



26: LORD, PLEASE OFFEND ME, IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN! (Luke 7:18-30)

Cindy Beall from Life Church wrote the following:

“Why in the world do we get so easily offended by the actions of others? To be easily offended means that we are resentful, annoyed, or even insulted because of the actions or words of others. The easily offended are often unhappy, frequently complaining and assuming malicious intent instead of accumulating the facts. They tend to make mountains out of molehills and are considered “high maintenance.”

The reason I can pinpoint this easily offended person is because I used to be one. I still experience moments when I get offended by the actions of others, but I have truly grown in this area. You can, too.

If you're a person who's easily offended, chances are strong that you identify too much with being right. You might even find your worth in it.

We might even assume others are intentionally trying to provoke or hurt us—because they're clearly not as good and pure as we are, right? We form instant negative opinions about others based on this hurtful assumption. Choosing your opinions over the facts is

often when an offense happens. We cannot let our feelings wreak havoc in our lives. They're meant to indicate, not dictate. Recognize them, but then focus on the facts.¹

Do you struggle with being easily offended? I think if we're all honest, we have to admit that we all do!

In fact, I have to confess to you that I have a process I go through when people tell me I'm wrong, or was wrong about something.

Number one, I will invite people to go ahead and be honest with me, and tell me things I'm doing wrong or problems they've had with me. People usually then assume that I must be very thick skinned and can take it. So they'll tell me where I've made a mistake or wronged them. In the moment I'll pray with all the faith I can muster to receive what they're saying humbly and respond graciously.

But then I'll go home, and start feeling sorry for myself. I'll go through a whole process of battling with God inside of myself about what I heard. I'll lose sleep sometimes. I'll torture myself. Then eventually, I'll come out on the other side attempting to apply the correction that I've been told. Sometimes it takes minutes, sometimes hours, sometimes days, sometimes weeks, sometimes months, depending on the degree to which the thing being called out me is deeply embedded in my soul.

We all get offended. We live in a culture that is addicted to offense. We're inoculated with social media, information, and conversations that offend us politically, personally, theologically, and philosophically. Someone can rage about something on a post or a video and instantly quadruple their social media engagement.

But Beall points out some important things in her words about being offended. When we live in a state of constant offense, it's likely that we have an obsession with being right that interferes with our ability to see what's right! It's so important to not allow our feelings and opinions to run our lives, but instead, to "focus on the facts"!

But what are the "facts"? If we believe that the scripture is the Word of God, then guaranteed we will find the facts of God in there. We will find the truths of God, the character of God, the advice of God, and the wisdom of God in scripture. The Holy Spirit will confirm all the above in us and lead us to **all** truth!

And therefore, we will also find the facts of God in the people who are truly living out those facts! We'll find the truths, character, advice, and wisdom of God in the imperfect

¹ <https://finds.life.church/how-to-know-if-youre-the-one-whos-easily-offended/>

people who have Christ in them, who have the Holy Spirit in them! We need to be disciplined! We need mentors! We need real accountability! I'm certainly grateful for all the people I have in my life who are further along in their faith than me that speak the truth in love to me and help more of Christ to be formed in me!

But we also need the ability to personally discern the facts. If we can't get to that place, then no amount of accountability can really help us. As vital as it is, we can always evade accountability and play games to avoid coming under the quickening of the Spirit. We need a touch of discernment and conviction from heaven above. We need the ability from heaven above to be able to discern the truths of God and the things of God as we go about our everyday lives, and to not allow the lies of the enemy and our flesh to pollute the truth!

We need the words of Jesus ringing in our minds, hearts and souls! There's lots of things to be offended by. May we never be offended by the things of Jesus! Remember, many people **were** offended by Him! May we not be one of them!

In fact, may we actually ask the Lord to offend us in the ways of God! That's a huge main point of Luke 7:18-35 that we're looking at right now.

