

# Offensive! (The Sharing of the Gospel Is)

## *Part 2: Filthy Rags*

(Preached 6/20/21)

Please turn to *Luke 7*.

### **Sermon #1: The Reality of the Full Gospel**

- What we say is causing more offense than what we do.
- The Gospel message, meant to be spoken out loud and shared with people, is not just going to Heaven—it contains an offensive part as well.
- God became a human and needed to eat, drink, and sleep. He got tired, He could be injured, felt emotions, and had temptations...yet He never committed a sin.
- He subjected Himself to His own creations, allowing us to betray, reject, beat, crucify, and kill Him.
- Jesus died to pay our debt of sin, reconcile us to God as sons, guarantee our resurrection and citizenship in the coming Kingdom and a place in the NJ, amen!
- OFFENSE: Jesus didn't die for us to be happy all the time, have physical provision, never get sick, avoid accidents, be promoted at work, and to live in a nice house.
- Modern American charismatic teaching portrays God as a Father Who wants us to live our best physical lives now (provision, promotion, prosperity) AND in the Kingdom to come.
- Said teaching has produced weak Christians who fall apart in the face of 1<sup>st</sup> world adversity.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians gave up everything in this world and lived for the Kingdom to come! They gave up money, possession, lands, jobs, businesses, reputations, rights, and even marriages and families to make disciples.
- We're not greater than our Master, Jesus.
- No, we don't have to die for our own sins, praise God! We don't have to go to Hell, the eternal debtors prison, to pay our debt, thank the Lord!
- Because of Jesus we now have the Holy Spirit living in use, producing His Fruit and helping us to combat temptation and the desires of the flesh. We have everlasting life in His Kingdom, a completely secure future! HALLELUJAH!
- Yet if they persecuted Him, we too will be persecuted. Other people, the world, the devil, and our own flesh will betray us, steer us away from the Lord, tempt and entice us, falsely accuse, and directly come against us just as they did Jesus.
- Jesus gave us a new spirit so we are no longer of THIS world—therefore we cannot have our Joel Osteen best life now AND in the Kingdom to come.
- We will suffer in this world and in this body...and that message is horribly offensive.

TRANSFORMATIONAL. It is true that God loves everyone just as they are...but **His love is transformational and inspires us to repent of our former life and be more like His Son Jesus.**

OFFENSIVE? That truth is a great offense to some. Why?

- They falsely believe God's love AFFIRMS their old selves and the desires of their flesh and heart.
- They deny the need to repent, change, and turn away from it even if the Lord, in His Bible, calls it sin.

HATE SPEECH? If a Christian points out a sinful lifestyle and calls for repentance, it's considered hate. Again I say: God does love everyone just as they are and **He doesn't withhold His love while waiting for us to change.**

EXPRESSION. Yet look at the expression of His love in a famous verse:

**John 3:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

**What comes after the "God so loved" part is His expression of it and how it transforms us:** for people to repent to avoid perishing in Hell, done only through Jesus.

AFFIRMATION VERSION. The affirmation-only version of God's love would change this verse to read like this: ***"For God so loved the world that everyone will have eternal life."*** Let me read the verses immediately following verse 16 where Jesus gives us the whole picture:

**John 3:17-21 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

<sup>18</sup> Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

<sup>19</sup> And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

<sup>20</sup> For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

<sup>21</sup> But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."

**Verse 17:** Jesus doesn't want to condemn...He came to Save, praise God! This verse shows that He's brought a NC and is not here to enforce the old one.

**Yet verse 18** shows there will be some who are judged & condemned, NOT because Jesus is comparing their actions to the Law, but because they didn't believe in Jesus as their Savior.

EVIDENCE OF SALVATION. Aren't there lots of people who claim Jesus as Savior? Including people who believe God is affirmational only? You bet...but in **verses 19-21** Christ shows the evidence of those who believe in Him: *they turn away from any wicked way or lifestyle and step into the Light of God, where all things are exposed.*

**What defines wickedness?** God defines it, and He took great pains to do so in His commandments. Anyone walking in the love of God doesn't remain where they are perpetually, they recognize anything in their lives that's not of God and depart from it.

3 P'S. That's offensive, especially to an unbeliever or an affirmation-only Christian who thinks God is here to promote, protect, and prosper them.

ENEMIES. Before we are Saved, we are not God's children. While He does love us, we're His enemies.

MAKE SENSE?! Just in case you think that isn't possible or think it doesn't make any sense, I'll bet most of you have experienced this with other people. Can you think of someone you love who has made false accusations about you? Tries to control your life? Sticks their nose in your business? Perhaps you've even faced them in a court of law over something. You still love them, but truth is when they do these things they're adversaries. We love our teenagers, but sometimes they directly oppose us!

