

Bait Of Satan #2

For July 18, 2016

(Please Review Study Notes Below Then Proceed To Discussion Points)

THE BAIT OF SATAN #2

“The Blessedness Of The Unoffended”

(Booklet by T. Austin Sparks)

One of the greatest secrets of our walk with the Lord is hidden within the mystery of Jesus' final words to an imprisoned John the Baptist recorded in Matthew 11:6...

“Blessed is he who is not offended in Me.”

Matthew 11:6

What did He mean?

I. Review

A. The English Word For Offences From The Greek Word ‘Skandalon’

“The Greeks had a special word for the portion of an animal trap upon which the bait was laid. It was called the “skandalon”.

Bob Mumford

1. With a mouse trap, it's where you lay the cheese the trigger mechanism.
 - a. If the mouse picks up the cheese, he's dead.
 - b. If the Christian picks up an offence, he's trapped.
2. Offences are the “bait of Satan” to entrap a believer; and if you're going to follow Jesus, you cannot avoid them!

a. Jesus said:

“Offences must come.”

Luke 17:1

3. You can't live in this world without being offended:
 - a. Most of us know about being offended by *others*.
 - b. But very few have thought about the very real possibility of being *offended by Jesus!*

“One of the greatest dangers of the Christian life lurks in the pathway of discipleship. It is the danger of being offended in Christ.”

T. Austin Sparks

4. Many church going people might be offended I even mention such a thing is possible!
5. But like the Apostle Peter, they may be in denial.
 - a. Hours before He went to the cross, Jesus told His disciples:

Mark 14:27

“All of you will be offended because of Me this night.”

- b. Peter’s response: “though all be offended, yet not I”.

But Jesus said, “Before the cock crows twice, you will deny Me three times”.

- c. And he did!

7. Jesus said, “Blessed is he who is not offended in me”. This message is titled: The Blessedness of The Unoffended...

But if someone as great as Peter, always listed first among the apostles, could be offended by Jesus, we ought to realize it could happen to us!

B. Jesus Was An Equal Opportunity Offender

1. During the course of His life on earth, Jesus offended just about everyone!
 - a. Jesus offended His **family**:

When his family heard what was happening, they tried to take him away. "He's out of his mind," they said.

Mark 3:21 NLT

(in verses 31-35, He wouldn’t even come outside to see them)

- b. He offended His **hometown**:

Mark 6

2 And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

Mark 6:3

3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary? And they were offended at him.

c. His friends Mary and Martha...

“Lord, if you had been here, he would not have died.”

John 11:21, 32

d. He offended **the rich young ruler**...

Mark 10:22

But at these words his face fell, and he went away grieved, for he was one who owned much property.

e. He offended Simon Peter in Matthew 16:21-22, calling him “satan”

f. He offended **the multitudes** in John 6, whittling the crowd from 5000 down to just 12...I AM; eat my flesh, drink my blood...

John 6:61

when Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you?"

Jesus knew what He preached was causing the crowd to get smaller...

John 6:66

From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. 67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?"

g. Jesus was glad to minister to everyone; He taught the crowds and healed the sick; but when it came to discipleship, He raised the stakes...

IN LUKE 9, JESUS OFFENDED 3 MEN IN 6 VERSES

- To **the man who wanted to first bury his father**: “Let the dead bury the dead”
- To **the man who first wanted to look after his business interests**: If you’re not willing to be homeless, you can’t be my disciple
- To **the one who just wanted to say goodbye to his family**: no double minded man can inherit the kingdom

2. There is a pattern here and a lesson for the church about the ministry of Jesus:

a. The invitation is to everyone! He makes Himself accessible to all. He has a “whosoever will” approach

b. But He never pulled any punches about what it would mean to really follow Him and be His disciple!

3. Today, the church has the “whosoever will” part down pat! By and large, the Church in America has bent over backwards to be inclusive and to be nice. The problem is that we are not making disciples!

- a. So most church going people never grow beyond baby-level
- b. They know about Jesus the Savior; almost nothing of Jesus as LORD.

4. The same Jesus who loved everyone and ministered to everyone never shrunk back from telling the truth about what it would mean to belong to Him!

- a. Notice how He runs the risk of offending people who wanted to follow Him:

WARNING! VERY CHALLENGING WORDS OF JESUS AHEAD!

Matt 10:24-26 NKJV

24 "A disciple is not above *his* teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub,* how much more will they call those of his household!

