

Offended in Christ

by David Wilkerson

David Wilkerson's sermon explores the theme of being offended in Christ, emphasizing the importance of faith amidst doubt and unmet expectations.

Duration: 44:05

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 11:2-6, James 1:2-3

Topics: "Trials And Temptations", "Faith And Patience"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the book of James, specifically chapter one. He emphasizes the importance of finding joy in the midst of various temptations and trials, as these experiences help to strengthen our faith and develop patience. The preacher believes that God uses these times of waiting and apparent slowness to awaken and transform His people. He also mentions the story of John the Baptist and how he faced doubts and trials before his execution, highlighting the need for believers to know their identity in Christ and stand firm in times of difficulty. The preacher concludes by warning that the world is heading towards a time of great shaking and that God is raising up a people without offense to be a testimony in these challenging times.

Transcript

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Offended in Christ. Now, I want you to go to Matthew, please, the 11th chapter. Matthew, the 11th chapter.

Offended in Christ. It doesn't say by Christ, but offended in Christ. Matthew, 11th chapter, beginning to read verse 2 through verse 6. Now, when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which you do here and see.

The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the gospel preached to them. And here's my text. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.

Heavenly Father, we're asking that you speak to us about our confidence in you, our faith in you, that you will speak to us lovingly but convictingly about the areas of unbelief. Lord Jesus, in those areas in our lives when we are offended, when we do not see the hand of God revealed as we think we should. Lord Jesus, do a marvelous work among us today.

Thank you for the moving of your spirit already. Lord, we pray for those in the annex and the overflow rooms and all over this house, wherever we may be seated, that you will speak from heaven to our hearts. Speak, Holy Ghost.

This is your temple. I'm asking you because I know that you're in the temple and you're here speaking through your temple. In Jesus name.

Amen. John the Baptist is in prison. That voice crying from the wilderness has been silenced by Herod.

The crowds are gone. The voice of the one crying in the wilderness has been silenced. John's ministry lasted one year from August to August.

If you want to know where I got those dates, see me after the service. It's in your Bible. I don't have time to get into it for a year.

The crowds came, the proud Pharisees, the scribes and the Sadducees, the rich and the poor, the soldiers. They came to hear this voice, powerful, convicting preaching. Jesus said of this man, there's no greater prophet born among men than John.

The Lord also dignified this man by saying he's the one who is supposed to come to lay a straight path before me. Jesus loved this man. John's public ministry, though now silenced.

The priest and the Levites came to him one day to visit. They said, who are you? Are you the Christ? Who are you? And he said, no, I am not the Christ. Really, who are you? They insisted, tell us who you are.

He said, I'm the one that Isaiah prophesied about, the one who would come before the Messiah, come before him who was to come to lay down a straight path before him. He said, that is it. And while in prison, John was permitted to be in touch evidently with his disciples.

And they gave him a daily report, probably most likely of the activities of Christ, of Jesus. He heard everything he did. He heard about the wedding feast of Canaan, I'm sure.

He heard about all of these things Jesus did, the miracles and the signs and the wonders. And when John heard these things, by the way, his disciples were there when Jesus raised a widow's son from the dead. His disciples were there when they saw this boy sit up in the coffin and begin to talk.

And the scripture says, there came a fear upon them all. And they glorified God saying, what a great prophet has risen up among us and that God has visited his people. And I'm sure that was the sense and the joy that was in John's disciples when they went to tell John of all the miracles.

He said, the blind eyes, John, are opened and the deaf are hearing and the dead are being raised. And I'm sure they were awed by what God was doing, what Christ was doing. And they were excited.

They were enthused. But John did not share their enthusiasm. John said, I want you to go.

And he sent two of his disciples. He said, I want you to go to this man and I want you to ask him one question for me. Are you the one who is to come or do we look for another? This from a man who is called the greatest prophet ever born.

This from a man who once pointed to him and said, this is the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world. This is the one who spent years in solitude studying the prophets. Everything Isaiah especially said about him, because the word that came to John, you can find it all in the book of Isaiah.

This this man spent years and last week they claimed to have found the cave that John used to sleep in, not far from where he baptized. And they're trying to claim that now that's the cave that he slept in. But from this man that baptized Jesus and saw a dove descend and heard a voice from God saying, this is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased.

This is the man who says go to him because Jesus had told his disciples. And when Jesus heard this, and evidently in Luke, it suggests that it was said before a multitude. It must have been a shocking experience for the disciples of Jesus and especially of John to hear this from John.

Is John doubting? And the question is, are you the one who is spoken of by the prophets? Or do we look for another? And they gave this to Jesus. And these are the very words here. He said, are thou he that should come or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, go and show John again those things which we do here and see.

Blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And then Jesus and then aside the two disciples and said, look, and it says and and this is in the side. He said, tell John, here's a personal message to John.

Blessed is he whosoever is not offended in me. You see, John, John is a student of the word. According to John, it has to be as it is written.

He spent his lifetime in the word of God. And he has this he has this concept of what the kingdom of God is to be like. John has the the old Jewish concept, the Jewish concept that when the Messiah comes, he will set up his kingdom here on Earth.

It'll be a political religious system and he will legislate holiness. And when he comes, he's going to lay the axe to the root of the tree. All of these proud judges are going to come down.

All of these proud Pharisees, they're going to burn as an oven. He knew and understood the prophecy of Malachi, that he will come and he will send fire and consume the wicked and he will make it hot as an oven. And he has this all his lifetime.

He sees this kingdom of power and might. And he said when he comes, he's coming with an axe in his hand and he's coming with a flaming fire. And he's going to he's going to cut down everything that offends.

And John, I'm sure, is thinking if they think they've heard preaching, if they think they've heard something smiting, wait till he comes. And when he comes in, this was a Jewish concept that he will gather his army

and he will rule with a rod of iron and he will legislate holiness. But now John hears the report of Jesus at a wedding and he's sitting with sinners, feasting, eating with sinners.

The very sinners that John condemned. And something is happening to this man. Some dark test of faith is coming to John the Baptist in that prison.

And I'm sure the enemy came and said, did you not hear? Did you not see? Did you not preach that he's come to release those who are in prison and set the captives free? Why are you here? Why hasn't he come and set you free? And the context of this chapter, if you look at the first few verses, Jesus has dispersed his disciples to the whole the whole country now and sent them out two by two. And Jesus is working all alone. He's going about the bus, just doing good.

And John is how the enemy must have dealt with this man. The devil, I'm sure, whispered, John. And you see, he's human.

He feels everything in common to you and to me. I wouldn't want to believe this. And I wouldn't want to believe anything about John the Baptist.

I wouldn't. I can't accept it unless it relates to my human nature. He's a human being.

And Jesus knew that he was depressed. Who wouldn't be depressed? A man who's lived his lifetime without walls. His lifetime spent in solitude.

A man who loved nature. A man who loved to walk and meditate and talk to God. A man who would spend days with the parchments of all the prophets and the law and the Psalms.

A man who came out with no walls and now he's caged like an animal. And that to John is a living hell. And I'm sure John heard the gossip among the guards that this king's wife, Herod's wife, has already decided he's going to have his head.

And you see, there's a battle going on and the devil whispers to this man, Hey, John, this man Jesus, yes, he's a good man. He's a holy man. But he's just another prophet.

All the prophets did miracles. What did Moses do? He opened a red sea. Elijah raised the dead.

Hosea preached to the poor. He's just another miracle working man. He's a prophet.

And doubts begin to come into his own heart. Go ask him. What prompted this outburst in John? Kind of deep, dark trial.

Something is troubling John's soul. He's not really, the enemy is saying to this man, he's really not setting captives free. He would have started with you.

Jesus said, Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended. And what Jesus is saying, John, I know that you're offended by the way I am fulfilling the kingdom of God. You're offended because the expectation you had and everything that you saw and wanted and hoped it to be.

And John's not thinking of anything personal because he has such a passion for God and he has such a hatred for sin. He's lived with this for so long and he's longed for the kingdom of God. He's longed to see God avenged and righteousness established.

But now his expectations are not being fulfilled. You see, you can go to the scriptures and we have our expectations built up so high through the promises. The promises of God create these expectations in us.

And we read these promises and we claim these promises. And time after time we wait and we wait and we wait. And the promise is not fulfilled in our timing.

When we conceive and our expectations are not fulfilled. And that's why the enemy comes in with all the questions about the faithfulness of God. About the reality of who he is and the reality about who you are in him.

He said he who comes is going to have a fan in his hand. He's going to purge his floor. He's going to gather wheat into the garner.

But he will burn all the chaff with unquenchable fire. He'll lay the axe to the root. He'll hew down every tree not bearing fruit and cast it into the fire.

Malachi said the day cometh. And he's speaking of the day of the Messiah. That shall burn as an oven and all the proud and all who do wickedly shall be stubble.

And that day that cometh shall burn them all up. It was said of the judges by Isaiah the prophet. He's going to bring the princes down to nothing.

He's going to make all the judges of the earth as vanity. He shall blow upon them and they shall wither. John, this is the expectation of the kingdom.

But now comes a gentle man with passion of love. Just going about doing good, healing the sick, casting out devils. And John said that's not what I saw.

