

Woes & Offense

Oftentimes when we become offended we respond more often than not like a human wrecking ball than a follower of Jesus. And what do wrecking balls do? They tear things down and destroy them... If we are not careful of how we proceed after being offended, we too will tear down and destroy relationships we've built and just like a wrecking ball destroys buildings that took much time to build are instantly brought down - we can destroy a relationship that took a lifetime to build or even weeks, months and years. Instead, for today's study let's be mindful of Jesus and how He handled things and what He has spoken to us outside of the box of typical ways to walk the Earth, using Him as our example and surrendering to His request of us to lay down our lives for the sake of others. He came and laid His life down for each one of us so that we could be reconciled back to the Father, showing how important it is that we aim for reconciliation over offenses and woes in dealing with people, even the difficult ones - to honestly love our enemies and those who harm us, which can be extremely difficult all the way around.

How we deal with our emotions and thoughts and reactions when offended, determines if a woe comes upon us or a blessing, because it is a given offenses come and just like Jesus said... it is needed for us to grow spiritually and become an overcomer and child of God.

Luke 17:1-4

Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come! ² It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. ³ Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. ⁴ And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."

Today we are going to discuss the woes that come upon us when we are offended, if we do not let it go when harmed in some way or we ourselves are offended seeking to retaliate to force another to own and acknowledge what they have done. In both cases, we can and do become very "woeful..."

Before we get started though, I think it is a good idea to go over "woes" in order we can recognize when we've been in a woeful state and then later study to find out why this came back around to us, adding insult to an injury we just suffered through.

The interesting thing is this - the term woe is not only found in this verse I just read... In fact, a woe is promised to come upon the inhabitants of Earth as three angels blow trumpets, so we will read that today too.

In doing scripture search, I found woes are listed in the new testament a few times actually, which we will read. But first, let's discover more about what a woe even is... knowing we in Jesus we are more than conquerors, even to the point of cultivating a changed heart that is unoffendable.

WOE STUDY

So now we understand more about the woe side of things... let's get deep into offenses. This is an important topic to study because Jesus told us it is impossible that each one of us live here on Earth and not get offended. And like we will learn more about, it is not the offended part that needs purified, it is how we react when offended. So right off the bat, let's accept the fact the way we can get off the righteous path is not from actually being offended, but rather how we respond. And like always, Jesus is our guide and example to follow - He above all handled offenses perfectly - so He is an excellent source to turn to when we get offended in some way, in order we do not occupy woefully until He comes.

Like with all studies, this gives us clarity in the Word as to what is happening to us as children of God and answers more questions we have of why... but the Word should also be taken as an instruction for course correction and heart purification, in that we become more surrendered to Jesus continually, repent from when we went astray and truly are hidden in Him – where there is no divide and we are fully reconciled through Jesus back to our Father. I said all that to say this... lets not focus on just how we are being harmed and offended by others – but hold a candle up to our own hearts to insure we are not also offending people.

Again... *It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come!*

- Its impossible to live on Earth and not ever be offended
- A woeful life of existence is promised to those who offend and don't care or retaliate when it comes

Pretty simple, right? So clear a child could understand and yet, only the spiritually mature will walk it out.

Offense at times can become a tormenting spirit assigned to harass us in many ways. Sadly, some people have such a woe of offense plaguing them, they are tormented day and night by people they know, strangers, the world, the news, churches who follow Jesus but serve Him differently than they do and they have fallen into a ditch, having been labeled faultfinders in every sense of the word. In this group are what I am going to call "offense spreaders" who will squirm their way out of being directly in offense, but love the drama it brings – they are opposite of peacemakers – they talk too much, intervene as being in charge having solutions to problems they never should be involved in and will vomit on others weighing in on issues that do not involve them – they will spend a lot of time talking on the phone, via emails, in chats, etc... complaining and spreading gossip about offense, whether it does or does not involve themselves, they will interject themselves into any drama they can.

Remember... If someone has an issue with you and they are telling everyone but you, they are enjoying the attention they are getting from talking about you. They don't truly have a real issue with you, but rather a spirit of offense has latched on and is driving them to accuse and spread offense to others – lets call this "white vomit" which is what Michael was shown... its white because it masquerades as Holy, but it is still vomit... and in his dream it was exchanged back and forth... because that is how it works and it is rampant right now in the mix of believers/non-believers who reside in the physical church today. It is when bitterness is in the heart that it comes out of the mouth like guile...