**Enemy and hate are familiar with each other, but they're not a married couple. We can love someone who is opposing us and acting like an adversary.**

#### **Romans 5:6-11 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

<sup>7</sup> For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—

<sup>8</sup> but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

<sup>9</sup> Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

<sup>10</sup> For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

<sup>11</sup> More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

**Verses 6-8:** God loved us before we were saved even though we were, back then, considered sinners.

**Verse 9:** despite God loving unsaved sinners, His wrath IS stored up for them should they remain where they are and not be Saved. They will receive this wrath in the form of eternal debtors prison if they don't repent and receive Jesus as Savior.

**Verse 10:** unsaved people are enemies of God. He still loves them, but so far they refuse to step into the Light and be Saved.

**Verses 10-11:** Being Saved RECONCILES us to God...remember that sermon in the Forgiveness series? First we did "distance forgiveness" where we forgave someone who wronged us within our hearts. But then we needed to complete the circle by approaching the person we forgave and reconciling with them, which is where the true miracle takes place.

RECONCILED TO GOD. God sent Jesus Who paid the debt for the whole world! God has forgiven us in His heart, yet some choose to reject Him and remain in darkness and will end up in debtors prison. Once we receive Christ we meet with the Lord and are reconciled with Him.

"I'M A GOOD PERSON" When I attempt to evangelize an unbeliever, most of them already think they're good, moral people. They usually tell me that while they aren't perfect, they've never done anything truly bad like murder. They go on to talk of their generosity, willingness to serve, and other good qualities along with a personal moral code they feel they live up to. When I ask them if they think that qualifies them for Heaven, they say "yes."

OFFENSE! Now here's where the Gospel can cause offense: **it takes all of our self (or others) assigned righteousness, and throws it in a dumpster.**

**Isaiah 64:5-6 (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> You meet him who rejoices and does righteousness, *Who* remembers You in Your ways. You are indeed angry, for we have sinned-- In these ways we continue; And we need to be saved.

<sup>6</sup> But we are all like an unclean *thing*, And all our righteousnesses *are* like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.

PERFECTION. The Gospel offends because God's standard for righteousness is absolute perfection—never having committed even one sin in our entire life AND doing all the good works He commands!

**There are no shades of gray when it comes to righteousness, there is only Light and Dark. Anything less than absolute perfection is darkness.**

NOT MORAL ENOUGH. Therefore, in order to become a citizen of the Kingdom, walk the streets of the NJ, and be a son of God filled with the Holy Spirit you need to be perfect. An unbeliever needs to come to the knowledge that they aren't good enough, not even close. They must melt down the golden calf of their own morality and goodness, and recognize that they're sinners who can never be good enough.

PRE-MADE RIGHTEOUSNESS. I'll compare my pre-Jesus, pre-Saved "righteousness" to anyone! (Remember, there are no shades of gray when it comes to righteousness!) I was the good kid growing up: never got in trouble with the law, was respectful of elders, didn't have problems at school, never drank alcohol, did drugs, smoked, or fornicated. People called me "good two-shoes." When I was a teenager I was the favorite of all my friend's parents. They used to say to me *"you can hang out with our son any time, Scott! When he's with you he never gets in trouble and we trust you!"*

DRUNK ONCE. I got drunk once, in 1996 when I was living in NYC and my family came down for a night on the town to celebrate my last days there before I moved. I'd never been drunk before that. Becky is the only woman I've ever been with—I don't have an ex. I took a puff of a cigarette once when I was 12, choked and gagged, and have never touched one since.

OCEAN. Yet on the day I met Jesus, in 1997, the first thing He did was show me every sin I'd ever committed since I was a baby...yes, babies commit sins and yes, that's Biblical. The amount of sin I'd committed wasn't just a pool or pond, it was an ocean! Have you ever swam too far out into a lake and worried that you didn't have the strength to make it back to shore? I remember thinking I had been thrown into the middle of Atlantic Ocean with nothing but water for miles in every direction. That ocean was my debt of sins and I was drowning—I needed someone to save me.

FILTHY RAGS. As I was forced to watch myself commit all of them, I began to sob and scream at my depravity! As Isaiah said, my self and others assigned righteousness was nothing but filthy rags before God!

NECESSARY REVELATION. Why is the revelation necessary for the unbeliever? Why was it necessary for me? Because I would only recognize my desperate need for redemption and forgiveness once I saw how I'd failed to be good. I would only reach out—cry out!—for a Savior when I realized I needed Someone Who succeeded in being righteous and loved me enough to pull me out the moral quicksand I found myself in.