That's not what I believe the prophets have said of this man. And so he's saying once again, ask him. Are you the one that has been prophesied about? Are you the one that I read about in Isaiah? The devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness.

In the same manner he is now testing John. In the same way he tests every one of us. What a deceiver the devil is.

And he can come to the most godly of saints. Yes, I believe John was in depression because of his being caged. Yes, I believe there were raging doubts.

And I believe the devil was coming at this man. If he came against Christ, he'd certainly come against John. And if he came against Christ and he came against John, he's going to come against you.

He's going to come against me at times and try to rob us of our confidence in God. And especially our confidence in his faithfulness in prayer. To answer prayer.

And the devil is doing a work. And unbelief is set in. May I tell you that the sign of unbelief being sprouting in us is that you no longer pray for the things that you once believed God for.

You don't pray for them anymore. The evidence of unbelief sprouting and taking root is that you no longer lay all of your problems. You don't lay this before the Lord.

You don't come to him by faith anymore. And this is the temptation of the enemy. That John be tempted in a way that very few men have been tempted.

Let me expose the devil's most effective, destructive device to rob us of our confidence and faith. Jesus said, blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. And the Lord is there in that one sentence exposing the worst lie of the devil.

He is exposing the worst device. We're not ignorant of his devices and this is one of his most destructive devices. Jesus is tenderly warning John.

John, you asked me if I'm the one you claim me to be. But can't you see that that's a trap? Because if the devil convinced you that I'm not who you claimed I was, then you're not who you claim to be. You're a fraud.

You're a phony. And if he is not, then there's no resurrection. And here I am facing death and I'll be left in a grave.

Oh, how the enemy came against this man. He comes against us the same way. He'll come against you and say, all right, you spent your lifetime seeking God.

You spent years talking about the faithfulness of God. He hears your prayer before you even ask. He knows what you're asking for.

He that hears will answer. You make all of these statements about the greatness of God, about him being a God of impossibilities. Then why are you in the condition you are? Why is there no evidence of a deliverance? Why are you stuck in this condition? Is God just a slow God? But you see what Jesus, I believe, is really saying to John, John, the devil not after me in this issue.

He's trying to get to you. He's trying to trap you. And Jesus loved this man.

And Jesus knew this man was going to come through because I'm sure Jesus prayed for him that his faith fell not. But some of you that are here now, this is what I heard from the Holy Spirit. And I'm trying to tie this together now.

So do you see the point that the Lord is trying to make? There are some of you that are sitting here right now. You're going through a test in your faith because things have been things have been so slow. There doesn't seem to be any evidence of those things that you prayed about and so believed about and so talked about and encouraged others to believe for.

And now here you sit in this meeting this morning, hearing me speak. And the enemy has come to you. And what he wants you to do is the same thing he wanted to happen to John, that he would doubt who Christ is so that he would doubt who he is in Christ.

He would doubt who he is. He would doubt all the things that God had done for him, the call of God. He would doubt that the hand of God was on him and the lie, the lie from the pits of hell, screaming at him, John, you're a fraud.

Because if he's not the one who is to come, you're not the prophet to set the road straight. And that's what the devil is trying to do to you, to make you so doubt that God is faithful to you. Because John, yes, he heard of the miracles all around him.

But that's what the devil said. Yeah, you look around, you look at everybody getting answers to their prayer. Look what God's saying to other people in the revelation they have now.

Look at you, stuck in a prison in a marriage that is unfulfilling and like a prison. And you pray for your unsaved children and you go month after month, year after year, and where's the evidence? Why doesn't the preaching you preach work for you? Now, I know there are many going through this battle and the devil is trying to not only get you to doubt God, he wants you to doubt the faithfulness of God so that you will doubt yourself. Oh, I know what that's about.

I know what it is to have those kind of doubts flood my soul, especially after having to prophesy. All the devil wants to do is get John to speak three little words. And if he can get him to say these three little words and just voice them, and Jesus knew the consequences that would happen if John gave in to this lie, this trap.

In fact, the word offended in Greek is entrap, it's slave and ensnare, to trip up. He's trying to trip you up, he's trying to ensnare you with a lie to say that if I were really in Christ, he didn't have any places, surely I would have his ear. Surely he would not hold back from me.

Surely he would not allow me to go through what I'm going through without. You see, Jesus didn't even answer John's question. He didn't answer him because he's not trying to persuade John.

It has to be a work of the Spirit of God in him through the word. He has to get John to say these three words, I have regrets. You see, if he voices these regrets, and the word regret here means distress over unfulfilled expectations.

Distress of heart because of unfulfilled expectations. And if all John says to one or two of his disciples, I have regrets. My expectations have not been fulfilled in this man.