Again, I am going to keep reminding you... every single person in the flesh body on Earth shall get offended at times, which is not the issue, the issue is how do we respond when offended.

Those under the influence of offense will often put together a plan of attack, sometimes daily in which others who are around you must defend themselves from the pain you inflict or project. Many people who are under this woe have a poor me attitude to gain sympathy from others, so be careful... offense can really masquerade itself to trick you to give it an ear and listen. We need to put this under the subjection of Jesus so it does not go unchecked in our hearts or we will become just like the enemy, roaming places seeking someone to devour and destroy.

Woes and Offenses play off one another... it is like a vicious cycle of destructive bitterness that follows us everywhere we go. And when abiding it, people don't really enjoy being in our presence too much. Our vibe is off and it shows.

I know this can be somewhat stressful to discuss, but it is time for more chains to come off of us. There isn't a day that goes by that I don't have to take Jesus's hand and let Him lead me out of the influence of offense. How about you? Thank You Lord for setting us free when we are taken captive.

Even right now the enemy keeps trying to sow thoughts of times in which people who say they believe in Jesus have inflicted great pain in a hateful way but not today Satan, today we choose to surrender to Jesus, resist the enemy and he has no choice but to flee. Amen!

I didn't coin this phrase, but it certainly is true... offense is the bait of Satan, that he uses to hook us in to do his bidding so we stop doing Jesus's will on the Earth and do his instead. Jesus told us in the last days everyone would become greatly offended, betray one another so hatred abounds. As His vessel we give it to Him so love abounds in place of hate.

Did you know in Proverbs 18:19 it says... A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city? Offense distorts our vision as filter and everything we see or hear must pass through it. The word compares it to a strong city because of the walls that surround it, which can be our hearts if we are not careful. A heart with walls will perceive almost everyone as an enemy and you build up walls to keep many you are to reach with the Gospel out and only let in those you think are for you. Jesus didn't do this, did He?

Our hearts can truly be that city, its called a stronghold of the mind/heart in which vain imaginations take over that causes one to be paranoid, which in turn drive us to overact – and remember, as a person thinks, so is he/she – we can easily become unreasonable, when seeing through the lens of offense.

In turn these thought processes become contrary to the Word of God and eventually if not dealt with, our love will grow colder and colder.

The truth is, we've all been betrayed at times... but if we seek self over those we love, the ultimate abandonment of a relationship will occur and if not handled in a Godly way, our feelings of guile can turn into hatred and murder and the person becomes our target. Hatred in this sense means void of love. We cannot get over a betrayal if we are not willing to look at the person through eyes of love, rather than offense.

Mathew 24 tells us this offense will touch the lives and hearts of many right before Jesus's return. We can see it right now, can't we? This is so scary and dangerous because:

- An offended heart is the breeding ground for deception
- A deceived person believes they have a right to be offended and will keep trying to convince others they are right when caught up in offense, it spreads like fire in their souls because they absolutely will not stop trying to convince people they are right – but in truth they are way wrong... Jesus ended up labeling them as wolves in sheep's clothing.

Here's why:

- Wolves (devour & attack) others and they come in appearing outwardly to be like one of the sheep, but in truth they are deceived, trying to deceive others, their love has waxed so cold to the point they will seek to harm others who do not agree they are right, offended they travel in packs like wolves of offended people dressed as sheep to enter in through the sheep gate and will often come in a click, trying to single out another to slay and harm them.
- The real believers of Christ are a church, these wolves have joined a society where lawlessness abounds, they set laws they feel they can keep, while ignoring the ones they cannot – so they become self rulers in a household of their own design and refuse to submit to the full authority of God's word, they are highly steeped in rebellion, yet look in the mirror only seeing an outward appearance of holiness, still blinded by offense.
- They will curse anyone who does not align in totality with them, railing accusations as a faultfinder – not considering if Jesus would find fault in someone, only that they do.