This passage has three subunits: John the Baptist's question to Jesus (vv. 18 - 23), Jesus' view of John (vv. 24 - 30), and Jesus' parable of rebuke (vv. 31 - 35).² Let's dig into the first subunit:

18 *Then John (the Baptist's) disciples told him about all these things (that Jesus was doing). So John summoned two of his disciples **19** and sent them to the Lord, asking, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"*

20 *When the men reached him, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to ask you, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?'"*

21 *At that time Jesus healed many people of diseases, afflictions, and evil spirits, and he granted sight to many blind people. **22** He replied to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor are told the good news, **23** and **blessed is the one who isn't offended by me.**" (Luke 7:18-23)*

Jesus was like, "listen, you want to know if I'm legit the Son of God? Take a look at all that's happening and see how it's fulfilling the very promises of scripture. Don't be offended by me and trust that I am the One!

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At this point, John the Baptist was in prison, and his disciples visited him and gave a report about all the amazing things that Jesus was doing.

From prison, John sent two of his followers to ask Jesus if he really was the one to come. The use of two messengers would biblically & ethically certify that the reply came back faithfully to John (Deut. 19:15).³

John's question in verse 19 was significant because it signaled that even Jesus' forerunner was struggling to understand the nature of Jesus' ministry. Jesus was not the type of agent John (or anyone, for that matter!) was expecting, so he sent emissaries to Jesus just to make sure.⁴

The question John asked shocks some students of the Scripture, who can't accept the fact that John doubted Jesus. But John was human, and his question was specific. He did not wonder whether Jesus had been sent from God; he simply wanted confirmation that his ministry was the promised ministry of deliverance.

Even the best of God's servants need reassurance from time to time! The reference to "the one who is to come" recalled John's own words in 3:15-16. So John was asking if Jesus was truly the Messiah.⁵

If you're truly searching for God from a genuine place, you'll find that all of God is revealed in Jesus. But you have to ask the hard questions first! You have to doubt to be able to truly arrive at a place of sincere belief!

This is why I don't shy away from hard questions with my kids. We have got to be real with our young ones who are coming up! We don't want to shield them from reality. We should be age appropriate and sensitive to their emotional, mental, psychological, and spiritual maturity, but should be open and honest. We need to let our kids struggle with the controversies and confusion they're seeing all around them, and help them to ask hard questions and really arrive at a place of discipleship. If we don't disciple them, who is going to? Social media? Their friends? TikTok influencers? Come on y'all- get ahead of the game and build that deep relationship of trust with your kids. Be vulnerable with them. Let them ask you hard questions and answer as honestly and appropriately as the Lord leads you to!

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Don't lie to your kids. Don't hide things from them that they're ready to know. Seek the Lord in the scriptures. Pray for your kids. Ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom to impart to them.

And also- ask the hard questions yourself! Take it from someone who didn't grow up in the Church, and searched the bowels of reality for the truth! I made many addictive and sinful mistakes in my teenage years, and it led me on a search where I studied many religions and philosophies, asking all the hardest questions I could muster up, and at the end of this journey I far more willingly fell into the arms of the Savior Jesus Christ! Why? Because even when I came to the scriptures, I was asking hard questions. I was looking to see if I could disprove the things of God, and God really ended up disproving me! My search was genuine- I was hungry to know the truth and the realities of how things are! I found those answers to be clearer than anywhere else in the scriptures. My honest doubts and questions actually led me to deeper trust and assurance in Christ! The same can be true for all of us!

Back to the text, particularly Luke 7:21-23.

Before recording the reply, Luke interjected a reminder about the scope of Jesus' ministry; it involved healings, exorcisms, and even sight given to the blind. Jesus' ministry "graced" many with restoration. The envoys were simply to report what they had seen, using a collage of Old Testament phrases from Isaiah (Isa. 35:5 - 6; 26:19; 29:18 - 19; 61:1), all of which referred to the coming period of decisive deliverance. Jesus' ministry signaled fulfillment of these prophecies. Jesus' reply closed with a beatitude that called for faith. Blessing belonged to the person who was not offended by Jesus. His style of ministry may not have been with the powerful flair of position and status the world expected, but he had been sent from God nonetheless.⁶

It's inevitable that we'll be offended by things in people from time to time, because we all, as people, do offensive things to one another. We are under the curse of sin and it's inevitable that we will offend and hurt one another to differing degrees. We need to stay repentant, stay apologetic, stay humble, and stay teachable to God and Christ through one another!

