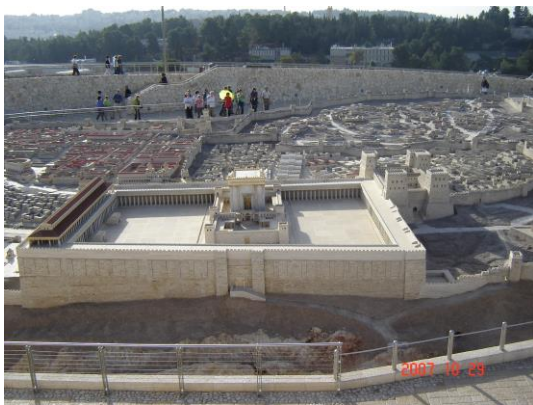
Satan offered Jesus a way out of the suffering. Jesus had been fasting 40 days and 40 nights and Satan tempts Jesus to turn stones into bread, so he could eat. Go ahead Jesus! Take pity on your hunger...EAT! Jesus refused. Then Satan tempted Jesus and offered Him the kingdom of the world if He would just bow to him (Satan) and finally, Satan tempted Jesus to jump off the corner of the Temple compound in Jerusalem. Let me show you...

Take a look at this picture...



I took this picture from the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem back in 2007. What you see is the Kidron Valley below and there on the top of the hill is the Dome of the Rock...the Muslim Mosque that was built in 692 Ottoman Turks (Muslims). But, remember, it's where the Dome of the Rock is that the Jewish Temple was located in Jesus' day and at the corner of that Temple compound, scholars say Jesus (when tempted by Satan there) would have been about 300 feet above the floor of the Kidron Valley. **Take a look at this picture.**

It's a model, built to scale of what the Temple would have looked like in the first century...



See that left-hand corner of the picture? That's considered the pinnacle of the Temple compound (the southeast corner) and that's where Satan took Jesus and tempted Him to jump off and be rescued by angels.

You see, Satan was trying to short-circuit and short-cut the redemptive plan of God that would come through the death of His Son. Satan was tempting Jesus to take the easy way out... EAT the bread...let angels rescue you...YOU DON'T have to suffer Jesus... You can accomplish the plan with an easier way...

Oh...Jesus recognized the deceit of Satan...the Father of Lies! And He didn't fall for it...literally...falling from the Pinnacle...and he wasn't going to fall for it with Satan to trying to use Peter either!

You see, here's Peter...a man that Jesus loved so much and Satan was trying to use Peter to trick Jesus into doing what he couldn't get Him to do some 2 ½ years earlier with those temptations. **Oh, be careful Church...be careful**...Satan is so deceitful and crafty...he will use whatever means necessary to trip us up. He couldn't do it on his own with Jesus...so, Satan sought to put those deceptive thoughts into Peter's mind and try to use Peter...a man Jesus chose and loved so much...to thwart God's plan to redeem us. **But, it didn't work did it!**

You know, when Jesus was tempted by Satan, Jesus only used Scripture in speaking to Satan? Why? Because Jesus chose not to pull rank on us...those of us disciples of His that would come in future generations.

You see, God anointed His Son to do **as a MAN** what we, as humans, can also do since we've been saved and anointed with the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The power of God resides in us as saved people, just as the power of God resided in Jesus. ***The great preacher Adrian Rogers said it this way:***

“You and I have all we need to face any temptation. For we are in Christ and He is in us! We have the same Father to call on, and we, too, have the Word of God to use against the Enemy! For, ‘greater is He that’s in us than he that’s in the world.’” Adrian Rogers

You see, we can resist Satan just as Jesus did...using the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.
Please look at verse 23 again... Jesus will say the same thing that He had said when He was tempted back in Matthew chapter 4... BE GONE SATAN... In the Greek: **“Who-Pog-Oh Satanus!”** Get behind me...

