

DOES THIS OFFEND YOU?

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John 6:59-61

(1904-1969)

In the sixth chapter of John's Gospel, we have a running controversy between the Lord Jesus Christ and the religious leaders of the Jewish people. After the marvelous miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, our Lord begins to teach the people who followed Him in great numbers at this time, and here his teaching was very offensive and became a stumbling stone to the leaders of the people of His day. This morning I want to take out of this sixth chapter of John a few things that my Lord taught that were offensive to people then — and also very offensive to people today.

As a text, let's read John 6:59-61:

“These things said He in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard this, said, This is a hard saying, who can hear it? When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples murmured at it, He said unto them, Does this offend you?”

Does this offend you? Everything my Lord Jesus did when He was here in this world offended somebody — and you know He is still offensive today. He is the rock of offense (Romans 9:33). For instance, His birth in a stable in Bethlehem was offensive. My, my, the Lord of Glory has no business being born in a cow stall! And that is offensive even today! Also, His common heritage offended men. He didn't come from the high and mighty, and one person upon learning that Jesus was from the little province of Nazareth is quoted as saying, “Can any good thing come out of Galilee?” His death on the cross of Calvary was offensive then and it is offensive now (Galatians 5:11). His second coming is offensive to so many religious people. It was offensive then — and it is offensive today.

And here in our text we find that His preaching greatly offended people of His day. On many occasions when our Lord would speak, the people became so angry that they'd take up stones to stone Him. How then does the modern-day preacher hope to get along with the world and please the unsaved crowd, when they hated the Lord Jesus with such fury that they nailed Him to a cross? My dear friends, the world loves it own — it hates God's people — it always has and it always will. Listen to John 15:19, “If ye were of the world, the world would love its own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”

In verse 26, our Lord began preaching to the people. And after He brought this message, the people said as I read in our text, “This is a hard saying, who can hear it?” This is just too much for us! Our Lord met that quibble by asking, “Does this offend you?” And then He brought some

more blessed truth (verses 62-65), and then the crowd of about five thousand men, plus women and children, walked off and left Him. And then my Lord turned to the twelve and said, “Will ye also go away?” The crowd was offended by His Gospel — they stumbled at His Gospel. Everything they clung to was being attacked by His teaching on this occasion. And my friends, the Gospel of God’s sovereign grace — the Gospel of God acting in sovereignty offends people today just as much as it did here in John six. Yes, it offended people then, and it offends people now. It will either drive people to the Saviour, or it will drive them away from Him. The Gospel will either save or it will condemn. But, blessed be God, the preaching of God acting in sovereign grace will always accomplish the purpose whereunto God Almighty has sent it! Now may we look into this message and see three great foundation truths that our Lord preached at the height of His ministry — and lost His crowd. As you follow me with your open Bible, I call your attention to these truths. Note, first of all:

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ Preached the Sovereignty of God

Listen to John 6:37-38, “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.” My friends, there is sovereignty. There is God’s will being done. There is Christ coming down here appointed and delegated and set apart to accomplish the will of a sovereign God, Who must do and will do that which seemeth good in His own sight! (See Matthew 11:25-27)

Yes, when our Lord was here as God’s Prophet, there is one thing certain: He put God Almighty on the throne in His preaching. It made those people angry, and it does so today. Any time on earth that any preacher anywhere enthrones God Almighty in his preaching, proclaiming the sovereignty which belongs to Him in all things, it will certainly offend the pride of old sinful unregenerated man — I do not care whether he is a church member, or not. Religious or not, if he is unregenerated, the sovereignty of God (just the mention of it!) will offend him. And when a preacher in this modern day dares to stand for the great teaching of God acting as seemeth good in His sight — the Gospel of the glory of God, which is the Gospel of the sovereign grace of God (Exodus 33:19; Romans 9:15-16) — it will be offensive! And today, when we take the crown off the head of sinful man, and put it on the head of a sovereign, holy God, the fur begins to fly, and all hell will break loose!