Luke 14:26-27

26 "Anyone who comes to me but refuses to let go of father, mother, spouse, children, brothers, sisters — yes, even one's own self! — can't be my disciple. 27 Anyone who won't shoulder his own cross and follow behind me can't be my disciple.

Luke 14:33

"Simply put, if you're not willing to take what is dearest to you, whether plans or people, and kiss it good-bye, you can't be my disciple.

John 15:20

20 Do you remember what I told you? 'A slave is not greater than the master.' Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you.

- 5. The classic case of Saul the Pharisee, who became Paul the Apostle:

Acts 9:15-16

But the Lord said, "Go, for Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel. 16 And I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake."

6. If we want to follow Jesus, make Him Lord and be His disciple, we're going to have to learn how to not to be offended by Him!

II. The Classic Example: John The Baptist

A. The Greatness of John

- 1. The man "sent from God":

- 30 years in preparation
- The first to recognize Jesus and proclaim Him to be the “lamb of God”
- The one who insisted on baptism from Jesus
- The one of whom Jesus said..

Matt 11:11

"I tell you the truth, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist.

2. But what happened? John gets offended at Jesus!
 - a. He expected to have a place in the ministry, but now Herod has him in prison
 - b. He expected Jesus to take over the kingdom but He didn't
 - c. He expected Him to get him out but there he is...and the headsman is on his way.
3. John gets so offended at Jesus he begins to wonder if He is the Messiah after all!

Matt 11:2-3

Now when John in prison heard of the works of Christ, he sent *word* by his disciples, and said to Him, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?"

- a. To which Jesus replies...

Matt 11:4-6

4 Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: 5 *The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.* 6 **And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."**

5. If someone as great as John can be offended, so can we!

B. The Nature Of Offence

1. Offences come by way of disappointments.
2. We get offended when God doesn't act the way we expect Him to!

C. Austin Sparks Lists Several Occasions When We Might Be Offended

We can become offended in Christ by:

- a. The severity of His requirements**
 - b. The mystery of His contradictions**
 - c. The slowness of His methods**
- c. The unreasonableness of His silence

1. The severity of His requirements.

“When we first come to Christ, the pathways seems to be strewn with roses...the air filled with perfume...but before long we discover the conditions of companionship are severe.”

T. Austin Sparks, The Blessedness of the Unoffended

2. The mystery of His contradictions.

a. We ask for rest; but He seems to give us more to do

b. We look for peace; but He sends us to the most His amazing promises attract us; but our life is hard

3. The slowness of His methods.

4. The unreasonableness of His silence.

III. Jesus Anticipated Our Offences

A. In The Closing Chapters Of John

1. It touches my heart to see how much Jesus said to His disciples in those final few days before He went to the Cross...knowing He would go away...knowing they would all be offended and forsake Him for a moment...knowing what would come against them.

(John 13-19 all takes place in the week before the Cross!)

2. He teaches them about how safe they were in Him, who was in the Father:

a. He promised them He would be with them through the Holy Spirit

b. That He was going away to prepare a place for them

c. That the Father loved them as much as the Father loved He himself

3. Right in the middle of these 6 chapters He says...

These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

John 16:1

B. Conclusion

1. **Austin Spark's little pamphlet was titled, "The Blessedness of the Unoffended".**

2. Every disciple needs to know what Jesus spoke to John, paraphrased by John Bevere in his book, "The Bait Of Satan"...

"John, I know you don't understand what's happening with you and many of my ways...but do not be offended with me because I do not operate the way you expected."

John Bevere

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. The Apostle Peter quotes the Prophet Isaiah concerning Jesus the Messiah:

Isaiah 8:14-15

He will be as a sanctuary, But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, as a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble; They shall fall and be broken, be snared and taken."

In Galatians 5:11, Paul said he was persecuted because he preached the offence of the Cross.

- a. What do you think they mean when they speak of the offence of Christ and the Cross?
- b. How does this help us as to how we present the Gospel?

2. Describe how Jesus Christ or the Gospel was offensive to you before you were saved?

- a. Hint: why didn't you give your life to the Lord before you did?
- b. How does this relate to how you present the Gospel to others?

3. Describe the time when your faith in God was challenged the most. Has there ever been a time when you almost gave up on God?

a. How might your experience help you disciple people who have backslidden, given up on God, or stopped attending church?

4. How do you think you might be able to use this series of messages or these notes as you seek to attempt to help others follow the Lord?