

Trapped “*The Spirit of Offense*”

Matthew 24:10–13 (NKJV)

¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

- Most agree that we are in the season of Christ’s return
- Never have we seen such prophetic fulfillment in the church, in Israel and nature
- One of the signs of His return – “*Many will be offended...*”
- Not a few, not some, but many

He said, “*lawlessness will abound and the love of many would grow cold.*” – The Greek word He used is, *Agape*

- *Agape* is the love of God which has been shed abroad in our hearts – Its unconditional
- Not based on performance or whether or not it is returned

An offended Christian is one who takes in life but, because of fear, cannot release it

- The Greek word offend is where we get our word trap from
- More specifically, the part of the trap where you place the bait

If it is not dealt with, offense will eventually lead to a life of unforgiveness, isolation, bitterness and betrayal

Mark 11:24–26 (NKJV)

²⁴ Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive *them*, and you will have *them*.

²⁵ “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. ²⁶ But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”

- Jesus means what He says
- He’s not trying to win a popularity contest
- This is not like when our parents said, “*If you do that one more time you’re getting a spanking.*”
- Jesus walks at a level of truth and integrity that transcends our culture
- When Jesus said if you don’t forgive you won’t be forgiven, He meant it!

Matthew 6:14–15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Luke 6:37 (NKJV)

³⁷ “Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Matthew 6:12 (NKJV)

¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

- How would you like it if God forgave you the way you forgive others?
- That is exactly what Jesus is saying
- Just because unforgiveness is so rampant in the church it doesn't change the truth
- The way we forgive, release and restore another person is the way we will be forgiven
- Forgiveness has a direct impact on your spiritual growth

Matthew 5:46–48 (NKJV) Love your enemies and do good to those who hate you

⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more *than others*? Do not even the tax collectors do so? ⁴⁸ Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

- Spiritual growth is progressive
- Progressively becoming more like our Father
- Perfection is the lifelong goal
- Unforgiveness is a prison that cuts us off from others as well as God
- True forgiveness is not something we can do on our own

We need God to forgive us and then ask Him to empower us to love and forgive like Him

Matthew 18:21 (NKJV)

²¹ Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”

- I believe Peter thought this was a pretty generous answer to his own question
- But Jesus likes to take things up a few notches

Matthew 18:23–24 (NKJV)

²³ Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.

- A talent was a unit of measure
- It was used to measure gold, other metals and commodities
- In this parable it represents debt
- Let’s say gold
- The weight of a talent was approximately seventy-five pounds
- It was the full weight that a man could carry
- Ten thousand talents would be about 750,000 lbs. or 375 tons
- This servant owed 375 tons of gold
- \$15 billion by today’s standards
- A debt he could never pay

Matthew 18:25–27 (NKJV)

²⁵ But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. ²⁶ The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ ²⁷ Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

- When an offense occurs a debt is owed, “*They are going to pay for this.*”
- Forgiveness is a cancelation of debt
- The king represents our Heavenly Father
- He forgives the servant an impossible debt
- This is what Jesus has done for us

Colossians 2:13–14 (NKJV)

¹³ And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, ¹⁴ having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

- Our debt was unpayable
- Our offense was overwhelming
- God gives us salvation as a gift
- Jesus paid the certificate of debt that was against us

Matthew 18:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ “But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’

- A denarius was about one day’s wage for a common laborer
- So, let’s say by today’s standards it would be about \$6,500

Matthew 18:29–30 (NKJV)

²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ ³⁰ And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt.

- This fellow servant owed him a third of a year’s wages
- Remember though, he was forgiven about 15 billion by today’s standards
- More money than he could ever earn in a lifetime
- What is \$6,500 compared to 15 billion?
- We may have been treated badly but what is that compared to our transgressions against God?

You may feel that no one has it as bad as you do, but remember Jesus didn’t deserve any of the treatment and punishment He endured

- He was innocent
- The Lamb of God that was slain for us

A person who cannot forgive has forgotten the great debt that they have been forgiven

- Jesus delivered us from the lake of fire
- No relief, the worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched

This was our destination until God forgave us through the death of His Son Jesus!

Matthew 18:31–33 (NKJV)

³¹ So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. ³² Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. ³³ Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’

- Jesus is not talking about unbelievers
- This man already had a great debt forgiven (Salvation)
- This was the fate of a believer who refuses to forgive

Matthew 18:34–35 (NKJV)

³⁴ And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. ³⁵ “So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”

- Three major points in these verses

The Servant Was Turned Over to Torturers

Websters: Torture – “*agony of body or mind*” or “*the infliction of intense pain to punish, coerce, or afford sadistic pleasure.*”

- These torturers inflict pain and agony on those who have been forgiven (*believers*)
- Unforgiveness can also keep you from receiving healing
- Medical doctors have linked unforgiveness and bitterness with certain diseases, as well as mental sickness
- Many times, we can't forgive ourselves
- Jesus said, “*If you have anything against anyone, forgive...*”

The Servant Had to Pay the Unpayable Debt

- He was required to do the impossible
- It is like being required the debt Jesus paid
- This will challenge our “*Once saved, always saved*” theology

Explain this

2 Peter 2:20–21 (NKJV)

²⁰ For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.

²¹ For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.

- These are people who have escaped the pollutions of this world
- They are saved
- They once again become entangled in sin and overcome by it
- Unforgiveness is sin

Peter says you would have been better of never getting saved than getting saved and turning away

Jude 12–13 (NKJV)

¹² These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving *only* themselves. *They are* clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; ¹³ raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

Notice they are in the church attending the feasts and services

- “*Twice dead*” – once dead without Christ
- Made alive by receiving forgiveness
- Die again by departing from His ways permanently
- I don’t believe you lose salvation the way you lose a sock
- You need to be carried away and depart

Matthew 7:22–23 (NKJV)

²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

- They knew Him
- They called Him Lord and did miracles in His name
- But He did not know them

1 Corinthians 8:3 (NKJV)

³ But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.

Some people say, *“I love God I just don’t love this brother who has hurt me.”*

1 John 4:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

- Deception is a terrible thing
- When you are deceived, you don’t know you’re deceived
- You believe with all your heart that you are right
- You believe you are one way, when you are another

A person who refuses to obey the Word deceives his own heart

The enemy will try to convince us that when we have been wronged by someone that they owe us

- We expect some kind of payment

Romans 12:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, “*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,*” says the Lord.

- We are not to avenge ourselves
- This is what we are seeking when we refuse to forgive
- We desire, seek, plan, and carry out revenge
- We will not forgive until the debt is paid in full
- We determine the acceptable amount of payment
- We are not called to be the judge, God is

James 4:12 (NKJV)

¹² There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

James 5:9 (NKJV)

⁹ Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

- We need to leave it in God’s hands
- He will pass righteous judgement
- He will repay according to righteousness

You may have done no wrong to provoke the wrong that was done to you

- Each one of us have broken the laws of God
- None of us is without sin
- We have been forgiven so much!

We have the Holy Spirit in us and are called to a higher standard

Matthew 5:38–42 (NKJV)

³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘*An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.*’ ³⁹ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. ⁴⁰ If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have *your* cloak also. ⁴¹ And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴² Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

- There is no room for holding a grudge

In fact, we are supposed to be so forgiving that we are willing to open ourselves up to being taken advantage of again

- When we seek to correct the wrong done to us we set ourselves up as judge
- We must give place to the only righteous Judge

Colossians 3:13 (NKJV)

¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*.