

## Our Journey - - The Season of Formation

### Romans 8:29 -- Mirror Translation

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

We are Presently at Base Camp 1 - - - The Camp of Hard Truth

April 19, 2026

### Sermon Title - - **Don't Shoot the Messenger**

### Sermon Text - - **John 6:60-61 New Living Translation**

"Many of his disciples said, ... 'This is very hard to understand. ... How can anyone accept it?'  
... Jesus was aware that his disciples were complaining about what he had said and asked them  
... Does this offend you?"

### **Introduction**

Last week we established something critical at Base Camp 1 ... The crowd that had been following Jesus hit a wall ... A hard saying landed in their ears – and what followed was a cycle that every one of us is familiar with ... The natural mind tried to comprehend what Jesus said and couldn't ... The feelings reached for emotional confirmation and came up empty ... Performance had no framework for what Jesus was describing ... The internal cycle ran through every option available to it – and came up empty.

Now here is what I want us to understand this morning ... When the internal cycle fails – something has to give ... The tension doesn't simply dissolve because the flesh ran out of options ... In fact, it may even intensify by added frustration ... And verse 61 clearly indicates this condition ... Jesus knew they were grumbling from confusion and frustration ... He knew

the internal pressure had reached a breaking point ... So, He addressed this situation with a very pointed question ... "Does this offend you?"

This is an important principle to understand ... Jesus didn't ask – did you understand Me? ... He didn't ask – do you have any questions? ... He went straight to the interior condition that the tension had produced - - Offense ... Because Jesus understood something about the flesh that most people never recognize in themselves ... When the internal cycle fails – the flesh immediately looks for an outside target ... And we live in a world that has mastered that reaction.

Offense is no longer just a personal response – it has become a cultural weapon ... A justified reaction ... A socially acceptable reason to shut down – walk away – cancel – and in many cases – has been used to justify violent toward the source of the discomfort ... We have normalized offense to the point where most people practice it daily without ever recognizing what is actually happening on the inside ... Let me put it this way – many people are living their life in a constant state of offense – and don't even realize it.

Now I want to be honest with you this morning ... Most of us practice offense so regularly we don't even recognize it anymore ... So, let's go back to the text and look at exactly how it happens.

## **When the Internal Cycle Fails**

### **James 1:14-15 New Living Translation**

Temptation comes from our own desires – which entice us and drag us away ... These desires give birth to sinful actions – and when sin is allowed to grow – it gives birth to death.

James is describing a progression that begins entirely on the inside ... Then ends with a consequence that is very visible on the outside ... The internal always manifests on the outside

... And this is clearly what this text in James is describing for us ... So, keep this in the forefront of your mind as we continue.

Last week we identified the three internal stages the flesh cycles through when it encounters hard truth ... The mind tries to comprehend it ... The feelings try to confirm it ... Performance tries to manage it ... And when all three fail – something shifts when the internal possibilities fail to resolve the tension.

When the flesh hits that ceiling it doesn't just quit ... It doesn't pause and say – perhaps I need to process this differently ... It doesn't engage with the spirit and ask the Holy Spirit for illumination ... That would require the very surrender the flesh – unfortunately our ego is built to resist this process.

Instead – it seeks another option to deal with this internal tension – so it now turns outwardly ... It looks for an external behavior – to now deal with the internal discomfort ... It searches to identify a target ... And then it will redirect every ounce of unresolved internal pressure toward that target.

The crowd in John 6 – did exactly that in real time ... The hard saying created unbearable internal tension ... Their internal cycling process failed to resolve it ... And the pressure continued to build and needed to go somewhere ... So – Jesus became the target ... The very One who was trying to take them higher in kingdom revelation – became the object of their unresolved interior condition ... This situation is not unique to that crowd ... That is the flesh doing – what the flesh always does – when it runs out of internal options ... And the mechanism it reaches for in that moment has a very specific name.

## Offense - - The Flesh's Emergency Exit Ramp

### Proverbs 19:11 -- Mirror Translation

A person's wisdom gives him patience – it is his glory to – **overlook** an offense

Notice what Solomon is saying here ... Overlooking an offense requires wisdom ... Which tells us an important kingdom principle ... The default response of a person is offense – and not to seek wisdom from the Spirit ... This default response is typically a knee-jerk reaction which hinders clear guidance from the indwelling Holy Spirit.

