**What to Do When…**

**Opening Comments:** Praise the Lord; good morning, everyone.

Be sure to be here next week to hear about the fantastic work we are doing in the lives of the Wolof people in West Africa.

Amen,

Now, for today we are continuing in our series What to do When…

These last five weeks, we have heard some great messages in this series, I would say from some pretty incredible men, Pastor Landon, Cole, and Pastor Ron & last week was Pastor Danial Villareal from Texas; I hope you enjoyed him.

I encourage you to go back and listen if you have missed any of those messages. They are really good!

Today, I am speaking on What to do When…I’m offended!

I am confident that the Holy Spirit wants to say something significant to us today. Why this topic?

Have you lived in our world over the past two years? Think about it; there have been so many reasons people scream, “I’m offended.”

If you want to be offended, you do not have to look far!

* Wear a mask, don’t wear a mask
* Get a shot, don’t get a shot
* Get a booster, don’t get a booster
* Stricter gun laws, looser gun laws
* Team Johnnie or Team Amber

Before school was over, my wife Laura had a student ask her, are you team johnnie or team amber! What?!?

Pause Here

Trust me; if you are looking to be offended, you will be offended. No doubt!

Just this morning, when I walked in here… I was…. PAUSE!

Nah, I’m just kidding! I love my church; you can’t offend me, or could you?!?

But seriously.

Let’s get real, some of you walked in here today with something, and it’s as acute today as it was when it happened. Some type of offense you have not been able to shake - it could have happened years ago, last week, or maybe even this morning?

*So, what does it mean to be offended:*

*Webster says it is “to cause (a person or group) to feel hurt, anger or upset by something said or done?”*

*It is different than just having an opinion or a dislike.*

*For example, when I order a hamburger, I order it with no ketchup, no onion, and no cheese. When I get my burger, if it has ketchup or onion on it, no biggie, I will eat it – But if that joker comes with cheese on it – oh nooooo, you didn’t!*

*I am offended that you put cheese on my burger when I asked you not to!*

*I don’t care how far the restaurant is; I will take that burger back!*

*Or throw it in the trash.*

*“A dislike becomes an offense or a hurt when you put it on and wear it around like a backpack and never take it off.”*

*It’s like this – I get my hamburger, it’s got cheese on it,*

*Oh my gosh! Laura, I can’t believe they put cheese on my burger,*

*5 hours later, can you believe they put cheese on my burger,*

*You call your kids, and then you call a friend, bro; let me tell you what the restaurant did to me!*

*Then you post, Tweet, Snapchat, and “Tik Tok” about that restaurant that did you so wrong!*

Now, you may be visiting or came across us online, and you are like a story about cheese; what have I gotten myself into.

I believe that the sovereignty of God has brought you into this moment to help you get past an offense or a hurt that doesn’t seem like it will let you go.

Even if it is as tiny an issue as my burger with cheese on it

Can I tell you a Story?

*In 2002/03, I was working as a Quality Technician at a company in LaVergne, TN, and then in 2004, I was promoted to Quality Manager. Mind you, I started at the entry-level of this company in 1992. Some of you are thinking, wow, how old is this guy? HAHA!*

*So, for 10-11 years, I had worked hard learning everything I could about processing flat-rolled steel product.*

*Then in 2004, I got the promotion to Manager, Quality Manager.*

*One day in my office with our Quality Systems Administrator and a guy I had worked with for years on the production floor. He was my friend, my co-worker, and when the QSA, the Quality Systems Administrator, commented on my promotion to Manager, this guy makes this comment… “even the sun shines on a dog’s back end sometimes,” but he didn’t say “back end.”*

***I was like, WHAT!! What did he say?!? Of course, I didn’t say that out loud; I just thought it to myself, BUT I was offended, I was hurt, and still, when I think about it, I’m offended that hurt!***

***I have worked hard to get here***

***I have put in the time***

***I have put in the energy; what makes him think he can say something like that? He should be happy for me!***

Luke recorded Jesus saying in Luke 17:1 HCSB

Jesus says, “Offenses are certainly going to come….”

Jesus made it very clear that it is impossible to live in this world and not have the opportunity to become offended. He recognized that this was going to happen.

You know as well as I do that people do or say stupid stuff, right,

It’s like with some people, their life’s mission is to just mess with you!

It’s true; they say things, they do things just to offend you.

