

# “So, You’ve Been Offended?!”

Matthew 18:15-20

**Intro.** – It was the pioneer days of the West on the Oregon Trail. A rider came on his horse over a ridge. There he saw laying before him, flat on the ground with his head tilted, an Indian. The rider got off his horse, walked over to the Indian who said the following:

“Four wheel wagon, two horses draw it. Water bucket on back of wagon. Wagon rattle. Two men walk by side. Woman follow with two children. Woman wear blue dress.”

Cowboy replied, “Can you tell all that by listening to the ground?” “No,” said the Indian, “they went by here and ran me over.”

That’s something like what this message is about – people who get run-over. This message is about people who get hurt or at least think they get hurt. It’s no fun to get hurt or *is it?!*

Looking carefully at our text. It speaks of a brother who sins and how real brotherly love cares enough to go in private and talk to that brother concerning the matter. Thus, let us use care NOT to appeal to this passage in judging somebody in how they handle a case of hurt feelings; unless, the text is carried out to its full extent... (serious business). Note: not saying hurt feelings can’t involve sin, but most of the time hurt feelings involves something(s) else, as we’ll be covering.

Now to the question of the hour – “So, you’ve been offended?” How are we as Christians to respond to that? How does God want you and me as brothers and sisters in Christ to respond to getting our feelings hurt?

- 1) So you’ve been offended? – Really? Does that surprise you?
- 2) So you’ve been offended? – Welcome to the club!
- 3) So you’ve been offended? – So what else is new?

*Purpose: to better understand God’s will in how we are to respond to hurt feelings*

What does our Lord expect of us when we are offended or get our feelings hurt? Do we know? Have we thought through the proper responses?

## I WHY DO WE GET OFFENDED?

- Illus. – dictionary: “bitter, resentment, anger, displeasure” = why do we get so angry, bitter and resentful often resulting in heated displeasure?
- A. Some People Enjoy Being Offended
  1. It gives some people attention they can’t ordinarily get...
  2. The term “thinned skin” is often used to describe someone who is easily offended... resulting in making people walk around on egg shells...
- B. Some Are Offended by the Smallest Matters
  1. Why? In short, some people are just itching for attention, and have discovered a great way to get attention is to be offended. = word describes this *childish*
  2. Illus. – Pete Jones was preaching at Colorado Christian Service Camp... two boys sitting up front were acting up and distracting Pete and everyone else. He very discreetly politely asked the boys to please go sit with their parents... Afterwards, the parents of these two boys demanded an apology from Pete because, “they had been offended by the way their boys were treated.”
  3. Point: the real question to address: “Why do we get offended?”...

## II DID THE OFFENDER REALLY INTEND TO OFFEND?

- A. If the Answer is “Yes”
  1. Recognize this guy?... Yes there are those who do/say things with intent to inflict hurt and pain...
  2. If you’re convinced what that person did/or failed to do; said/or failed to say was intended to hurt you then ask the following:

- a. who has the real problem?
  - b. if someone out to hurt you/or anyone else... they have a problem... need help... pity them!
  - c. if you carry same attitude toward them, then both parties have same problem = real trouble!
- B. If the Answer is “No” (which I believe is the case 90% of the time)
1. If you know this individual(s) didn’t intend to hurt your feelings or offend you... why are you hurt? Foolish to make it an issue if you don’t know it was intended to be an issue!
  2. Illus. – we say things and can be completely misunderstood – e.g.
    - a. “We have a pair of black lady’s gloves.” = person wanted to know why poking fun at blacks...
    - b. “Are all of these children legitimate” = could have been stated better, but purely innocent...
    - c. 2 ladies saying goodbyes. One lady (lived higher elevation) said, “Come up and see us soon!” I ask, anything wrong with that statement? Other lady offended because she thought her friend meant come up to our society now that you’re going down to your level.”
    - d. as a preacher I find myself in these circumstances more than I care to admit...