Remember the ones who can hurt you the most are the ones you have invested your love into the most:

- Family
- Spouse
- Children
- Fellow Believers
- Close Friends

In Psalm 55:12-14, David said... It wasn't my enemy who reproached me, that I could handle, but it was you, my equal, companion and close friend.

And why? Well a couple reasons... one David did the same thing to his close friend, so he had to reap what he sowed in order to feel the pain it caused to not do it again and he did not expect someone close to him to cause him harm. We can really relate to that one can't we? Anytime we are expecting something from another that looks like perfection in anyway, we are setting ourselves up for a fall. We set ourselves up for offense by the expectations we place on those closest to us and I don't care who you are, no one can live under that sort of pressure, because we are not perfected yet and we all fall short of the glory and usually unintentionally, we will offend someone at some point and time.

Let's talk about Christians for a moment -

All offended Christian can be placed in one of two categories.

- 1 - Those who have been genuinely mistreated
- 2 - Those who THINK they've been mistreated

Some people have so much hurt they refuse to let go of, they become "drunk" on pain... staggering and not sober, so you can tell them the truth, but they still think they are hurt and they very well may be, but it wasn't from you - it is a familiar spirit of pain from the past, all you did was trigger it. A sober person will hear your explanation and understand and reconciliation will occur. You cannot reason with a drunk adversary - just forgive, release and bless them in hopes the Lord will intervene and they will repent and return back to you, then you can embrace them with love.

Do we often have a right to be offended? Yes, of course... but if we want to walk surrendered to Jesus, we do not cling to offense or let it cling to us. Like many things, offense may be permissible (allowed to happen) but is not profitable to be what we abide in.

For those of us who do believe - If we choose to walk around offended, we can forget our own shortcomings, like they are no big deal or any sins we need to repent of that we personally committed against Jesus or that we too deserve death and need His mercy poured out on us continually. When offended we lack giving mercy and in return have none placed upon us either - this is what the Bible calls - being unmerciful to others, critical and judgmental. You've likely seen this inside the church by people who are very self-righteous, they strain gnats, keepers of wrong, pointing out specks in others, not realizing we all fall short of His glory and this walk is a process. We need not conform to one another's requirements for saving, just Jesus's.

I often talk about that plank... Its ego, self, offense solidifies that plank like cement - humbling yourself melts it away and once removed through mercy and love we no longer seek to point fingers at others, but simply desire to love like Jesus, giving Him praise that He did not dish out to us what we truly deserved and so He has that same merciful love to all. Desiring suffering as payment or requirement of sin is the wolf ways of operating in religion, while Jesus is mighty to save and came to save all.

How we respond to offense is a heart gauge we can use to test ourselves and to help us discern who is among us. It also helps us to see in truth who resides on the throne of our hearts and see clearly if it is self – offenses reveal if we have truly had a heart change or not and our actions that follow unfold by who we follow – Do we do what Jesus did by turning the other cheek and giving it to Him to handle or do we seek to repay evil with evil and punish and retaliate? Are we easily able to forgive, release and bless the offender or do we hold a grudge?

When we hold a grudge, we are held in captivity by our own doing. One way to tell if you are holding a grudge is if you constantly think about the offense and/or bring up and talk about the hurt another inflicted upon you constantly... Sometimes we must be willing to let that repeat offender go, to be free of offense and I am not sure if you have noticed, but occasionally it the offense we are holding onto that is our only tie to the person, so we keep it. Separation is Godly order at times, as He gives and He takes away those things that bless and prosper our lives consistently.

When the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts, offense may come and it must come, just as it is written, but no woe is attached to it.

Sometimes we deny we are offended, don't we? But deep down we know we have wounds from people that we ignore are there, but our responses reveal the truth of us. It is our pride that keeps us from admitting we are even offended in the first place. When we deny we are offended we can become lukewarm to love, we become guarded, jaded, cynical and skeptical, even to the point of being numb in the heart, waiting for the next heartbreak. God can even use us in this spiritual state at times, but we do not contain inwardly joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Which are some of the many things we inherit in our lives as a child of God. These are the results – or rather fruit – of crucifying our flesh so that when we walk in the spirit, we live in the spirit of love – Galatians 5... The final result of overcoming offense is love, but also we no longer are vain, seeking self will be done and we stop provoking others and envying others – being secure in our own identity as His child.

