

Week 2, How could this happen to me! (from chapter 3 of “The bait of Satan”)

Introduction. Talking about offence can be difficult. When someone has hurt us, or when we've hurt someone else, we can be very tempted to keep it hidden. That's because bringing it out into the light can be painful. We can feel vulnerable to share that we were hurt. On the other hand, who wants to admit that they have been the cause of pain for someone else?

But to leave offence in the dark is to give into two destructive voices. The first is the demonic and the second is our sinful desires, both of which love darkness (John 3:19-21).

Darkness is a breeding ground for deception, Satan, the world and our sinful desires don't want to bring darkness into the light of Jesus because it loses its power (1 John 1:7). Bringing offence into the light is the only way we can receive grace.

But the voice of deception will provide lots of reasons not to bring offence into the light. After being offended or offending someone else, have you ever heard this kind of talk within yourself?

“What will people think?”

“It's been too long.”

“But it's right that I should be angry!”

“I can't see this ever changing.”

“I don't want to let them get away with it.”

“I haven't done anything wrong.”

When we hang onto reasons like this as justification for our offence we are saying to Jesus, whether we received the offence or created it (and we have all done both), the cross is not big enough to restore this. The second thing we are saying is, I don't need your grace God...

Step 1. Pause in Yahweh's presence together.

Read the following and allow some space to meditate on it.

To you, Lord, I call; you are my Rock, do not turn a deaf ear to me. For if you remain silent, I shall be like those who go down to the pit. Psalms 28:1

Step 2. Reflect on a scripture

Joseph is sold into slavery by his brothers.

¹⁹ “Here comes that dreamer!” they said to each other. ²⁰ “Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams.” ²¹ When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. “Let's not take his life,” he said. ²² “Don't shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don't lay a hand on him.”

Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father. ²³ So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing— ²⁴ and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it. ²⁵ As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt. ²⁶ Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? ²⁷ Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.” His brothers agreed. ²⁸ So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.
Genesis 37:19-28

Two categories for the offended.

John Bevere suggests that offended people fall into two major categories: (1) those who have been genuinely mistreated and (2) those who think they have been mistreated but actually were not. This week we are looking at the first category. Let’s begin by asking a question: If you’ve been genuinely mis-treated, do you have the right to be offended? In answer, let’s consider the life of Jacob’s favourite son, Joseph. (See Genesis 37–48.)

- Joseph was Jacob’s favourite son, and everyone knew it, especially his ten older brothers.
- After he shared a prophetic dream in which they were bowing down to them, they decided to kill Joseph but in a last minute reprieve they sell him into slavery.
- Joseph is bought by Potiphar, an officer in Pharaoh’s army.
- For the next ten years Joseph serves with great faithfulness but when he wouldn’t give in to the sexual advances of Potiphar’s wife, she falsely accuses him of assaulting her and Joseph is sent to jail where he remained for 12 years.

Imagine Joseph’s frustrated prayers to God.

I served my master with honesty and with integrity for over ten years. I’m more faithful than his wife. I stayed loyal to God and my master, daily fleeing sexual immorality. What is my reward? A dungeon! It seems that the more I try to do what is right, the worse it gets! How could God allow this? Could my brothers steal my promise from God, too? Why hasn’t this mighty, covenant God intervened on my behalf? Is this how a loving, faithful God cares for His servants? Why me? What have I done to deserve this? I only believed I’d heard from God.

Then fast forward to what he says to his brothers after he reveals himself to them as the now Prime Minister of Egypt.

“But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; *for God sent me* before you to preserve life. For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. And *God sent me* before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth,

and to save your lives by a great deliverance. *So now it was not you who sent me here, but God*" (Gen. 45:5–8).

A major sign that a person is offended is pointing a finger of blame at others, whether the recipient has actually done anything or not. Get together with one or more people and take turns interviewing each other. Ask the following questions and write your answers:

Q. Have you ever been on the receiving end of an untrue accusation or blamed for something you didn't do? How did you feel? How did you handle it?

Q. Were you able to resolve the issue and make peace with the other person?

Step 3. Ask.

Better or bitter.

All of us will experience mistreatment in this life. When it happens, we have two options: give in to the temptation to blame others and complain to God, or let go of the offence and leave it in God's hands. If we choose to trust Him and not to be offended, we'll come out of it better, not bitter.

God's Word says, "Many evils confront the [consistently] righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all" (Psalm 34:19 AMP). Our lives are held securely in His hands, and *no one* is able to snatch us away from Him (see John 10:28-29).

The only one who can take you out of God's will is *you*. How? One major way is through holding on to offence. The longer we choose not to forgive, the more resentful and bitter we become. The more bitter we are, the more vulnerable we become to the temptation to 'get even'.

Q. What would you like to ask your heavenly Father for?

Step 4. Yield.

Q. Is there anything the Father is asking you to yield/trust him with?

Spend some time praying for each other.

Extra reading.

Carefully read Romans 12:17-20; 1 Peter 3:8-9; and Hebrews 10:30-31 and explain what God says about getting revenge.