
A Plan for Offenses and Offenders

God's Plan For Your Trouble

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Sermon: God's Plan For Your Trouble: A Plan for Offenses and Offenders

Lesson Text

Matthew 11:2–6 (AV)² Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, ³ And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? ⁴ Jesus answered and said unto them, **Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: ⁵ The blind receive their sight, 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*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.**

Luke 17:1–5 (AV)¹ Then said he unto the disciples, **It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe *unto him*, through whom they come! ² It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. ³ Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. ⁴ And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him. ⁵ And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.**

Matthew 18:21–22 (AV)²¹ Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? ²² Jesus saith unto him, **I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.**

Matthew 18:32–35 (AV)³² Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, **O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: ³³ Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? ³⁴ And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. ³⁵ So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.**

Introduction

Our 2021 theme is surmised by Jeremiah 29:11 (BSB) ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a future and a hope.

So far we've looked at the Process of Discovering God's Plan for our lives, and God's Plan to Prosper us. **Now we will look at the problem when it looks like the plan just isn't working.**

We all have at some point have asked, whether privately or publicly, questions like “For real God?,” “Why God?,” “Why would you allow this to happen to me?,” “I never get a break” “All my life I had to (fill in the blank).”

David, and later Jesus when He was on the cross characterized this sentiment in scripture:

- Psalm 22:1 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? *why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?*

A Plan for Offenses and Offenders

Page 2 of 7 (March 14, 2021)

- Matthew 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, **Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?** that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

And for some of us, we feel some kind of way. We felt like giving up, and some have:

- Psalm 73: ¹Truly God *is* good to Israel, *even* to such as are of a clean heart. ² But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. ³ For I was envious at the foolish, *when* I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
- Psalm 38:⁸ I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.

The reason for these thoughts, emotions, and ultimately actions are because of the difference between God's plans and our plans, between God's thoughts and our thoughts.

Isaiah 55:⁸ For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. ⁹ For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

But ultimately the difference is about God's Vision and our Reality; about what God said, and what we heard; about God's perfect will and our desired will.

Which brings us to the purpose of this series, in general, and this message, in specific. How do we deal with the reality of our lives, our troubles, our struggles, our disappointments, our hurts, our setbacks, our betrayals, our afflictions, our tribulations, and our persecutions.

The answer is that we are in a world of sin and God never said that we were immune to its consequences; as a matter of fact, He said the opposite.

- Matthew 5:⁴⁵ **That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.**
- Psalm 34:¹⁹ Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.
- 2 Corinthians 4:⁸ *We are* troubled on every side, yet not distressed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

The point is that although these things happen to us all, God has a plan even for our troubles.

Genesis 50:²⁰ But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive.

And specifically, today we want to look at God's plan for our Offenses and Offenders.

Offense means to do wrong, to cause difficulty, discomfort, or injury. It also means to cause dislike, anger, or vexation. To violate, transgress, cause pain, hurt, or cause to feel resentment.

Jesus said in our lesson text that it's impossible that offenses will come; in other words, offenses and offenders are bound to happen. But today, God's Got a Plan!

Series and Sermon: God's Plan For Your Trouble: A Plan for Offenses and Offenders

“God's Got a Plan for the Offense of Your Calling, the Offense of Your Brother, and the Offense of Yourself”

I. The Offense of Your Calling

Matthew 11:6 **And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.**

One of the challenges I face as a pastor is when those who once were excited about their relationship with God fall off, take a step back, slack off, or just simply give up.

Now I understand the sentiment as to why this happens. “After all that I've done and given up for God, how could He allow this to happen to me?”

And this was the challenge that John the Baptist was facing in our lesson text. He was a bad man. He was the forerunner of Christ himself. He prepared the way. Here's what Jesus said concerning him:

Matthew 11:¹¹ **Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.**

We literally get our marching orders as Christians in the next verse:

Matthew 11:¹² **And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.**

But now John is struggling with his calling. Why? Because after all that he has done, even baptizing Jesus Christ, decreasing so that Christ could increase; Jesus is not doing anything about John's current situation.

He's sitting in prison about to get his head chopped off for preaching the truth, and Jesus is essentially doing nothing about it.

Matthew 11: ² Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, ³**And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?**

- I'm still not married after all these years – Are you the one or should I look for another
- I dedicated my life to ministry; I'm broke – Are you the one or should I look for another
- I helped others with their marriage, and my spouse left me – Are you the one or should...
- I served and helped others, and I'm now all alone – Are you the one or should I look ...
- I prayed and saw others get healed, but now I'm sick – Are you the one or should I ...

