

THE OFFENSIVE CHRIST

By Johnny Ramsey

In Galatians 5:11, we read of “the offense of the cross.” To some in Corinth, nothing was as distasteful as the preaching of the crucified Savior. In Athens, Paul was mocked for preaching the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 17:12). To be perfectly honest, Christ was a “rock of offense” and a “stone of stumbling” to many among His own people and in the Roman Empire (Rom. 9:33). Why did Jesus offend so many?

He was despised in the region of Gadarenes because people there thought more of swine than of lost souls (Mark 5). The Master Teacher offended the Pharisees because of His blunt rebuke of their customs and traditions (Matt. 15:7-12). The absolute authority of the Lord caused a sword of separation within some families (Matt. 10:34-35). When Christ comes on the stage of life, the human scene must give attention to His claims. One cannot be neutral in regard to the Man of Nazareth. Jesus plainly reminds us in Matthew 12:30 that men are either “for or against” Him. But why was our blessed Redeemer such a controversial person?

His Perfection Made Others Uncomfortable

To be in the presence of the Son of God made anyone else’s fame pale into nothingness. His speech, action, attitude and endeavor formed a matchless framework of beauty. The scribes waned in power when Jesus unfolded the Scriptures. The righteous pretense of the Pharisees disintegrated in the marvelous purity of the Messiah. Arrogant claims of the Sadducees were easily put asunder by one clear

word of logic by the Savior. Caesars and Herod’s were always dwarfed by the heavenly countenance of the Redeemer. Since very few people enjoy being “upstaged,” Jesus was intently hated. Pilate realized that “for envy he had been delivered up” (Mark 15:10).

His Salvation Was Spiritual, Not Temporal

“Hosanna” had become a popular cry among the Jews by the time the Lord walked the Judean soil. Since the days of the Maccabees, it was a term of deliverance and meant simply, “Save us, we pray.” In Mark 11 is told the story of Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem. But however brilliant the palm-strewn road may have seemed that day, our Redeemer was a bitter disappointment to the Jews because He came not to save them from Rome, but to save sinners from Satan’s hold. He told Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36), and those coming to Him for loaves and fishes went away distraught.

He Embarrassed The Socially Elite

The Savior’s propensity of eating with sinners caused a revolt within the upper echelon of society (Mark 2; Luke 19). Jesus came “to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10), but the doctors of the law were upset with practical application of that maxim. It bothered them intensely when the large crowds came to hear him teach, because Jesus had not gone to one of their schools (John 7). The piercing logic by which Christ nailed their hides to the wall was constantly embarrassing (Mark 12:14; John 8:39-40). Jesus unveiled their evil hearts of

selfishness in the person of the “older brother” (Luke 15:11-31), and their vain ritualistic piety in the story of the priests and Levites who “pass by on the other side” (Luke 10:27-37). No wonder they were offended! Of course, they could have repented, but that would have called for more humility than they could muster. Are there any sadder words in Scripture than John 1:11? “He came unto His own, but His own received Him not.” Rather than being offended in Jesus, may God help us always to stand up valiantly for Him in the midst of a godless, decadent world.

It is hardly conceivable that anyone as wonderful as Jesus Christ would have had as many enemies as He did. As our minds retrace the beautiful life He led, the perfect pattern He set, we are amazed to recall the fact that many in His day coldly rejected Him. How could anyone spurn such an unselfish love? Even though we cannot answer these questions completely, it remains a sobering, heart-breaking fact that thousands of His day turned a deaf ear to heaven’s will, expressed so capably in Jesus, the Son of God.

The Fruit That Delights

Article Selected

I have a fond childhood memory of picking fruit with my grandmother. We would drive over to the next valley that was full of orchards. In the spring, descending the hills down into this town you could see miles of flowering trees. In the late summer, the flowers were replaced with green leaves and fruit. We picked cherries, plums, and peaches. Having seen the trees from a distance with the promise of their sweet delights, we would run out into the orchard with our buckets. Finding the ideal tree loaded with fruit we would climb up into it and start picking. We usually would eat until we were full then start filling the bucket.

The fruit tree and fruit has been used to teach many concepts in the New Testament. Fruit was something everyone understood. Even today most of us are not tied to an agricultural community, but the truths taught with fruit are still understood and communicate heavenly truth. That is why God commands that we have it (**Matt. 3:8; Luke 3:7**). Godly fruit is in connection with the salvation of others. The gospel bears fruit (**Col. 1:3-8**). The word is the seed (**Matt. 13:3**). There is the need to harvest a crop for eternal life for the fields are ready for the harvest (**John 4:35-36**). Paul’s goal was to obtain this fruit (**Rom. 1:13**). There is the fruit of repentance (**Luke 3:8**). The fruit of the Spirit (**Gal. 5:22-25**). We are also instructed about the fruit of righteousness (**Phil. 1:9-11**). The blessings of having these types of fruit means that the opposite is also true.