Matthew 16:23

²³ But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

Wow! Think about it...Jesus said that Peter was being a hindrance to Him. The word “hindrance” means: “Stumbling Block.” And it means being OFFENSIVE to someone. Peter was offending Jesus. Are you?

You know, Amazing isn't it... The same believer who can, in one breath, be used to speak for God, (as Peter did when he proclaimed Jesus was the Christ) can in the next breath, be used in speaking for Satan. But isn't that how it is with us? One minute we are seeking to follow God and the next minute we are falling into Satan's trap!

We might ask one another: Come on! Is this so bad? After all...all Peter wanted to do was to eliminate the pain and suffering for Jesus! Peter could see NO VALUE in the pain. But, you see, that's how man thinks... We would rather choose feelings and ease over suffering, pain and truth! Soften it up God! Make it easier for me!

And folks it's happening in pulpits all over America today. What? Softening it! Making the Gospel “easy” and palatable for the masses. I'm telling you soft pulpits are leading people astray...following the ways of Satan when the truth is not preached... It's not popular to preach truth...they say. That's a lie...we're growing...why? People want truth...they're tired of it being watered down!

Let me give you some examples of how the truth is being watered down and softened today: Yes, it's harder to wait until you are married to be intimate...but, that's God's design... So we live together outside of marriage...because it's easier! I don't want to study...so, I'll just cheat! I don't want to forgive...so I'll just hate! I don't want to hold my tongue...so, I'll cuss. I don't want to protect my heart...so, I'll click that site... I don't want to have to pay for it now...so, I'll just charge it and go deeper in debt. No! Let me drink... Let me watch trash... Let me listen to garbage... It's easier this way, Lord! Let me do it this way, Lord! I don't want to suffer, Lord! Have pity on me Lord! **He-Lee-OS**...have some

mercy, Lord... You see, my way is much better...you'll see...just get on board with my way of thinking...

And you know what, LISTEN...if Jesus were standing right here in front of me and I were to say those things...He would say, **“Get behind me Satan! You are a hindrance (OFFENDING ME) to me! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man!”**

Are you thinking man's way or God's way today? Think about your life. How are you living it? Are you trying to soften it for yourself? How about your family? Your children? Are you afraid to apply the truth. Yes, it might hurt! Yes, it might cause suffering... But, think about it... Jesus' suffering and death was followed by a resurrection! You see, there has to be a dying of self before we can be raised to a new life! And so often, there must be a death to the things of our lives before there can be a resurrection.

Do you know what we're going to see in the next verse (next Sunday)? The path to God's way... Just see the verses for a moment...

Matthew 16:24-26

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. ²⁶ For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?”

One last thought as we close... Take a look at verse 23 one last time and I want you to see Peter's thoughts...

Matthew 16:23

²³ But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are **not setting your mind** on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

Jesus said, “Set your mind on the things of God.” What are the things of God? Well, there are many things... The things of God are being in Church, having Christian friends, listening to Christian music, etc. But, I'm telling you this...if you want to set your mind on the things of God you are going to have to read the Word of God.

Can I ask you... Have you set your mind on the Bible at all this past week? If not, you're going to be MOST LIKELY be thinking like the world and Satan is going to take your thoughts and try to trap you! That's why the Bible says this about our thoughts...

2 Corinthians 10:5-6

⁵ We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,⁶ being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

Hey, how did Peter finish up? He would lead the Church wouldn't he? He'd preach at Pentecost and 3,000 people would be saved. Ultimately, he didn't want to offend Jesus did He? In fact, so as not to be offensive or presumptuous of his Savior, when he was executed in Rome for his faith in Jesus, (according to the writings of the early church fathers), how did Peter ask to be killed? (Remember, Romans killed non-Romans by what method?) Crucifixion. Upside down...



He said he wasn't worthy... I think Peter got it, don't you?

May we today, set our minds on the things of God and not the things of man, so as not to offend the Lord Jesus!