

Trapped “*The Spirit of Offense*”

Matthew 24:10–13 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup> And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. <sup>11</sup> Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. <sup>12</sup> And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. <sup>13</sup> 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 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

## Isaiah 28:16 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily.

- A person who acts hastily is an unstable person
- Their actions are not properly founded
- This person is easily swayed and moved by the storms, trials and persecutions in life

It’s the trials or seasons in life that are meant for us to grow our roots deep

- When our roots are deep in Him we have a sure foundation

## Psalms 1:1–3 (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup> Blessed *is* the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; <sup>2</sup> But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. <sup>3</sup> He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.

When we allow ourselves to become offended it will quickly lead us in a direction that is contrary to the will of God

- We need to be planted in the house of God and have a foundation in the word that cannot be shaken
- It’s then that we will bear fruit in every *SEASON* of life

Jesus has just entered the region of Caesarea Philippi and asked His disciples

### Matthew 16:13 (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?”

- Several of the disciples enthusiastically shared the opinions of the crowds about who Jesus was
- Jesus waited until they finished, then looked at them and asked

### Matthew 16:15 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

- I’m sure the disciples were puzzled and confused
- I believe they were speechless as they pondered Jesus’ question
- It’s as if they had no answer apart from what the crowds were saying
- They truly didn’t know who He was
- They were living off of the speculations of others

Simon was the only one who answered

### Matthew 16:16 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus responds and explains that Peter had this revelation not by receiving the opinions and teaching of others, but what God had revealed to him

- Peter was very hungry for the things of God
- He asked the most questions
- He was the one who walked on the water, while the others watched
- He was a man who wouldn't settle for someone else's opinion
- He wanted to hear directly from the mouth of God
- It wasn't something that came through his natural senses

Many people had witnessed the same things Peter had witnessed, including the disciples, yet didn't have the same revelation he did

- We, like Peter need a divine revelation of who Jesus really is

### 1 John 2:27 (NKJV)

<sup>27</sup> But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

We can take notes all day long or read our Bibles systematically, but without the anointing we will not have the revelation we need for breakthrough

It is this revelation on which Jesus builds His church

**Matthew 16:18 (NKJV)**

<sup>18</sup> And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Yes, Jesus gives us gifted teachers, but we need to hear His voice within the voice of the teacher we are listening to

When we listen to an anointed minister or read a book, we should look for words or phrases that explode in our spirits

If all we gain is head knowledge without revelation two things can happen

- We are easily susceptible to hype or emotionalism
- Or we are bound by our intellect

Jesus said He would be founded on the revealed word, not just memorized verses or phrases from our favorite preacher of worship leader

- When the word becomes a revelation (something revealed) it conveys light and spiritual understanding
- What God reveals to us cannot be taken away  
– **Deuteronomy 29:29**
- It becomes a sure foundation – **Matthew 7:24-27**
- Without it we will be easily offended by trials and tribulations

Jesus also said that it was possible to receive the word with excitement yet not taking root in our lives

## Mark 4:16–17 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; <sup>17</sup> and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble.

- Trials and tests locate a person's heart
- They reveal where you are spiritually
- They reveal the true condition of your heart
- How you react under pressure is the real you

Some people are like the disciples who were so quick to speak about all of the things they had learned from what others had said about Jesus

- They may sound and look like the real deal
- The picture of strength, stability, giftedness and beauty

They may weather a few minor storms, but when the wind really blows they are moving on because of offense

**Remember that if you are in the place where God wants you the devil will try to offend you to get you out of the will of God**

- He wants to uproot men and women from the place where God has planted them
- If he can get you out, he has been successful
- If you don't budge, even in a great trial, you will spoil his plans

## Psalm 92:13 (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> Those who are planted in the house of the LORD Shall flourish in the courts of our God.