But oh please, no matter what you do, decide right now not to be offended by Jesus! If you're offended by Jesus, you're offended by the things of God! What a terrible place to be y'all. You don't want that.

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Ask yourself right now- are you offended by righteousness you see in others? Are you offended when people are forgiving and merciful? Are you offended when people have the joy of the Lord? Are you offended by supernatural miracles and healings? Are you offended by the truth? Are you offended by people's passion for Christ? Are you offended when someone responds with patience and kindness to your impatience and unkindness? Are you offended when you see people living out the things of scripture that you are not living out yourself? Well then, you're offended by Christ in someone, and thereby you're also offended by Jesus. Don't be.

Something that is super popular in the market of health products these days are gut cleansers, because people say that an unhealthy gut leads to myriad other health issues. Being offended by the things of Christ, whether you call upon the Name of Christ or not, is like having a toxically unhealthy gut! It will impact, affect, and poison your entire life! Let God gut check you and clean out what's inside of you.

Please don't religiously justify your ungodliness. Please don't religiously justify your bitterness, your unforgiveness, your anger, your irritation, or your sin.

Repent instead. When you see the goodness of Christ shining through someone else and you experience conviction, which will initially feel like a good kind of "gut guilt" that could lead to change, follow that conviction into the change that God wants to bring in your heart, your mind, your decisions, and your life! He will clean that unhealthy stuff outta your spiritual gut!

Back to the text, starting in v. 24, and into the second of three subunits of the passage we're looking at;

24 After John's messengers left, (Jesus) began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the wind? **25** What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothes? See, those who are splendidly dressed and live in luxury are in royal palaces. **26** What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. **27** This is the one about whom it is written:

*See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you;
he will prepare your way before you.*

28 I tell you, among those born of women no one is greater than John, but the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

29 *(And when all the people, including the tax collectors, heard this, they acknowledged God's way of righteousness, because they had been baptized with John's baptism. 30 But since the Pharisees and experts in the law had not been baptized by him, they rejected the plan of God for themselves.) (Luke 7:24-30)*

Jesus raised the question about John the Baptizer for the crowd. He noted that people did not journey to see reeds in the desert or fine clothes when they went to see John. The reference to reeds was either an allusion to the scenery at the location of John's ministry or a figurative, ironic reference to John as a spineless man. Either was possible, but since the next statement about fine clothes should be taken literally, the reference to reeds was also likely literal. People did not go to see John because of the scenery at the Jordan River or for a fashion statement! They came for another reason: to see a prophet.⁷

Why do you "go to church"? To see a great worship music performance? To hear a great sermon? To plug your kids into a killer kids ministry?

And what about our community, Streetlight Community Church? It's a weird anomaly in the Body of Christ in Akron. It's not your typical Sunday Church gathering. So get real! What do you come up an alley in Kenmore to see? What do you come onto Kenmore boulevard to see? Hip hop music? Brandon Hathaway all tatted up with stylish clothes? Jolana Dawson's fiery exhortations and shepherd's heart? Sarah Klinger's compassionate, intellectually stimulating teaching? Sarah White's beautiful vibrato laden voice and encouragement? Mindy Bechter's reverent, uplifting worship leadership? Sarah Motich's passion for the throne of God? Ben White's wild and crazy rantings and ravings about his passion for Jesus? All the wonderful people that make up this community? A cool logo with a cool Church name? Or did you come here to experience Jesus? What is it? Make your choice now! Jesus is worth it! All that other stuff is human. All those other things will certainly let you down. They all have the potential to wear out their luster over time. Jesus will never wear out. Jesus should be our motivation for everything.