Here's a thought... When our offended dies, they are released completely – but way too many people are caught in a prison snare, still holding a grudge against the dead – which is totally silly if you think about it. Since that person is gone from Earth there is no possibility for reconciliation or convincing them you were right or harmed, but many refuse to let it all go, even after the person has been dead for years... its like taking a poison pill and will eventually eat you alive and consume you. Jesus has come to set us free, even from such things.

Acts 24:16 says for us to... Always have a conscience void to offense toward God and toward men.

Choosing disobedience in the area is spiritually murdering yourself to get back at someone else and can lead to that numbness of the heart or what the Word calls a seared conscience – which can make one void of discernment concerning right and wrong, good and evil – void of convictions of the heart and sadly we will become unable to repent, no longer heeding the conviction and leading of the Holy Spirit. A seared conscience will hear/see all that others say or do through a filter of deception and paranoia, void of all truth having taken the bait of satan.

As a result, they:

- No longer recognize truth
- Everything is skewed by offense
- Their identity is one as a victim, rather than child of God
- They become drunk in the mind
- Randomly, falsely accuse others or react hyper sensitive to those who mean no harm to them at all

When we can no longer perceive a truth from the lies we feed ourselves, we will lack peace and become a very tormented soul. Which is why, when a person passes or is removed from our lives and we stay ensnared to them via a tie that binds called hurt – if you take a step back and remove yourself from the equation you will see – it wasn't the person all along who had you gripped in their hands, it was the enemy himself. If it was the person, when they were gone, you would no longer be entwined with the offender in anyway way.

Here's something else to think about... If this offense is not dealt with, we become those who offend – like the walking dead, we have a chip on our shoulder, walking earth but our souls are weeping, we gnash our teeth, are bound in chains, not set free, choosing victimhood over sainthood.

In case you are wondering how I know all this or maybe why the Lord has revealed it to me... well that easy, I was offended, the walking dead, held captive, overly sensitive and quick to respond in ways I shouldn't have until Jesus healed me, released me and made me whole. I still have areas that pop up occasionally, but am no longer held captive, so I recognize quickly when I am falling into that pit again and let go, giving the person to Him, while releasing myself in surrender to Him in the process.

It is undeniable that we all get wounded at times. Sometimes it is intentionally by others who want to harm us and sometimes is it by accident. But unless wounds are properly treated by Jesus, the soul physician, they will not heal. The Bible tells us that great peace comes for those who love God's word and nothing can offend them. How awesome it would be if we all were like that! Well with Jesus all things are possible, even becoming unoffendable.

A few things about the wounds we keep and tend to ourselves:

- They are deep and cause great pain as thoughts keep them festering
- The source of them come from real harm, not perceived harm. Perceived harm feeds that one wound to grow.
- There are those who have truly been mistreated and those who just think they have been.
- Our bodies can be wounded, receive treatment and heal and heart wounds require the same approach, but are often overlooked and hidden within.
- When our wounds are healed by Jesus, nothing can offend us to the point of negative reactions anymore.
- When we become solid in God's word by applying it and abiding in it, offenses come but in Him we stand to endure all things until the end. Why? Because our trust is in Him now, not people. Our expectations are focused on Him, not humans and since He is perfect and without offense, we rise above the fray of offense.

Taking baby steps... Begin praying for those who abuse and mistreat you, Jesus did. Its very cleaning and healing and requires a laying down of self to pray for those who harm us. Love is a choice, over a desire in this way, when we pray for one who has harmed us – it may never benefit us personally, but do it anyway in hopes it benefits them. Praying for our enemies shields us from living a woeful life.

Sometimes all we can do is pray without details, in tears and just like Jesus said... Father forgive them, they know not what they do when they _____ [fill in the blank] We may assume they know, but in truth if they truly knew the consequences to their actions later on to the harm they caused, they wouldn't do these things now. So in essence, they do not know – so we plead for His mercy on their behalf, just like Jesus did for us.

David frequently prayed for his enemies in truth - PSALM 35:11-14 says...

Fierce witnesses rise up;

They ask me *things* that I do not know.