Distinctions will be made based on the fruit that people produce. Only those that bear fruit will

enter the kingdom (**Matt. 7:20-21; 21:43**). People will be known by their fruit (**Matt. 12:33**). Not having fruit will result in being cut down and cast into the fire (**Luke 13:1-9**). Those that “participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness” will not inherit the kingdom (**Eph. 5:3-7, 11-12**). For that reason, we are told that if we have certain qualities, “you will be neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (**2 Pet. 1:3-11**).

There are things that need to happen in our lives for good fruit to grow. It is associated with dependency on Christ (**John 15:4-5**). We need to live pure and blameless lives, one that is pleasing to God (**Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 1:9-12**). In doing so, we are recognized for who we are (**Luke 6:43-45**). We are true disciples of Christ (**John 15:8**). We will be in the kingdom (**Matt. 21:43**). There are eternal rewards for those that endured the work (**2 Tim. 2:3-7**). Fruit will be credited to our account (**Phil 4:14, 17-18**). We need to make sure that we are producing the kind of fruit that will bring about that eternal reward. As one expects to find fruit in the orchard, God expects those delights from us also.



Upcoming Events

Friday, Feb. 25– Family fellowship night @ 6:30pm at the building.

Sunday, Feb. 27—Chili Cook-Off Fellowship after evening services. There is a sign up sheet in the hallway.

Sunday, Mar. 6—Potluck luncheon with a 1pm afternoon service.

April 1—3: Challenging the Church hosted by Midtown. Please make plans to attend and bring a friend.

Area Events (More info on the bulletin board in the hallway):

Feb. 24 through 27—Arise hosted by SW church of Christ

April 1-3: University church of Christ Spring Retreat

April 23: University church of Christ Spring Formal

Prayer List

Prayer Requests

Kin Marie is home from the hospital and continues to improve with medication. Virginia Escojido and Veronica Serenil’s brother, Julian Valdez, who was diagnosed with throat cancer and will be in hospice care.

Members

Jeff Cannady, Les Daltry, Scott DeDear, Kin and Sandra Marie, Ann Pantel, Veronica Serenil, Clark Withers, Dee Gilpatrick, Faye Henderson, Sandy Malone.

Food Helpers for the month of February - Team B.
There is a list of teams on the bulletin board.

Service Roster

Week of February 20, 2022

Sunday Morning

Announcements..... Bryant Siegel

Scripture Reading.....Mike Atkinson

Song LeaderRick Bass

Opening Prayer..... Lupe Escojido

Closing Prayer..... Kevin Sheeran

Lord’s Supper & Offering

Bread.....James Cammock

Cup..... Lupe Escojido

Offering..... Bryant Siegel

Assist..... Will Burleson

Assist..... Clifton Rutherford

Assist..... Kirk FitzSimmons

Sunday Evening

Announcements..... Bryant Siegel

Song Leader Doug Jobes

Opening Prayer.....Fred Scherffius

Closing Prayer..... Mark FitzSimmons

Lord’s Supper & Offering.....Lupe Escojido & Clifton Rutherford

Wednesday Evening

Adult Class..... Ronnie Scherffius

Song LeaderJesse Moser

Devotional Bryant Siegel

Other

Usher.....Allen Clifton

Prepare Communion Flonnory Family

Congregational News

Birthdays

Virginia Escojido.....Feb. 21

Simon Cammock.....Feb. 24

We are working on the 2022 Pocket Directory. Please make any corrections to your family information by Wednesday, Feb. 23rd. The directory is located on the table in the foyer.

If you have any prayer requests or upcoming events to be announced, please contact our secretary, Nina Siegel, at (361) 573-0030.

Our Elders

Mark FitzSimmons
Ronnie Scherffius
Ron White

Our Deacons

James Cammock—Evangelism
Lupe Escojido— Benevolence
Bryant Siegel—Education and Finance

Our Preacher

Ronnie Scherffius

Weekly Reading

*"The Lord your God which goeth before you, he
shall fight for you, according to all that he did
for you in Egypt before your eyes"
Deuteronomy 1:30*

Service Times

Sunday Morning Bible Class.....9:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship.....10:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship.....5:00 P.M.
Wednesday Bible Class.....7:00 P.M.

Attendance Records

Week of February 13, 2022

A.M. Bible Class.....63
A.M. Worship.....84
P.M. Worship.....47
Wednesday Bible Class.....62
Offering week of February 13, 2022.....\$3,127

Supported Works

Mani Pagidipalli *India*
John & Carla Moore *Bible Land Passages*
Anthony Scherffius *Southwest School of Bible Studies*

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Weekly Communication! To receive the *Midtown Messenger* and other congregational news to your inbox each week, please email events.midtowncoc@gmail.com.