

Overcoming Offence

By Kriston Couchey

Jonah prophesied to the citizens of Nineveh saying, “Forty days this city will be destroyed!”, and yet the city was not destroyed. Is it possible that Jonah spoke the prophetic word excluding the option to repent according to his own offence toward Nineveh? Jonah had no love for the Ninevites and was angry when they repented and God did not destroy them.

And he made prayer to the Lord and said, O Lord, is this not what I said when I was still in my country? This is why I took care to go in flight to Tarshish: for I was certain that you were a loving God, full of pity, slow to be angry and great in mercy, and ready to be turned from your purpose of evil. (Jonah 4:2)

SPIRIT OF BITTERNESS - THE PROPHET'S ENEMY

Bitterness is the state of unforgiveness and woundedness resulting from offence. This bitterness has the potential to turn a true prophet into a false prophet. Jonah struggled with bitterness as his people had suffered offence at the hands of the people of Assyria, whose capital was Nineveh. It took an act of God to get him to finally give the word of the Lord, and even after that he still hated them. If you are offended by a spiritual leader, political leader, a nation, religion, or anyone for that matter regardless of how evil they are, and how badly you have suffered at their hands, your prophecy will be controlled and distorted by offence. A lot of prophecy directed toward the religion and its leaders, toward political leaders, and people groups are rooted in bitterness out of offence.

And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. ~Jesus~

This verse describes the state of much of the church today. Many have taken offence at the hypocrisy of religion. The ranks of atheists and agnostics are filled with offended men and women bitter at those representing Christ who have acted like the devil. The emergent and organic church movement's numbers are swelled with disenchanted, wounded, and offended people who were given a raw deal in the halls of religion. Thousands of offended have stopped going to churches altogether. Heresy hunting "ministries" are motivated by and continue to sniff out sin and offence from a “church” acting like the world.

ROOTING OUT OFFENCE

As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world (AGE). The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend (those causing to stumble), and them which do iniquity... ~Jesus~

The end of the age brings with it a purging. The purging is of those who are causing offence. It also brings a healing from offence for those who will allow Father to release them from their agony. The sad fact is those who are offended can easily become offenders themselves. Father has great mercy and is bringing a move of repentance and reconciliation to the earth. It is a time for those who have been offending to repent and change, and those suffering offence to get healing. We are about to see a move of the Holy Spirit bring this repentance and healing. Today is the day of salvation and restoration to Father; and to our brothers and sisters.

THE REMEDY FOR OFFENCE

offence from others has been a tool of Father to expose in me the places of pride and self-centredness that were not obvious apart from suffering at the hands of others. The Spirit of God told Ananias concerning Paul, “... ***I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake.***” To be used for the

greater purposes of God demands meeting suffering offence at the hands of others with the unconditional love of God. The cross of Christ was where Jesus laid down His life in love for those who hated Him, and it is the cross all who would follow in His footsteps must take up as well.

While many of us cannot claim to have suffered as much as Jesus or even Paul by the hands of others, there is a glory in suffering offences with the unconditional love of God that releases in us a joy that is unspeakable. I have responded wrongly to the attacks of others upon me or my family in a wrong way many times. In the midst of that offence and ensuing bitterness; Father has been faithful to show me the places of self and pride that has been the “landing pad” upon which the offence of others has landed. He has given grace when I recognized and repented of the pride and released me from that bitterness and offence.

The times I have responded correctly have been through returning offence with unconditional love. Two experiences come to mind from the past in which the Spirit of God turned the opportunity to be bitter and offended into healing for me and love for the offender in my heart. In a business dealing in which I was losing income due to the refusal of a Christian to abide by his agreement; I was led to fast for forty days not for my sake, but for the sake of physical/psychological healing for the man who was responsible. In the end I recovered most of my losses and had property restored to me, but only after taking my eyes off myself and showing real love and kindness to him personally and in prayer.

Another instance was someone who personally very grievously was an offence to my family and continued in their sin. In that situation I was moved by the Spirit to approach the man and tell him that I loved and forgave Him because God loved and forgave me, though I did not agree with what he was doing. In that step of faith I received healing and deliverance from woundedness and bitterness.

FATHER'S GREAT LOVE

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless those that curse you, do good to those that hate you, and pray for those who speak evil about you, and persecute you... ~Jesus~

There are times we have to make a choice to love and pray for one who is being an offence to us. It is Father's love alone that releases us from offence. It is love that covers a multitude of sins. Father is looking for those who will not be offended by the sin of individuals, the church, and the world; and be a light to them of His love. But we must first die to our self and its desire to react to the sin of others. It is selfish pride that picks up offence; a DEAD MAN cannot be offended. We must offer ourselves as living sacrifices to Him and embrace His great love for us that brings healing and forgiveness for others.

It is important to approach our Father with a faith in His love and goodness in order to receive the healing we need from Him. His Love brings healing that will release us from our states of deception that results from taking on offence. In His unconditional love for those who will in faith receive and live it, there is a glory that changes our perception of Him and of our brothers and sisters. He wants to impart to us a Love that has brokenness for His people and a love that lays down our life for those who would even try to kill us.

In His Unconditional Love

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