

Sermon Series
The Season of Formation
Foundational Text
Romans 8:29 Mirror Translation

“For those He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the exact image of His Son”

February 22, 2026

Sermon Title - - When Being Right Costs You

Sermon Text - - Proverbs 18:19 NKJV

“A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle.”

Introduction

Back in the day when I was the associate pastor at CWC – I was the guy who did the majority of the counseling ... So, people would come in – I would listen – then I would give them a plan of action to deal with their issue ... Many times, they would come back the following week and we would discuss how things were going.

But would you believe – that there were a lot of people – who never followed the plan ... Would you believe some people didn't want to even fix the issue – they just wanted someone to complain to ... Would you believe – that some people actually got mad at me – because I shared with them that they were the problem.

This became very confusing to me ... You would think someone with a problem – who makes an appointment for counseling – would actually want to receive counseling ... But that wasn't the case – in fact – I became the focus of their frustration and anger ... Here I was – doing what I was asked to do – giving them proper council – yet now my motives and intentions came into

question ... Suddenly – I was now their problem ... My heart and motives were right – but now it was costing me ... I was paying the price.

I say all this because what I found over time – a spirit of offense began to crept into my life ... I no longer felt peace – but heaviness ... I found myself explaining and defending myself to others – because those people I counselled – were now running around telling others – how terrible I was ... And that is when I realized something sobering ... Doing what was right – was beginning to take a toll on me both physically and emotionally.

I'm sure I'm not the only one who has experienced this spirit of offense ... In fact – Jesus said certainly offenses will come ... So, let's jump in and expose this subtle pitfall of offense

What Is the Pitfall of Offense?

Luke 17:1 NKJV

“Then He said to the disciples, - - - ‘It is impossible that no offenses should come, - - - but woe to him through whom they do come!’”

Jesus clearly states – offense will come – there is no getting around them ... The spirit of offense is not a rare occurrence – as long as people roam upon this earth ... If you live long enough in relationship with people – you will experience it ... If you speak truth long enough – someone will become offended ... If you try to help people – someone will misunderstand it ... So, what is an offense?

An offense begins with an event ... Someone says something ... Someone does something ... But it does not remain just an event ... An interpretation is formed ... You assign meaning to what happened ... You ascribe intention ... You attach a motive ... Then you return to that interpretation again and again ... You replay it in your mind ... You rehearse it until your version of the event feels settled and certain ... And the more you rehearse it – the more

convinced you become – that you were entirely right – and they were entirely wrong ... That is where the pitfall quietly takes shape.

Being right is not the problem ... Truth is not the problem ... Correction is not the problem ... The problem begins – when our peace becomes dependent upon – being acknowledged as right ... When we need others to agree with us ... When we need others to admit – that we were correct ... That is when a spirit of offense is forming on the inside ... Proverbs tells us that a brother who is offended becomes like a fortified city ... Walls go up ... Access is restricted ... Conversations become guarded ... Relationships become strained.

Offense builds barriers – where openness once existed ... And if it is not recognized – it quietly shapes how we see and treat people moving forward ... Now the question becomes – how does something that begins so innocently – turn into something so troubling?

How Does Offense Develop in a Person's Life?

Ecclesiastes 7:9 New Living Translation

Control your temper - - for anger labels you a fool.

Now catch this critical concept ... When you feel your intension – motives – or integrity – is being challenged by another person – this is a clear indication that a spirit of offense – is knocking at the door ... Offense often moves quickly – especially if you have submitted to it in the past ... Those feelings rise quickly and you will tend to react – rather than to pause and reflect... Something is said – and you immediately feel it ... Something is done – and you immediately react.