### III DOES SCRIPTURE SPEAK WELL OF THE OFFENDED?

- how does Scripture speak concerning the person offended?
  - Bible warns against being offended – you’ll find the Bible often speaks of “offended” people as being *weak* and *immature*:
- A. Matthew 11:6 “*And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me.*”
1. Yes, there were people *offended* by Jesus – were they justified in being offended?
  2. We read in the NT about “*the offense of the Cross*” (Galatians 5:11 – KJV);
    - a. I Corinthians 1:23 “*but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness.*”
    - b. to the Jews the Cross was *a stumbling block*... Gentiles *foolishness*...
- B. Matthew 13:20-21 “*And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he is (offended).*”
- would you want to be that kind of *offended* person?
- C. Matthew 13:57 “*And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, ‘A prophet is not without honor except in his home town, and in his own household.’*”
- Jesus’ hometown and own family *took offense* at Him...
- D. Matthew 26:31 “*Then Jesus said to them, ‘You will all (be offended) fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, ‘I will strike down the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.’*”
- E. Matthew 26:33 “*But Peter answered and said to Him, ‘Even though all may (be offended) fall away because of You, I will never (be offended) fall away.’*”
1. Before I ever say “I’m offended” I would want to check and see what the Bible says about that. Jesus consistently pointed out that the weak and unbelieving are the ones who get easily offended, who desire the spotlight be put on their lives...
  2. “σκωνδαλιζω” = “stumble, offend, make fall or fall away” = where we get our word “scandal”
- F. John 6:60-61 “*Many therefore of His disciples when they heard this said, ‘This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?’ But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this said to them, ‘Does this cause you to stumble (offend you)?*”
1. There’s no virtue in being offended – Bible condemns causing brother to stumble (1 Cor 8:13 etc.) but hurt feelings and stinkin’ thinkin’ fall into a completely different category = being offended!
  2. In summary, Bible does anything but commend the offended!

### IV HOW ARE WE TO HANDLE HURT FEELINGS?

A. Things We Should NOT Do

1. Milk it for all its worth
  - Illus. – shingle throwing out back of 2313 Francine Ave. Joliet, IL – Dave Miller...
2. Are we to call the world and let it be known we've been offended?... I.e. let the gossip fly?...
3. Are we to blow incident out of proportion... i.e. make a mountain out of a mole hill...
4. Are we to stew over it? Think about it and think about it?...

B. Things We SHOULD Do

1. Think the matter through carefully:
  - a. is it all that important... and what will result from the action we choose to take... will Christ and His Church be honored or are we stuck on ourselves?...
  - b. if the matter is taken to leadership of church, what if leadership says, "You're wrong." Can you live with that? – People's Court if you sue, there is such a thing as a counter suit...
2. Pray about it = prayer always helps to put things into proper perspective
3. Go, in person, and talk to the person about it:
  - a. Illus. – some offended by the way I introduced Lloyd Pelfrey one time... Only problem I had about the matter, I learned about this second handed...
  - b. spoken to leadership a little concerning this: if people come to them concerning something I have said, done or not done, "Have you spoken to Paul about this in person?" I promised I will do the same when someone comes to me to complain...
  - c. urge you to learn to do likewise: when someone comes telling you about how they were *offended* and *hurt* etc. Ask them before hearing them out, "Have you gone and talked to the individual who offended you?"

**Conclusion:** I'm personally convinced that 98.9% problems arising over "hurt feelings" are totally unnecessary. Perhaps we have not thought through, prayed about it or most importantly, gone and talked about it with our brother/sister in the Lord. The results are far reaching: distrust, loss of closeness, jealousy, stunt of growth in worship and service... In short, what's really sad about hurt feelings and being offended, is that the cause of Christ and His Church is usually severely hampered.

The next time we are offended, let's learn to take the brunt of that hurt rather than making it an issue where Christ and His Church suffer.