So – what actually is offense? ... At its core – offense is the story the flesh constructs around a trigger – to justify its own reaction ... Something is said or done to you ... And before the spirit has a chance to discern what is actually happening – the flesh has already written the narrative ... "You had no right to say that" ... "You don't know what you are talking about" ... "Who do you think you are?" ... And once that narrative is in place – the offense feels completely justified ... Paul actually acknowledged this when he wrote in Ephesians 4:26 - - "Be angry and do not sin – do not let the sun go down on your wrath" ... He wasn't saying anger is wrong ... He was saying anger has a very short window – before it crosses a line ... Because anger that is held – rehearsed – and nursed overnight – stops being a legitimate response to injustice – and starts becoming the flesh justifying its own reaction ... That is the line between righteous anger and offense ... And it is a shorter line than most people realize ... Because underneath this justified feeling – the flesh is actually creating an emergency exit ramp – to resolve this internal tension.

The crowd in John 6 didn't walk away from Jesus because He was wrong ... They left – because the offense – gave them a socially acceptable reason – to stop dealing with – what He was exposing on the inside ... Offense reframed the whole situation ... It was no longer about their inability to receive hard truth ... It was now about His audacity to speak it ... Does that sound familiar?

We live in a culture where offense has become the primary language of public discourse ... Someone says something that creates internal discomfort – and instead of sitting with that discomfort – and asking what it is revealing? ... The flesh immediately pivots outward ... The offense seeks to silence the speaker ... Seeking all means to cancel voice – as a means of removing the source of the tension.

And when cancellation isn't enough – when the internal pressure is so severe – that walking away doesn't relieve it ... Offense escalates into something far more dangerous ... Violence ... The crowd in John 6 simply walked away from Jesus ... Today – that same crowd would have driven Him out – using whatever means possible ... In John 6 they grumbled ... Today they organize – with the intent to purposefully silence – by any means necessary ... The flesh has always done this ... The only thing that has changed over time is – how socially acceptable and celebrated the response has become ... But here is what makes this so critical for our journey.

## **The Messenger Was Never the Problem**

### **John 7:24 New Living Translation**

Look beneath the surface – so you can judge correctly

Jesus said this ... Look beneath the surface ... Because the surface is never where the real issue lives ... The surface is the trigger – the hard saying – the uncomfortable truth – the messenger standing in front of you ... But beneath the surface is where the actual collision is occurring.

The crowd in John 6 directed their offense at Jesus ... But Jesus was only saying what the Father gave Him to say ... Which means their offense wasn't really with Jesus at all ... It was with the truth He carried ... And beneath that – it was with – what that truth was exposing inside of them ... They shot the messenger – and missed the message entirely.

Now catch this ... Jesus didn't defend Himself ... He didn't apologize for what He said ... He didn't chase after those who left ... He simply turned to the Twelve and asked – are you going to leave too? ... That is not indifference – that is a man so grounded in the source of what He was carrying – that the offense of others – couldn't redirect Him from His assignment.

The messenger was never the problem ... The real issue is – what is the message doing on the inside of you ... Because here is what offense actually reveals – it is an indicator ... When the

reaction is stronger than the reflection – something unresolved is living beneath the surface ... Something the hard truth just pressed on ... And instead of pausing to identify what that is – the flesh immediately redirected the pressure outward and targets the messenger ... The formation that was trying to occur in that moment – gets shut down completely ... Not because the truth stopped being true ... But because offense gave the flesh a way out – before the truth could do its work.

## **Takeaway**

Let me leave you with these thoughts as we conclude ... Most of us would never describe ourselves as easily offended ... We would say we have convictions ... We stand for what is right ... We don't tolerate foolishness ... And some of us would say – what I feel is righteous anger – not offense ... So how do you actually know the difference? ... Here are three honest indicators – that what you are feeling is offense – rather than righteous anger.

**Righteous anger grieves over the injustice** ... Offense rehearses it ... If you find yourself replaying the situation in your mind – adding detail – building the case – you are not grieving an injustice ... You are nursing an offense.

**Righteous anger desires restoration** ... Offense desires vindication ... Ask yourself honestly – do you want the situation made right? ... Or do you want to be acknowledged as being correct? ... That question will expose which one is actually driving you.

**Righteous anger remains focused on the issue** ... Offense shifts to the person ... The moment your focus moves from what was done – to who did it – and why they had no right to do it – then offense has taken the wheel.

I believe offense – just like auto-pilot – probably functions more in our life than we realize ... It doesn't help that the society in which we live – is permeated with this spirit of offense ...

Offense is a cancer that will destroy your transformation journey ... Next week we will examine its dangers.