Offense is strengthened – when you don't control your temper – when you react before you reflect ... A comment may sting – or a correction may feel sharp ... A conversation may not have gone as planned ... But – instead of stepping back to pause – you plow full steam ahead ... You replay the incident – you ascribe motive and intension – you create a narrative in your

mind – and you have flung the door open for the spirit of offense to come walking in ... Over time – what started as an irritation now settles in your soul as an attitude ... And here is the subtle part – you continue living – speaking – seeking to help others – while something unresolved is quietly fermenting on the inside ... Outwardly – everything looks the same – but inwardly there is a subtle churning of offense in your heart.

This churning – then begins to form a pattern – and once a pattern forms – it begins to affect how you see others ... How you interpret words and how you respond to correction – which brings us to the real danger of this pitfall.

What Are the Consequences and Dangers of Offense?

Matthew 24:10–12 NKJV

“And then many will be offended, - will betray one another, - and will hate one another. ... Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ... And because lawlessness will abound, - the love of many will grow cold.”

Did you catch that? ... Jesus ties offense to something far more serious than just hurt feelings ... He shows us a progressive pattern and looming danger ... Offense creates separation ... Separation leads to betrayal... And betrayal leads to hatred and justified lawlessness ... The result becomes love for others – and humanity itself will grow cold.

When offense is allowed to reside in our heart – it changes how we interpret everything ... We begin to assume motives ... We begin to expect resistance ... We begin to suspect – rather than to trust ... And once that posture sets in – cooperation and unity becomes impossible.

Proverbs said an offended brother becomes like a strong city with bars on the gates ... That imagery is not accidental ... A city with bars is not easily entered ... Access is restricted ... Communication becomes limited ... Restoration becomes difficult ... Offense does not just

affect one conversation ... It affects perception ... It shapes how we hear future words ... It influences how we see future actions.

Being right may win the argument ... But it can quietly cost us tenderness ... It can quietly cost us peace ... It can quietly cost us love ... And once love cools – spiritual formation slows ... Which is why this pitfall must be exposed before it takes root ...

TAKE AWAY

Proverbs 4:23 NKJV

“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”

Before I share with you some practical principles on how to deal with offense ... Let me laid a foundational truth for your consideration ... The real issue is not what happens to you – as life happens ... The real issue is how will you interpret – what has happened to you? ... What internal story will you create about the event? ... Now - - Let me “counsel you” – pun intended – on a couple of thoughts on how to deal with this issue of offense.

First – **don't take offense with people who are asleep** ... You know – those folk where – “the lights are on but nobody's home” ... I'll be honest – I really struggled with this issue last year – especially when it came to this transgender issue ... I have been accused – from the well at the State House – of causing transgenders to commit suicide – because of my position on the matter ... In fact – this past Thursday – we were accused of dehumanizing the LGBTQ+ community – because of a bill we passed ... I have now settled this issue – and will not open the door of offense ... If someone who believes gender is a mental construct and not a biological one – they are definitely asleep.

Secondly – **People can do what they want – even when it is wrong** ... Now understand where I am coming from ... I'm not saying to overlook lawlessness nor abusive behavior – those things must not be tolerated ... What I am saying is each person is a sovereign being – once

they reach the age of adulthood ... But before that – we are responsible to protect children from harm and abuse ... I have come to understand – it is not my job to correct a wrong – unless I am asked to help ... And even then – I may be persecuted for helping ... So – seek the guidance of the Spirit – before you just jump in to help – simply because someone asked you to ... What helps me to set a guideline with this one is - - You – Do – You - - and I will do me.

Thirdly – I am not responsible for another person's welfare ... I am not on this earth to make people feel happy – comfortable – secure – nor to meet any other emotional construct they deem necessary ... Now that doesn't mean I can walk around and live like a jerk ... Well I can – and I actually know people who do ... But we are called to live life like Christ did – not how we choose.

Remember – the only person you can control is you ... The only person you are responsible for is you ... And when someone tries to infringe upon your sovereignty – don't take offense – set guard rails – and if necessary simply move on ... Take the admonition found in Proverbs 4:23 seriously – Guard your heart more than anything else