## 2 Corinthians 7:9-10 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing.

<sup>10</sup> For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

NEED A SAVIOR. A Godly sorrow is what I experienced—my own sins were vast and I was dying in them, bound for debtors prison where the price would be exacted from me in blood. It was only when I realized this that I cried out for loving Savior, who pulled me out of that ocean and set my feet upon solid ground.

## Luke 7:36-50 (NKJV)

<sup>36</sup> Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat.

<sup>37</sup> And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil,

<sup>38</sup> and stood at His feet behind *Him* weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped *them* with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed *them* with the fragrant oil.

<sup>39</sup> Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw *this*, he spoke to himself, saying, "This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman *this is* who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."

<sup>40</sup> And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it."

<sup>41</sup> "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.

<sup>42</sup> And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?"

<sup>43</sup> Simon answered and said, "I suppose the *one* whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged."

<sup>44</sup> Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped *them* with the hair of her head.

<sup>45</sup> You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in.

<sup>46</sup> You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil.

<sup>47</sup> Therefore I say to you, her sins, *which are* many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loves little."

<sup>48</sup> Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

<sup>49</sup> And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

<sup>50</sup> Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

**Why didn't most the Pharisees get Saved?** Consider this: Simon the Pharisee invited GOD into His house to eat, and God accepted. Simon wasn't just sitting in the presence of a rabbi, prophet, or Messiah—but God in the flesh!!! I'm not sure whether Simon got Saved or not, but the woman who washed Jesus' feet did—of her Salvation I am sure! Why?

**Simon considered himself a moral person.** He was a pious, religious man who attempted to follow God's Law as best he could. Not only did he have great Biblical knowledge of the Lord's commands, but likely took great pains to follow them. Remember what I told you about the Pharisees in the first forgiveness sermon, they separated themselves from society and tried to follow God's commandments to the letter.

**A person who already considers themselves moral doesn't think they need a Savior.**

NEED MUCH FORGIVENESS? Even if they believe they need forgiveness, they'll judge it isn't much...especially compared to people living a less righteous lifestyle.

WOMAN KNOWN SINNER. The woman washing Jesus' feet was a known sinner in society...and she knew it. She had no illusions about her righteousness or morality—therefore she was ripe for Saving. Remember that being Saved first means recognizing Jesus as God—the only One capable of taking on human form and NOT giving in to the temptations of the flesh and world! The only One able to never commit a sin ever! The only One with a pure love to die for people Who may not know Him or love Him back, and Who might even hate Him!

SHE GETS SAVED. The sinful woman walked into that house knowing that Jesus was all these things and SHE is one to whom the Lord of Creation Himself declares “your sins are forgiven.” He doesn't say that to self-righteous Simon.

This sinful woman with a terrible reputation around town will make for a mighty Christian who produced amazing fruit for God's Kingdom! Why? She knows she's been forgiven for a lot and therefore her capacity to express the same love given to her will be greater than a Pharisee who considers himself mostly righteous already.

A person who realizes how much they've been forgiven will understand they aren't greater than the One Who Saved them, Jesus. They understand that persecution, suffering, and hardship will come especially if they actively choose to make disciples of others.

Humility is a fruit produced by the Holy Spirit and a powerful tool for every Christian.

Humility is NOT beating yourself up after being Saved...remember that we never agree with a drunk conscience. We cannot produce humility by condemning ourselves or letting others do it.

## **Humility is the recognition that we need Jesus just as much after being Saved as we did before.**

- He's forgiven me of everything, yet I still commit sins and He's the only One Who can help me turn away from them and overcome.
- He's transferred all of His righteousness to me and won't take it away, yet I still have this flesh whose desires directly conflict with that of the Holy Spirit. I still rely on Him heavily to crucify my flesh and fill me with the good fruit of said Spirit.
- If he were to take His Spirit away from me, which He won't, I would become an absolute reprobate.

## **TELL STORY OF GOING TO WASHINGTON DC.**

I'm a son of God forever and the only reason I belong to this family is because Jesus presented me to His Father for adoption.

### ***He is the only reason anything good is inside me.***

He is the only reason that I'm inspired to make disciples, speak His Word, or do any good works for His Kingdom.

Humility will flow to and through us only when we see, every day, that without Jesus we are nothing.

TESTIFY that you are His! Tell your heart and mind that you are a son/daughter of God! Tell the Devil that you're forgiven of all!

### **1 John 5:11-13 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup> And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

<sup>12</sup> He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

<sup>13</sup> These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue to* believe in the name of the Son of God.