¹² They reward me evil for good,

To the sorrow of my soul.

¹³ But as for me, when they were sick,

My clothing *was* sackcloth;

I humbled myself with fasting;

And my prayer would return to my own ¹⁴heart.

¹⁴ I paced about as though *he were* my friend or brother;

I bowed down ¹⁵heavily, as one who mourns *for his* mother.

This is such a beautiful example for us to pray for our offender for how we want the Lord to bless our lives, when praying in truth like this our hearts shall be healed and made whole. Remember... real and authentic love keeps no record of wrongs and once healed, we don't either.

Forgiveness is all about reconciliation, to the Lord and to others. Sometimes it is impossible to reconcile with someone, especially if they are a dead person. But offense and unforgiveness will always keep us separated from our Lord Jesus. When holding grudges towards dead people, that resentment has no place to land and can quickly turn into resentment against the Lord for allowing such harm to come into your life.

Sometimes we will say we are waiting for the other person to apologize and that also is not how Jesus did it, He didn't wait to forgive us until we apologized, so we shouldn't either.

Jesus tells us to do good to those who abuse us, once healed we can look for ways to bless them, only after love covers the sinful wounds held within our hearts is this possible. Guess what happens? We will look at that person and no longer see the evil sin that ensnares them, we will see them as Jesus does - a living soul worthy to be saved and loved and forgiven.

It is incredibly freeing to be made whole, healed and complete in Jesus. To no longer desire another pay for the sins or suffer for the pain they inflicted is walking right out of the snare of offense, while refusing to take the bait of satan in order we too are freely able to endure until the end of our days. Those who recognize they have been forgiven of so much are much quicker to forgive others. We realize He didn't make us pay for the all the wrong choices we made or the harm we caused, so why would we try to enforce that one someone else? We too hurt Jesus by our rebellion and yet... He never denied us or turned us away in shame. I know I keep saying this lately, but He alone is our perfect example to follow and imitate... we are to be constant "imitators of Christ." And with His indwelling help, it is possible.

Keep in mind, our love is faulty, but as Jesus pours His love into us - we are safe to pour His love out to others, the deserving and the not so deserving. We have a tendency to be stingy with our love, but do not need to be at all with His. We pour out, He pours more in... His love towards us never ends.

So we've gone over so much regarding the prison of offense... But now, lets go over how to handle it, because it is a guarantee we will get offended.

The key is - what do we do and how do we react in such times, especially these days?

Either we become more like Jesus or bitter... but whatever direction we decide to choose determines our own happiness and future. Whether it is full of blessings and fulfilled or woes.

CHOOSE LIFE - receive joy, peace and love and people gravitate to you

CHOOSE DEATH - receive the woes of torment, misery and bitterness and people run away from you

The Lord began showing me how we have greatly underestimated the enemy at work. He will often try to infiltrate our lives as a Judas among the 12 closest to Jesus and he does the same with us. He comes in, he

dines with us, worships with us and is often in our close family and friend connections in order to destroy us from the inside out so we corrupt ourselves. He cannot corrupt us so he uses bait for us to ingest as a target plan of offense.

I know many are looking for the enemy to appear as fallen angels, ufo's, leaders, church denominations you don't approve of, obvious sinners, etc... But in all actuality the worst enemy we face each day is self, our own flesh, which is why we are to die to it daily. It is the mystery of iniquity already at work and it's a mystery because we cannot see it when blinding with the plank in our own eyes of ego and pride. We convince ourselves we are the only one clean, trying to remove specks of sin out of others.

Also, don't forget what Jesus told us... that during the last days our enemy would be those of our own households. The enemy is riding on the backs of hypocrites right into the church. These are compromised believers who are religious and offended and feel justified in slaying us believing they are doing God's will with a laundry list of scripture of why that is okay. They are those who, due to their own offense they keep, believe they are doing His will while harming others. They are full of bitterness, killing with the sword of what they call the spirit - and sadly they will die by that law they measure others by, they refuse to lay their lives down for the sake of another and never turn the other cheek because they are convinced they are right and justified, even to the point they rail accusations, almost always false ones at the brethren and the enemy too.