Often times, it’s the people closest to you, your spouse, your kids, your family, your friends, the people you go to church with!

I believe God wants to help you get free of those offenses.

If you like to take notes, get your pen & paper, or your tablet, or your phone, and let’s get it.

Let’s start by talking about “What **NOT** to do when I’m offended” first.

Keep in mind that these reactions do not lead us into the life that God wants us to have.

What NOT to do when you are offended?

1. Do NOT retaliate!

If someone does something that hurts you, you get mad. What’s our initial thought? Like me with the “sunshine” comment –

I wanted to strap on the gloves and get after him. I wanted to retaliate, but I didn’t.

*Now it’s one thing when it happens to you, but it's different when it is someone we love.*

Let me explain:

*There is an offense that I will call a “secondhand offense”.*

*It’s when you gossip about what someone else did or said, which influences another person’s opinion.*

*Say you run your spouse down to your parents. That can create in them an offense about your spouse.*

*You can even get over the offense, but your parent may carry it for much longer. Someone offends me, that’s one thing, offend or hurt my children, doesn’t matter how old they are, parents don’t get over it so well.*

*Story:*

*Back when our youngest son, Caleb, was playing baseball. When he was probably 7/8 years old, Caleb was in left field in this particular game. (The boy could track a fly ball like you wouldn’t believe.)*

*The game is going on, and mom, grandmom, and I are sitting adjacent to the left-field to watch Caleb.*

*A hard-hit ball with lots of speed came screaming into left field on the ground, Caleb ran up, ready to make a play on the ball, and when he went down to glove the ball, the ball shot through his legs rolled past him to the fence. Ok, not good, Caleb knew it wasn’t good, and the coaches didn’t.*

*I am sitting there, I am about as far as I am here to the back wall, and of course, we can hear the coaches “coaching up” Caleb (if your kid plays a sport or is involved with extracurricular activities, you know what I mean) “Caleb, get your glove down!!”*

*Ok, no problem. I have always been open to either of my boys being “coached up,” Chase when he played baseball or football, and Caleb when he played baseball or basketball. No problem.*

*Well, I hear this one coach say, “Caleb, get your glove down” ok, then I hear it again, “Caleb, you gotta get your glove down” then again, but this time, I look at my baby boy standing there in left field, and his head drops, he was crushed.*

*It flew all over me, and I was HOT. I was like, it better not…. “Caleb, get your glove down!!!” that was it; I made my way towards that dugout, I was one my way to retaliate!*

*Well, oh my way I was like “help me Holy Ghost”, now’s the time to show up and by the time I got to the dugout, I had calmed down and was like, ok, I’m not going to say anything, it wouldn’t be right.*

*But wouldn’t you know it, as soon as I got next to the opening of the dugout, I heard my son's name come out of that coach’s mouth again.*

*It was on – I marched right up and onto that ballfield and was like YO! and began giving that coach a piece of my mind.*

*It was not my proudest Dad moment.*

Let’s bring some biblical truth for that guy at the ballgame that day, and I do not mean the coach either.

Paul wrote, “Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things so that everyone can see you are honorable.” Romans 12:17 NLT

We are to be so far removed from avenging ourselves and, yes, our children that we willingly risk being taken advantage of again.

I did not represent Christianity very well that day. I had to call that coach and repent for my actions.

What NOT to do When… I’m offended.

1. Do NOT stop functioning.

When that guy made the “sunshine” statement, I would have never continued to move forward in God’s plan if I had stopped functioning over the offense and hurt from that statement that I felt.

* In John Bevere’s book, “Bait of Satan,” he said that he had observed one of the enemy’s most deadly and deceptive traps in his travels. It imprisons countless Christians, severs relationships, and widens the existing breaches between us. It’s the trap of offense.

He went on to say;

“Many cannot function properly in their calling because of the wounds that offenses have caused in their lives.”

They are handicapped and hindered from fulfilling their full potential.

That is what the enemy wants you to do,

* stop functioning,
* stop ministering,
* stop serving,
* stop attending.

And to do that, He’ll have you piling on the offenses until you become overwhelmed with them.

So, #3

1. Do NOT become overwhelmed.
   1. Look around this room; there are say 200ish people here.
   2. That’s a healthy number of opportunities for someone to offend you, and it will happen.