Men today hate the sovereignty of God and it is offensive to their old proud hearts because it leaves them as paupers before a God Who does as He pleases, when He pleases, and to whom He pleases! But, my friends, God’s will is going to be done in all matters, whether in heaven or in the earth. The Apostle Paul says that God “worketh all things after the counsel of His own will” (Ephesians 1:11). The Apostle James says, “For ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that” (James 4:15). And the Apostle John says, “For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will” (Revelation 17:17). And again, the Apostle Paul says, “I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will” (I Corinthians 4:19).

My friends, you and I need desperately to be conformed to the will of God in all things — but the people in my Lord’s time grew angry and were offended because the Lord Jesus demanded that they be conformed to the will of God. They openly rebelled against these

demands, exactly as men do today. But, dear ones, God Almighty never has saved a man on man's terms. God always saves sinners on His own terms! Does this offend you?

There are many within reach of our radio broadcasts who are greatly offended. We hear on every hand that so-called Christian schools are coming out flatly to say that the great doctrines of grace will not be taught in their classrooms! And so such schools are manufacturing young preachers to go out and deny the very things that the Lord Jesus Christ solemnly set His stamp upon when He was here. And one of these truths is that the will of God is done — that man must bow to the will of God — that God does not take man into His counsel as to what He has decided to do — that God is very God, on the throne, and man must bow at His footstool! Does this offend you? The sovereignty of God was very offensive in the days of my Lord here on earth — and it is very offensive now. Let's look in this chapter at a second great foundation truth that our Lord preached that day and lost His crowd.

2. Our Lord Jesus Christ Preached the Total Depravity of Man and Man's Inability

My Lord said in John 6:44, "No man can come to Me." Strange language, but that's what He said. "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him." The Scriptures say a little later in this chapter, "Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is a hard saying, who can hear it?"

You know, my Lord put man down in the gutter of his total depravity, dead in trespasses and sin, depraved and corrupt — and this sort of preaching greatly offended men. My Lord put man in a spiritual grave unable to rise in his own strength. My Lord put man on a cripple's bed unable to walk. In His preaching, my Lord put man on a blind man's stool unable to see. And the people of His day were greatly offended — and people today are likewise greatly offended.

I tell you, dear ones, this is no time to be denying these great truths. My Lord taught them and I do not care if every preacher in the country says, "Well, Brother Barnard, they just can't be preached today." My Lord preached these truths. "Well," you say, "Brother Barnard, they offend people." I know, but my Lord preached them, and surely we would not be ashamed of any great truth that my Lord Jesus Christ preached when He was down here in controversy with religious leaders. HE dared to preach these things.

And I say to you that instead of this being a time to deny these great truths and skirt around them, it's time we preachers today deserted the modern high-pressure methods of trying to get men into the kingdom of God. And it's time we went back to the Bible way of Holy Spirit regeneration and Holy Spirit conviction. I say it with shame that most preachers today will say, "Oh, yes, Brother Barnard, I believe that God has elected His people to salvation from before the foundation of the world, and I believe that as we preach the Word the Holy Spirit will effectually call out God's sheep and I believe that no man can come to the Father except the Holy Spirit draw him." But saying all this, they'll turn around and use every high-pressure method known to man to pull countless numbers of poor unregenerated sinners down the aisle during an invitation and duck them beneath the baptismal water.

Thousands of children are being sinned against in our modern-day decision services held in the so-called revival meetings. The Sunday School teacher sits by the little child (I'm describing how it goes on in your church, sister!) — and when the preacher asks who wants to go to Heaven, the Sunday School teacher pushes the little fellow out of the pew and down the aisle. And I say to you, it is a sin against that child who has experienced no Holy Spirit conviction nor repentance, without which there is no salvation.

Let me say it and say it again, that man is a dead depraved child and can no more save himself than a demon in Hell could! The Holy Spirit must quicken him and awaken him and bring him to see his lost condition. Then the Holy Spirit reveals the Lord Jesus to that sinner as his Lord and Saviour. And when this takes place, bless God, you won't have to pull him down an aisle. He'll confess openly the Lord Jesus as his Lord and Saviour.

