

# SERMON NOTES

SUNDAY 04.08.24

PREACHER: PS NATHAN BEAN

“OFFENCE”

## BECOMING CHRISTLIKE

*BEING, THINKING & DOING*

**Conviction of a Disciple:** We are resilient through life's difficulties. As students of Jesus, we are growing in the art of forgiveness and developing an unoffendable spirit.

### OVERVIEW

Offence can quickly take root in our hearts and hinder our spiritual growth, so it's crucial to recognise and address it promptly, seeking the Holy Spirit's help for peace and healing.

### ACTION

**Step 1:** When was the last time I felt offended, and how did I handle that situation?

**Step 2:** Commit: How can I commit to recognising and addressing offence more promptly in my daily interactions?

**Step 3:** Act: What practical steps can I take this week to deal with any lingering bitterness or unresolved anger in my heart?

# THOUGHT

**SCRIPTURE: EPHESIANS 4:22-32**

Few things get us stuck in our spiritual growth faster than offence. It arrests us at the event in question and within moments can start to dig its roots deep into our hearts. Though not often thought of as one of the enemy's "Greatest Hits", offence is probably the most effective tool he has in his belt. It divides brothers against sisters, children against parents, husbands against wives, members against churches, churches against churches, the world against the Christians, and the Christians against the world.

When offence takes root, it causes our hearts to shut down toward others and we can even dehumanise them - they simply become "what they did" to us rather than who they are. Offense is toxic and should be labelled as harmful to the human soul. We need HELP!

The tricky thing is, there are seemingly limitless opportunities on any given day to feel the stab of offence! From other drivers, to our family members, to the dozens of online interactions we are engaged in (and the countless ones we simply scroll through), it can often feel that the world at large is out to disappoint us!

*So how do we avoid falling into this all-too-familiar trap?*

First, we need to learn to recognise offence as soon as it shows up. The next step is to name it for what it is, including allowing ourselves to be angry - but without get stuck in anger. Anger, in and of itself, isn't the problem, but what we do with it that get's us in trouble.

Once we realise and own the fact that we're frustrated, irritated, angry, we need to act quickly to deal with the source of these emotions. When we don't deal with these things quickly, they can plant a seed in our hearts. Paul writes in Eph 4:26 that "letting the sun set on your anger", (which simply means that we're stewing over it allowing it to fester) creates the opportunity for the devil to grip your heart. This is why the writer of Proverbs says "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." (Prov 4:23).

Hebrews 12:15 says: "See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many." We have to cut off the flow of bitterness at its root. Unfortunately, this usually has to take place before we're ready to let it go. But when we allow the Holy Spirit to enter these spaces of our hearts, he will begin the deep work of transformation and will bring us to a place of peace and freedom.

## DISCUSSION

1. What are some common sources of offence in our daily lives, and how can we support each other in overcoming them?
2. How can we create a culture of forgiveness and reconciliation within our small group and church community?
3. In what ways have you experienced the Holy Spirit bringing peace and transformation to areas of offence in your life?

## PRAYER

Lord,

Help us to recognise and release the offences that take root in our hearts, and grant us the grace to seek your peace and transformation, allowing your Spirit to bring healing and unity in our relationships.

Amen.