* She looked at me funny; I’m offended!
* He wore that to church; I’m offended!
* The preacher said what? I’m offended!
* They gave my child that for a snack; I’m offended!

It will happen a lot when you are easily offended, and it can get overwhelming. “Don’t be easily offended”

Keep the main thing, the main thing, and the main thing is Jesus!

There are so many more things we could talk about on the What NOT to do when you are offended, but our message title isn’t

“What NOT to do”, and it is not “What to do IF”, it’s

What to do WHEN I am offended!

Remember what Jesus said; it’s going to happen.

Question? what is the first step to recovery?

Recognize or acknowledge you have a problem.

1. Recognize & acknowledge the offense.

Like many of you, I have a tendency to pack it or bottle up when I am offended, but, it will eventually come out.

Have you ever shaken a coke can? You can’t tell how volatile it is inside, but pop it open, and well we all know what it does, it spews out everywhere.

Ps 39:2-3 (NCV) I kept very quiet…but I became even more upset. I became very angry inside, and as I thought about it, my anger burned.

We think we are like a coke can and no one can see what’s going on inside and yes, that is true, we do not have ex-ray vision, but in God’s eyes, we are all like this water bottle and as it is shaken, dropped, offended and offended and all that mess is going on inside, God sees right into your soul.

Don’t be a shaken coke can and suppress your offense recognize & acknowledge the offense.

And the next step,

1. Take it to God, in Pray –

Matthew 5:43-44 says, “You have heard that it was said, “Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I tell you; Love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you….”

I am not talking about the “you get’em God” type prayers – you know what I am talking about.

* + It’s the “Dear Lord; you know what they did was wrong; you get’em, God!

Or maybe you pray this way…

* + Lord, it’s me again. I know that we are all precious in your sight, and sweet Lord, I know you don’t make junk, but God, that one over there, yeah, that one right there, they are broke and needs fixing!

Come on; everyone is acting so holy right now - you know those prayers, we’ve all prayed them before. Lord, get that coach; he needs some fixing.

See, that is the thing; we pray, “God fix or change them,” but God doesn’t work that way.

You see,

“Your prayer won’t fix or change them, but it can change you!”

When you go to God first in prayer, when you take that offense or those hurts you are dealing with to God,

He takes His very nature and puts it in you.

That is why Jesus prayed in the Garden before he faced the most significant hurt and rejection you could ever get.

He modeled for us what to do when we are offended.

So, be like Jesus, do what Jesus did, and go to God in prayer first!

Cause when you go to the person first, when you say, I will settle this, when you retaliate, you are going in your strength, and how many know that our strength is no match to going in God’s strength! Amen.

Because you will need His strength to do #3 with people, and that is

1. We Forgive

Luke 6: 37-38 Jesus said, “Do not judge others, and God will not judge you; do not condemn others, and God will not condemn you; forgive others, and God will forgive you. The same measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you.”

We can build this tough exterior that says, I’m ok, and do nothing, that didn’t offend me, sticks and stones, right!

But, when we get alone, we are torn apart on the inside.

We process & reprocess over and over until we start to minimize it,

* “well, they didn’t mean it,” or
* “I took the wrong way.”
* “They didn’t mean to; it’s not that big a deal.”
* It’s fine, I’m fine, it’s fine, it’s fine

Here’s the thing:

“When we minimize the offense, it cheapens forgiveness.”

And when you understand forgiveness, and the huge price it took, when Jesus paid for it on the cross, when we minimize the offense, it cheapens forgiveness.

Listen, Jesus was beaten, bruised, and made to walk miles to where he would be crucified, and there He was nailed to a cross, which was the Roman death sentence, reserved for the worst of the worst criminals!

And if anyone had a right to be offended, it was Jesus.

But what did He do after all that?

Look at Luke 23:34, “Then Jesus said, Father, FORGIVE them, for they know not what they do….”

Jesus is the answer to heal and restore you from an offense. Only He can get into those deep dark places where you think you have hidden your pain. But it continues to rear its ugly head.