Cause you could also come here and realize that we're in an old Irish bar turned into a youth center. You could realize we're in an old building. You could notice the torn up walls and scuffed up floors. You could be irritated by the personality of the pastor and other leaders, or people in the community, or the fact that we're in an obviously rougher neighborhood of Akron. But I'm asking you now, did you come here for Jesus? Did you come to experience Him? Did you come to be disciplined by Jesus and His people? Did you come to join Jesus' mission in Kenmore and greater Akron? I'm not kidding- flush

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that other stuff down the toilet and focus on Jesus! He's worth it! We are a bunch of flawed people in an imperfect situation that are wild about Jesus and trying to get you wild about Him! Don't forget it!

There are always greater things to see than what's on the exterior! In John the Baptist, people likely saw a dirty, dreadlocked, camel hair-wearing, locust eating wild prophetic man in the wilderness, on the margins! But what God was doing in and through Him, **that's** where the value was! That's where the eternal treasure was! That's what was worth focusing on! Let's not lose our focus on the things of heaven! And **please** don't be offended by the things of heaven!

And if God speaks to you in an unlikely way, through an unlikely person, or a hip hop song, or someone from your enemy political party, or someone you dislike, **listen up!** Remember- don't be offended by the things of Jesus, wherever you may find them, and through whatever surprising means from which they reach you!

In fact, John was more than a prophet. At the time of his birth he was the greatest man yet born, since he represented the end of an era and pointed to the dawn of a new era of realization in God's plan. The words of Scripture in verse 27 from Malachi 3:1 pointed to his forerunner role. Like Elijah boldly preaching to the nation, John declared God's will to the people and helped prepare them for that new era. The imagery of John's going before the people also recalled the language of Exodus, where the Shekinah guided and directed the people in the desert (Ex. 23:20). God was pointing the way in this forerunner, a witness to the approaching realization of promise.⁸

John's greatness was nothing compared to those who participated in the new era's blessings and benefits. Jesus' remark in verse 28 is one of the greatest affirmations of the believer's status in Scripture. To belong to the kingdom is a great privilege. John is the bridge between the two eras, but those who follow where the Baptist points come into a closer, more intimate relationship to God that transcends even the best the old age offered. That is how great Jesus' work is in this new era.⁹

I have been a collector of music since I was about three years old. My first cassette tapes were the albums "Purple Rain" by Prince, "1984" by Van Halen and "Slippery When Wet" by Bon Jovi.

As I grew up, CD's became a more popular way to listen to music. I collected CD's and tapes. I ended up having hundreds of both in big CD books and tape carrying cases.

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Then napster came along, mp3s stormed the internet, and gradually the music scene caught up with technology.

And now we have this thing called Spotify where we can pay for a monthly membership, and have **unlimited access** to all the music we want!

The Old Covenant pointed to the beautiful, glorious music of the almighty, gracious, Lord of heaven- Creator of the Universe! Creator of us! Implanter of the Imago Dei into us! The law was given, the ordinances kept people connected to these glorious melodies of heaven.

And then Jesus showed up and gave us **unlimited access** to the things of heaven! The veil into the Holy of Holies was torn! No longer did we need the blood of bulls and goats to atone for our sins! The very Son of God Himself lived a perfectly obedient life on earth and willingly died to offer a perfect sacrifice of atonement on our behalf! He said **it is finished!** He meant it!

In an aside, Luke 7:29-30 noted the varying responses to John, setting up the parable that followed. The people and tax collectors were acknowledging God's work and responding to John's baptism, but the leadership remained hesitant. They did not recognize their need to repent and so reject God's counsel. The reversal of where one would've expected piety to reside signaled another surprise in the events of fulfillment.¹⁰

It's easy to go to the place where the Word naturally leads us here and say that those who appear to be the most religious, the most devoted, and the most pious outwardly can totally miss Jesus. And that's 100% true. It happens all the time. You can be all theological, all churchy, all committed to Christianity, and miss Christ. You can have all the right doctrine and do all the right things, and miss Christ.