Do you remember Michael's dream about the white vomit people in the church were consuming back and forth from one another? He saw it coming out of people's mouths and others consuming it... what the Lord showed him was vile and gross. I shared with Michael the other day what the Lord showed me about this vomit and I asked him if it was okay to share with you and he said yes.

That white vomit is: Accusations coming out of the mouth of the brethren. It appeared white to trick others it was holy so they would receive and take in as food that which was being spoken. Its mixing the holy with the profane due to offense - especially at the deemed enemies - and internally they have become lukewarm. I am praying they return to their first love Jesus so He does not vomit them out of His mouth, like spoken of in Revelation 3:16.

Michael reminded me of what he saw in a dream of people who accuse inside the churches, sharing accusations back and forth and vomit, like guile in the heart flows out of the mouth. Without offense in the heart, we have no accusations in our mouths.

Lastly, when we wallow in a bed of offense, we become very woeful... we will have a problem for every solution offered, every prayer spoken we cast down with excuse to stay in this broken state, we will ignore the rescue of Jesus and demand another human being be the one to pick us up and complete us. We think the whole world is against us and refuse to look inwardly and ask why? Or see our hand or part we've played in pushing others away? Let's be honest here - sometimes we are too harsh, overbearing and demanding our own way. Like I mentioned earlier, there are those who truly have been mistreated and there are those who think they have been.

I deal with people all the time who are in a delusional woeful state and it is impossible to convince them what they perceive did not come to pass, sitting in the seat of the woeful you will become implacable and unreasonable, refusing to listen to any truth. In my opinion, this is one of the highest forms of rebellion and it is most dangerous because it often goes on without notice. When someone has created an imagination in their head to hold against you, while falsely accusing you, it is impossible to reason with them... they become like one of the mockers who imagined reasons for Jesus to be put to death and they were not satisfied until it happened. Mind you... it was the religious then and is often the religious now. So in using Jesus as an example, we must do as He did... give no answer to them, do not defend ourselves, pray for them, forgive them for they know not what they do and be willing to lay down everything in love for their sakes.

But we do not try to convince them of anything, Jesus didn't. And just like Him, we wait with open hearts should they return to us in humility and we embrace them as a long lost friend.

Well, I pray this study has been a blessing in some way to your time here on Earth and give you hope and peace that trials may come and go, but Jesus remains forever, walking by our side and even carrying us at times when we can't take another step.

We are all a work in progress at the moment, leaning upon Him as our guide and imitating Him to the best of our ability. His mercies are new every morning, thankfully and remember... mercy given to others by cutting one another some slack at times over being on the ready to attack, in turn we will receive God's mercy in our time of need when we stumble. I don't know about you, but I make a lot of mistakes and need much mercy.

Let's pray...

Heavenly Father, we just cannot thank You enough for Your love and mercy and Your outstretched hand upon each of us today. We pray our lives be a reflection of You and thank You for teaching us and opening our eyes to just how amazing Jesus is. We are most grateful You granted us a living example in Your Son for us to imitate and follow.

Lord please forgive us for times we have embraced offense, rather than refusing it and casting it away. Help us daily to be more like Jesus and let things go and love others with His love. We surrender our hearts fully to You and ask You to help us let go of those who have harmed us and bless them with Your loving hand of protection and salvation. Mend our wounds and theirs, giving us both a sober and sound mind. Lord please burn away any sort of grudges we have held onto for so long, especially those against the dead. We set a purpose on our hearts to no longer hold others accountable when they sin against us, not even knowing what they are doing and we hand them over to You for Your perfect will to be done and carried out unto completion in their lives.

Today we make a conscience choice to choose life and not death. We repent for speaking death over ourselves, others and even inhabitants of the World. We join with You Lord as the giver of life and speak blessings to dead things to restore what was lost and stolen, only to be brought back to life and bloom for Your glory. Help us Lord to be instruments of Your peace and not for the stirring up of strife. Our heart's desire is to give glory to Your Name and walk this Earth as Your hands and feet. We are quite honored Father that You would even consider us worthy to serve You in anyway and may Your perfect will always be done in us and through us no matter what challenges we face - we surrender it all to You. In Jesus's mighty Name, Amen.