*I heard a story about a pharmaceutical sales guy in training, where suppliers would come and demonstrate a new product. It came to lunchtime, and he went and washed his hands. When he came back, the supplier said before you eat lunch, we want to show you a product.*

*One of the products earlier the guy had to put baby powder on his hands. The supplier said, “put your hands under these black lights”, now, under the black lights, our sales guy could see all these black specs still on his hands.*

*The baby powder had buried down deep in the pours of his hands. They said it looks like your hands are clean, but actually, they are not; they still have baby powder in the pours, and they said here is the product we want to demonstrate for you, and that is when Purell, the hand sanitizer stuff was first coming out.*

*Under those black lights, you could see the bacteria that gets into the pores of your skin, and when you use this stuff, it kills it.*

*Here’s the spiritual implication, I believe when people do things that offend or hurt us, it attaches to our hearts; we may dress nice, and look fine, smile, and act like everything is fine, but those things attach themselves to our hearts, and it’s a toxin, and Jesus is your spiritual Purell. Right, and he can clean and purify those things in your lives.*

Ever wonder why you do not feel forgiven, maybe because you haven’t forgiven others.

- Jesus said, “The same measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you.”

* + We forgive because that is how we are forgiven.
  + We extend grace because this is how grace is extended to us
  + We are generous, and generosity comes our way

We need some spiritual de-toxification in our lives. Jesus is the Purell that can get deep inside your pores, heal your heart and clean out those toxins that have rooted themselves in your soul.

And here is the last one… What to do When…I’m offended!

You must

1. Realize it affects your relationship with God.

Hebrews 12:15

Watch out that no bitterness (circle that word bitterness; it means poison or a toxin). Watch out that no bitterness takes root among you because it springs up and causes deep trouble, hurting many in their lives.

Bitterness leads to unforgiveness, and unforgiveness left undealt with, is a toxin or poison that can get rooted, hidden, and grow like spiritual cancer. It will cause deep trouble, hurt others, and affect your relationship with God.

I want to share this quote with you, and I will put it on the board behind me.

*“At its root, feeling offended is a choice to place something in worship above God. “Worship” simply means “to ascribe worth to something.” In other words, when I am offended, I am bowing down and idolizing the thing with which I am offended, or what I believe is the appropriate response to the thing causing the offense.*

*In my heart and mind, I am inappropriately assigning worth to something that is less worthy than God. I am spending more time in the presence of my offense, than in the presence of my Father.”*

The God of all creation is jealous for you, for your time and your attention, every one of you.

He does not just pick a few of us that He likes better than others. The offense that you carry does not scare him away.

He loves you with all your baggage.

God desires your worship. And if you have fallen into the trap of offense, it will take all your attention.

Preacher, you don’t know how bad it is; you don’t know what they did to me, or did to my child, or my food… it's BAD!

I need to clean up, and then God will accept or heal me.

That is not how God works. He loves you just where you are and the way you are!

Nothing can separate you from the love of God, not height, not depth, not life, and not even death…

So, What to do When… you are offended,

1. Recognize & acknowledge the offense, the hurt.
2. Take it to God in Pray.
3. We Forgive.
4. Realize it affects your relationship with God.

Close: Band comes up - Please stand with me

Acts 8:23 says, “For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin”.

Are you dealing with bitterness, are you dealing with unforgiveness, or are you dealing with offenses?

Is this bitterness or unforgiveness from a past offense?

Jeremiah said, “My people are broken – shattered-and they put on band-aids, Saying, “it’s not so bad. You’ll be just fine.” But things are not “just fine.” Jeremiah 6:14 (MSG)

Are you broken, shattered, walking around like everything is okay?

Does the band-aid keep coming off an offense?

Are you looking a release and healing from the pain the offense has caused?

Would you bow your heads and close your eyes for a few moments?

Would you be bold, and say, Pastor James, that’s me; I have offenses that I can’t seem to shake.

I’m not going to call you forward, and you do not have to cartwheels to the stage or any big production for God to see you. Will you raise your hand and say,

“God, here I am, please help me with my offenses, I have carried them way too long.

Look for hands – I want to lead you in prayer, even if you didn’t raise your hand. I know we all have them.

Will you pray this short prayer with me? Let’s pray this together. Say

*Lord, I repent today!*

*Help me to extend grace // to those that have offended and hurt me.*

*Lord, help me to forgive them.*

*And Lord, please forgive me // for any offense or and hurt I have caused.*

*In Jesus' name, Amen!*

If you prayed that prayer and meant it in your heart, enjoy this time of refreshing that comes from the Lord.

Last thing

*“Feeling offended is a choice to place something in worship above God. “Worship” simply means “to ascribe worth to something.”*

Choose God! Amen, let's worship together.

Amen!