But one can also be so addicted to something of God that they miss Christ. That's the real warning that we see in Jesus' exhortations to the religious leaders of His day- the Pharisees and teachers of the law. Just watch out that you don't put the things of God before God Himself!

One can be so addicted to helping people heal from Church hurt that they therefore see Church hurt everywhere, and totally miss Christ and the things of Christ! One can be so addicted to doing radical urban ministry and ministering to the poor and the marginalized, that they totally miss Christ. One can be so addicted to making Jesus cool

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and relevant to people that they miss Christ. One can be so into the edgy things of Jesus that they miss Jesus. Big point- **don't miss Jesus!** And **don't be offended by Jesus!**

Jesus concludes this chunk of text with the third and final subunit and a parable. Jesus said;

31 *"To what then should I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? 32 They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to each other:*

*We played the flute for you,
but you didn't dance;
we sang a lament,
but you didn't weep!*

33 *For John the Baptist did not come eating bread or drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon!' 34 The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' 35 Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children."* (Luke 7:31-35)

Jesus warned the current generation of religious leaders about their response to John. He did so through a parable, as he often did when discussing the kingdom or God's plan (Matt. 13:24; 18:23; 22:2; 25:1; Luke 13:8). He compared them to an ancient game of children at play. One can call this comparison **"the parable of the brats!"** Jesus was clearly comparing the complaining children to this generation, that is, to the Jewish objectors (Luke 7:33 - 34). The parable was told from their perspective. They were the children who were seated and refused to play, complaining that John and Jesus did not dance to their tune. Whether they played a light tune on the flute or a funeral dirge, these two men did not follow the Jewish leadership's desires. They charged John with being demonic and Jesus with gluttony and questionable friendships. Jesus' open effort to reach sinners represented a repudiation of the leadership's more separatist approach (5:31 - 32; 15:1 - 32).¹¹

Some people of a religious spirit want only light tunes on a flute. They don't want a serious challenge. They want fluff, tolerance, and license to do whatever they want.

Some people of a religious spirit want lament and funeral dirge. They want nothing but condemnation, guilt, challenge, and behavior modification. They judge everyone that isn't living up to their standards.

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But the point Jesus was making is that no matter what John the Baptist and He did, these religious critics would have found a way to discard and cancel them. It didn't matter how faithfully obedient to the Lord they were. It didn't even matter that Jesus was the sinless, perfect Son of God for that matter! These religious critics made up their minds before they could allow God almighty to make His way into their minds!

Have I said it yet? ***Don't be offended by Jesus!*** Don't be offended by the things of God! Stop trying to get God to sing and play to your tune, and start singing and playing to His! Stop trying to get Him to conform to your image and idea of Him and start conforming to His image and idea of you!

Those who respond, wisdom's children, were contrasted with those who did not, like the comparison in verses 29 - 30. Jesus' associations and John's call registered with some. The presence of the restored vindicated God's way, revealing his wisdom. The divine attempt to reach out to sinners meant that they should not be ignored but pursued. The rebuke through the parable was another way to say that the leadership was hardhearted in its rejection of God's way.¹²

We, who are in Christ and of Christ, are wisdom's children. Wisdom's children are talked about in Proverbs Chapters 1-8. We have Christ living in us! And therefore, we can discern, ingest, and live out the things of God! We have the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit is the third person of the triune God literally living inside those of us that know the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! Holy Spirit, guide us! Holy Spirit, lead us! Holy Spirit, we surrender all to you!

Help us, who are so easily offended in all of the wrong ways, not to be offended by the things of God the Father, Son and Spirit! Lord, please offend us, in Jesus' way, amen! Let the things of heaven and the Kingdom of God be fully implanted into us, and fully have their way in us Lord! Christ, come and chisel away all of our sin, confusion, doubt, selfishness, and godlessness! Fill us with Your aroma and fully have Your way in us!

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