- Those who “*flourish*” are the ones who are “*planted*”
- What happens to a plant if you transplant it every few weeks?
- The root system will diminish, it will not blossom or prosper
- If you keep transplanting it, the plant will die of shock

Sometimes God will put us in a place where we are not recognized and encouraged the way we expect so our roots will grow in Him

- When we don't agree with the way something is done, we become offended and leave
- Blaming the leadership and staff

They are blind to their own character flaws and do not realize that God wanted to refine and mature them through the pressure they were under

If the gardener listened to the tree in the face of wind, rainstorms, cold, hot sun, and other unpleasant weather he would actually harm it

- Trees endure the hot sun and rainstorms by putting their roots down deep – **Colossians 2:7**

Once you leave the place God has chosen for you, your root system begins to dwarf

- The next time it will be easier for you to flee from adversity
- You end up coming to the place where you have little or no strength to endure hardship or challenges
- You then become a spiritual vagabond
- Wandering from place to place
- Suspicious and afraid that others will mistreat you
- Crippled and hindered in your ability to produce fruit

You struggle in a self-centered life, eating the remains of the fruit of others

Look at Cain and Able, the first sons of Adam

- Cain brought an offering to the Lord from the work of his own hands, the fruit of his vineyard
- It was brought forth with much toil
- He had to clear the ground of rocks, stumps and other debris
- He had to plow and cultivate
- He had to plant, water, fertilize and protect the crops
- He made much effort in his service to God
- But it was his own sacrifice rather than obedience to God's way

This symbolizes the worship of God, by one's own strength and ability rather than God's grace



Abel on the other hand, brought an offering of obedience, the choice firstborn of his flock and their fat

- He did not labor as Cain did
- Yet it was something dear to him

Both brothers would have heard how their mother and father had tried to cover themselves with fig leaves, which represented their own works to cover their sin

- But God demonstrated an acceptable sacrifice by covering Adam and Eve with the skin of an innocent animal
- Cain had tried to win God's acceptance apart from His counsel

God showed him that He would only accept those who came to Him under His perimeters of grace (Abel's sacrifice)

- He would reject anything that was offered under the domain of the "*knowledge of good and evil*" (Cain's religious works).
- He then instructed Cain that if he would do good, he would be accepted
- If he would not choose life, then sin would master him
- Cain was offended with the Lord

Rather than repent and do what was right, allowing the situation to strengthen his character, he vented his anger and offense with God by murdering his brother

## Genesis 4:11–12 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> So now you *are* cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. <sup>12</sup> When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.”

- The thing Cain feared the most was to be rejected by God
- He brought judgment upon himself because of offense
- His actions which were to win God's approval now brought a curse
- The ground would no longer give up its strength to him
- Fruit would only come through great effort

Offended Christians cut off their own ability to bear fruit

- Jesus compared the heart with soil in the parable of the sower
- Just as Cain's field was barren, the soil of an offended heart is barren, poisoned by bitterness

Offended people may still experience miracles, words of utterance, strong preaching, and healing in their lives

- Remember these are gifts of the Spirit, not fruits
- We will be judged by our fruit, not gifting
- A gift is given – Fruit is cultivated

Offended people become spiritual fugitives and vagabonds

- Running aimlessly and carrying an offense – **Genesis 4:14**
- Looking for that perfect church or relationship that will receive their gift and heal their hearts

You will never find the perfect leader, leadership team, or church

Even Jesus offended those He was closest to

### Matthew 13:55–57 (NKJV)

<sup>55</sup> Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? <sup>56</sup> And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this *Man* get all these things?" <sup>57</sup> So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house."

- Jesus didn't compromise the truth in order keep people from being offended – **Luke 4:28-30**
- His own family was offended at Him and didn't believe Him – **Mark 3:21, 31-35; John 7:5**
- He offended His own ministry staff – **John 6:60-61, 66**
- He offended His closest friends – **John 11:1-3, 6, 21, 32**
- He offended John the Baptist – **Luke 7:18-20, 21-23**

### Hebrews 12:26–27 (NKJV)

<sup>26</sup> whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "*Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.*" <sup>27</sup> Now this, "*Yet once more,*" indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

## The Purpose of Sifting

### Luke 22:32 (NKJV)

<sup>32</sup> But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren.”

- Jesus didn't pray that Peter would escape the shaking he was going to face
- He prayed that his faith would be strengthened
- Out of this trial would emerge a new character
- He would become the Simon Peter that he needed to be in order to fulfill His destiny and strengthen the brethren

Lisa Bevere says there are five purposes for shaking an object

- To bring it closer to its foundation
- To remove what is dead
- To harvest what is ripe
- To awaken
- To unify or mix together so it can no longer be separated

Peter had to be shaken to the point of giving up – **Mark 16:7**

- Jesus not only forgave Peter, but also restored him
- Trials in life will expose what is in your heart
- Tests either make you bitter towards God and others or stronger
- If you pass the test your roots will shoot down deeper, stabilizing your future