My dear preacher brother, you have never convicted and you have never saved a single sinner and you never will! The Lord God of Heaven is the only Author and the only Executor of salvation. "Salvation is of the Lord!" (Jonah 2:9)

Oh how men do need to hear the truth about themselves today! The Lord told these people the truth about themselves and it greatly offended them — but the Lord told them! — and they left Him — but the Lord told them! — and they wouldn't listen to Him anymore — but the Lord told them about their awful condition. So helplessly bound by the cords of their own love of self and their own sinful practices that they couldn't come to the Lord except the Lord draw them with the cords of His eternal love. Does this offend you? Does this offend you?

And now in John six we come to another great truth that our Lord preached, and when the people heard it they said, "We just can't take any such teaching as this!" Therefore, "From that time, many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him." How sad that is! But the Lord didn't pull His punches. The Lord was telling them the truth and being true to their souls. The Lord was pointing them to the kind of God He really is and the kind of people they were — and now He points them to the true way of salvation. For in the sixth chapter, when people left Him in such numbers,

3. Our Lord Jesus Christ Preached the Blood Atonement

In verse 54, "Whosoever eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Now, my dear ones, that was an offensive truth then and it is still offensive today. The people in the days of our Lord resented what our modernists refer to as a "slaughterhouse gospel." These religious people had read in the old Scriptures how that the Christ, the Messiah, was to live and reign forever, how His was a kingdom that could never end, so they could not go along with this idea of the death of the cross and the atoning blood.

How offensive the proclamation of the cross is today! Preach works and people will applaud you. Preach baptism and you can form your own denomination. Preach church membership and you'll get along fine. Preach the social religion — or most anything you want to preach — and people

will applaud, but God will be offended. But, my brother, if you preach the cross — proclaim the death of death on that cross — preach it in all of its offense and shame — preach it in its humiliation — preach it in its goriness, its bloodiness — and then preach the cross in its victory. I say to you, then God will applaud, but the people will be offended.

But the Apostle Paul said what we must say, “I’d rather please God than men,” and this is one time we want to say, “Move over, Paul, and let me join you!”

The Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed blood atonement. He said the blood has been shed. It was God’s blood — holy blood — precious blood — it was Divinely sent blood — saving blood — redeeming blood. The blood atonement means the life laid down, it means the offering up of the Lord of glory! And He said this was the only basis on which a Holy God could deal with sinful men. Not upon your goodness, but upon the basis of His life laid down — that’s how God deals with sinners.

My sinner friend, may God speak to your heart today. Don’t join the church members and preachers all over this country who get fighting mad at the Word of God and these great truths we’ve mentioned to you today. How they do scoff at anyone who dares to preach that God Almighty is very God — the God of absolute sovereignty. How they do make fun of anybody who dares to talk about the desperate condition of lostness under which sinners are bound today. And how they do skirt around the awful implications of the death on the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Oh, my sinner friend, don’t join this religious crowd the record of whom is given here in John chapter six. When they heard our Lord preach these blessed truths, they took it out on Him! They said, “We won’t listen to that! We’ll skee-daddle away from here! We’ll go and get us a preacher who will prophesy unto us smooth things!” Don’t you be offended, sinner friend. No, sir! Don’t you do it! It’ll cost you your soul! I tell you the cost of being offended at the truth as it flows from the lips of Christ is to go to Hell. Don’t be offended at the proclamation of the Gospel of God’s sovereign grace! I say to you, there is no other way for a sinner to be saved. I say to you that man is lost, that, man is corrupt, man is vile without one thing to offer God. And, like dear Brother Spurgeon, we like to quote that hymn very often:

“In my hand no price I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.”

That’s your only hope, sinner! You have nothing to offer. But Christ died, yea, rather Christ is risen again and sitteth on the right hand of God. If you could but believe that He died for you and paid your sin debt and satisfied the Holiness of God for you, you would come to Him in utter surrender. I pray that you can.

That old song,
“What can wash away my sins?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus!

What can make me whole again?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus!

That song is still true — eternally true! And I pray that you won't be offended at the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, but humble yourself in the sight of God, and cry unto Him for mercy. That is my prayer in the name of Him Who loved us and bought us with His own precious blood, even the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen and Amen.