

I. Intro

A. Text: **Matt. 11:1-6**

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² And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples ³ and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: ⁵ The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. ⁶ And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me." (**Matt. 11:1-6**)

B. Series Overview

1. I'd like to invite you to the first part in our new series called "Don't Trip": Avoiding the obstacles of offense.
2. One of the greatest and most strategic tactics that the enemy uses to attack us is to lay the trap of offense among the people of God.
 - a. Offense often spreads and destroys the spiritual body much like cancer destroys many earthly bodies nowadays.
 - b. It's the one tactic that the enemy has seemingly mastered.
3. Our enemy has mastered offense so well that Jesus gave us a 100% likelihood of being confronted with it.
 - a. "For it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" (**Matt. 18:7**)

II. Body

¹ Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities. ² And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples ³ and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" (**Matt. 11:1-3**)

A. Background to Passage (**Mk. 6:14-29**)

1. John was the forerunner to Jesus.
2. One day, in the line of his normal duties, John approached King Herod to deliver a word from the Lord. (**Mk. 6:14-29**)
 - a. It's not cool for you to be knockin' boots with your brother's wife. (**Mk. 6:18**)
 - b. Instead of a nice, pretty altar call marked by repentance and a sizeable love offering for speaking an anointed word from God, John received a prison cell for His troubles.
3. **Mk. 6:27-28** explains that John never left that prison cell.
 - a. Herod eventually had John beheaded (all because John spoke the word of the Lord).
4. While awaiting the executioner's sword, John was sitting inside of his filthy, dark prison cell when the news came to him that Jesus was in town.
 - a. There was a buzz in the streets. There was excitement in the air.
 - b. John probably anticipated that Jesus would come storming in to break down the walls and snatch him from the clutches of pain and persecution.
 - i. After all, he was the devoted mouthpiece of God; the very friend of the Bridegroom.
 - ii. He was the cousin of Jesus.
 - iii. The Forerunner who prepared for the way of the Lord.
 - iv. But it never happened.

5. To add insult to injury, John had also heard that Jesus had recently sent his disciples out for the first time two by two to experience ministry's ups and downs in the streets of Jerusalem... all while John was trapped in this prison.

- a. The news was spreading like wildfire in Jerusalem.
- b. These new, immature disciples preached the same message that John the Baptist devoted his life to: Repent. (**Mk. 6:12**)
- c. They were even casting out demons and healing the sick.
 - i. And the word was getting out quick about what God was doing in and through this ragtag group of disciples
 - ii. ... all while John was in prison (not for doing wrong, but for doing right).

6. These are the circumstances that precipitate our text.

¹ Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities. ² And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples ³ and said to Him, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?” (Matt. 11:1-3)

B. Offense is the Fruit of Misguided Expectations

- 1. Clear from the text that John the Baptist was more than a little fed up.
- 2. Surely by now, Jesus should have come by to pull him out of the unjust situation he was in.
 - a. After all, John was the faithful servant of God.
 - b. Surely Jesus wouldn't allow those who follow him to suffer persecution, tribulation and trouble?
 - c. Those are misguided expectations
 - i. **Job 14:1:** “*Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.*”

- ii. **Jn. 16:33:** “*In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*”
- 3. We get offended when people and things don’t measure up to our predetermined expectations.
- 4. John had his own expectations that were not consistent with his reality.
 - a. John’s expectations were not consistent with the truth of God’s word, so the result was internal chaos and offense.

C. Offense Always Starts With Offense Toward God

²*And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples*³*and said to Him, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”*
(Matt. 11:2-3)

- 1. John the Baptist (because of misguided expectations) was MAD!
 - a. He was so offended that it threatened to rob him of his revelation of Jesus Christ
- 2. If anyone knew WHO Jesus was, it was John the Baptist.
 - a. From the time he was in his mother’s womb, the Holy Spirit came over him in such a way that He declared that this is the Christ with leaps of joy.
 - b. He was Big Cousin.
 - c. It was John the Baptist who pointed to Jesus and announced His revelation to the world:
 - i. “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world”
 - ii. Experientially, he knew Jesus. Yet offense threatened to settle in and rob him of the revelation.

“Are you the Coming One, or do we look for another?”

3. **Question:** I thought we were talking about dealing with offenses with others, why are you talking about being offended by Jesus?

a. **Answer:** Offense toward others always starts with offense toward God

4. Don't act like we don't get offended with God.

a. God is transcendent, so He inevitably goes far beyond what our minds could possibly contain:

i. **Is. 55:8-9:** *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.⁹ "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.*

5. The word of God often offends the natural mind.

a. **1 Cor. 1:23:** ²² *For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness.*

b. Count it all joy...

c. Turn the other cheek.

d. **Matt. 5:43-44:** ...Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.

e. **Lk. 14:26:** ²⁶ *"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.*

A. Offended People Are Easily Offended

6. Trip over the stumbling block of offense one time and the next time becomes that much easier.

- a. Many of us have been hurt so much that we're just looking for the next offense.

D. Offense is Dangerous, But It Will Not Stop the Kingdom of God

⁴Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: ⁵The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. ⁶And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.” (Matt. 11:4-6)

- 1. Tell John that the Kingdom must and will be advanced.
- 2. Folks are still getting healed, delivered and set free. The gospel is being proclaimed, accompanied by signs and wonders.
 - a. Salvations without number.
 - b. Revival is striking the land.

Offended (skandalizo #4625): *to reach out and trip, to ensnare, to entrap, to cause one to distrust someone who is trustworthy, to entice to sin, to cause to stumble.*

- 3. The Kingdom must be advanced. It will. No matter what your personal circumstances and current situation.
 - a. I'm using your current status to bring about my glory.
 - i. I've called you to partner with me in Kingdom building.
 - ii. You may endure circumstances that don't match up with your fairy tale expectations.
 - b. But if you can get through this without tripping, blessing unspeakable is on the other side.
- 4. I am trying to get you to indescribable blessing, but can you trust me in the journey?
 - a. Joseph, I'm going to bring you to the palace to be the second in charge of Egypt.

- b. David, I've got great plans for you. You'll rule as a man after my own heart: A Shepherd King.
- c. Bushawn, you're going to teach and preach my word in the city of Barstow.

III. Concl.: God's Kingdom will absolutely be established in the earth. And he'd love to partner with you to make it so.

- A. What a beautiful blessing?
- B. But the blessing of Kingdom partnership is reserved for those who ain't offended at how God does it.