What is God's Plan when we are offended by our calling?

Matthew 11: ⁴ Jesus answered and said unto them, **Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: ⁵The blind receive their sight, 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.**

The plan for the offense of our calling is first to remind us that the calling is still working.

In other words, everything that you preached about, everything that you fought for, everything that you believed in, everybody that you helped, everybody that you served, every marriage that you counseled, every poor person that you fed, every broken person you fixed, every blind person that you recovered, every captive person you set free...

Guess what, they are still healed, still see, still delivered, still married, still full, still free!

Secondly, although your present situation does not demonstrate or show it, you are blessed!

Matthew 11:6 **And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.**

II. The Offense of Your Brother

Luke 17:1 Then said he unto the disciples, **It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto *him*, through whom they come!**

The second challenge I face as a pastor is counseling people about their offenders.

I've had some great members who are no longer members of our church. And it hurt me that they left, but in most cases I could do nothing to convince them not to leave.

One of the persistent things I've learned about this challenge was not so much what was done to them, but who did it to them.

Psalms 41:9 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up *his* heel against me.

Familiar friend here is translated to Best friend.

It's not just that I was hurt, but that it was you that hurt me. It was not that I was betrayed, but it was the one that I loved that betrayed me.

I expected my enemies to hurt me, to betray me, but "Et Tu Brute?" (A Latin phrase that means "You too Brutus?", said by Julius Caesar after recognizing that one of his assassins was his friend Brutus)

But he was a preacher, she was a minister, it was my Pastor, it was my own family, my own brother, my own child, my own mother, my own father!

The plan for the offense of our brother, mother, sister, lover is to recognize that these offenses are a part of the plan to glorify God.

John 12:²⁷ **Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.** ²⁸ **Father, glorify thy name.** Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again.

1 Peter 4:¹² Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: ¹³ But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

I know you've been offended, but there's glory coming out of this!

III. The Offense of Yourself

Luke 17: ⁴ And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him. ⁵ And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

- God's Plan for the Offense of Our Calling is the Blessings of the Lord
- God's Plan for the Offense of Our Brothers is the Glory of the Lord
- God's Plan for the Offense of Ourselves is the Forgiveness of the Lord

The final challenge I deal with as a Pastor is getting us to shift the focus of our offenses from ourselves to our Lord.

We tend to lose it concerning our offenses, especially when we feel that it has been too much. Too much trouble, too many afflictions, so much pain, too many betrayals.

Matthew 18:21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

Lord, how long do we have to put up with this? How much do we have to go through? How long do I remain single? How long can I put up with this bad marriage?

Matthew 18:22 Jesus saith unto him, **I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.**

Matthew 18:³² **Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: ³³ Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? ³⁴ And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. ³⁵ So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.**

Lamentations 3:²² *It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. ²³ They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*

We are forgiven for our offenses, so forgive them for theirs!

Midweek Study Lesson Plan (Sermon: A Plan for Offenses and Offenders)

Lesson Text

- Matthew 11:2–6, Luke 17:1–5, Matthew 18:21–22, Matthew 18:32–35

Sermon Outline (Notes)

I. *The Offense of Your Calling*

II. *The Offense of Your Brother*

III. *The Offense of Yourself*

Questions (What was your main takeaway from Sunday’s Sermon?)

I. Getting to Know “Me”

1. What does your perfect breakfast look like?
2. If you could start a charity, what would it be for?

II. Into the Bible

1. Read Matthew 16:21-23. Why would Jesus address Peter, his disciple, as Satan? How was Peter an offense to Jesus?
2. Matthew 5:39 (CEV) states “But I tell you not to try to get even with a person who has done something to you. When someone slaps your right cheek, turn and let that person slap your other cheek.” Is Jesus teaching us to be a doormat for others by turning the other cheek? If not, what does he mean?

III Life Application

1. ***The Offense of Your Brother:*** We must come to terms with the fact that we cannot change others. How can knowing that help us when we are offended by others? Give practical ways to start the forgiving and healing process when we are offended.
2. ***The Offense of Yourself:*** When we receive salvation through Jesus, God forgives us for all of our past, present and future sins. It is sometimes hard to forgive ourselves. Think of a time when you had to forgive yourself. How did you do it and what would you say to someone who needed to free themselves through forgiveness.