If he does that, he's undermined every prophet of all ages who spoke of his coming. He's undermined the work of Christ for generations to come. And it's so important that this man hears the word of Jesus, Blessed is he whosoever is not offended in me, who will refuse the lies of Satan and stand faithful and believe.

He comes at us with the same thing he came to John because the devil saw John's impatience. John was impatient with the way Christ, with the way Jesus was fulfilling the ministry of bringing about the kingdom of God. John didn't know much about the cross other than what he read in Isaiah, but still steeped in the Jewish traditions.

Impatience is an inability to wait, unable to bear afflictions calmly. Unable to just be calm in the spirit and rest in the Christ who made the promise. And John is impatient, not for himself.

He wants to see sin defeated. He's not trying to be validated. John just says, I want to see the word fulfilled.

I have all these promises. I spent my life on it. And this is what the devil wants you to do.

And that's to be impatient about the promises God has made you. Promises about salvation of your family, about your ministry, about your life, about your future, about children. So many things.

And God has made you a promise. And these expectations are built in you. And now, if you don't mix patience with your faith, it's not faith.

This body is a temple of the Holy Ghost. This is his church. This is his body.

And there's an altar in this body upon which incense waves to the throne of God. And that incense is faith, the prayer of faith. But you see, the enemy wants to mix a little mixture of unbelief.

And there's a thing in the Bible called strange incense that turned in an obnoxious odor. And you see, when you mix just a little bit of impatience with your prayer, that incense, it goes up. You cause that incense to become an obnoxious stench in the eyes of God.

And the devil picks up that scent. To him, it's his perfume. He picks up that impatient spirit.

And some of you have that right now. Some of you, in fact, are about ready to give up on God, ready to give up on your confidence in the Lord. And I've seen many people like that.

They've been so offended because Jesus hasn't answered on time. Jesus, you're too slow. And now in their impatience, their prayers have become obnoxious in the sight of God because now it's producing unbelief.

And then out of this temple, everything that comes out is mixed with that impatient spirit. Inability to wait, unable to bear afflictions calmly. Hebrews 6, 12, be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

The Bible says of Abraham, after he patiently endured, he obtained the promises. God has been speaking to me about my impatience. We get impatient with people.

Husbands and wives get impatient with one another. But oh, buddy, brother, sister, I tell you, it's another thing to get impatient with God. Thank God John did the right thing.

He ran quickly with his doubts to Christ. He ran directly to Jesus. Jesus knew this man's heart.

Jesus warned in the last days, many shall be offended. Same Greek word. So many are going to be offended, he said, and it results in Jesus said an amazing thing.

When I come, will I find faith on the earth? So many of my people are going to be offended. So many of my disciples are going to be offended. And after the death of Jesus, this prophecy came to pass.

Jesus had prophesied to his closest disciple, all you shall be offended because of me this night. And when Jesus gave the parable, the seed that was sown and fell on various types of ground, he said, when there are those who have no root in themselves, in other words, meaning they have no patience. When affliction or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

And affliction there in the original is pressure, trouble, stress. He said when stress and all this can come because of the word, until the word came, the Bible said, the word of God, till his time came, the word of God tried Joseph. Those promises can try you.

And when stress, he said, there are some that are coming and they serve me for a while. They were faithful for a while and in their stress and in their trouble, they held on. But because they didn't have roots

and because really saying because of their lack of patience, they couldn't wait calmly.

They didn't mix faith with their patience, with their faith. He said they are offended. Immediately they are offended.

There's a powerful verse in Proverbs 18, chapter verse 19. And I saw this last night and it really struck me. This is serious business before God.

The scripture says a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city. And their contentions are like the bars of a castle. Offended here is in Hebrew, break away, apostatize.

And the word contention here is argument. And when you put it all together, being offended, a brother was offended. If not, if this offense is not dealt with, there's a danger of breaking away, spinning out of faith completely, breaking away and apostatizing.

He said, and then when you go to this person, they have bars. They they are all barred in because of their argument. I have a reason to feel like I do.

He said, and if you hold on to that offense. It gets harder and harder because your heart gets hard because you have an argument now. And they're like the bars of a castle.

They lock you in so that nobody can reach you and you hear it. You hear it from the girl. Fifteen year old girl wrote to me and said, I believed in God and I prayed and I fasted.

My father, who was dying of cancer, be healed. But he died and I'll never believe in God again. And you'll never persuade that girl because she has walls, bars of a castle around her.

This is the danger. This is the danger of holding an offense. While you're in Christ holding this impatient spirit, the danger of is breaking away.

Not that God wants to let you go, but he will come and speak to you about the blessings there are. If you will lay that offense down, I will bless you. There are incredible blessings that wait.

That blessing is the fulfilling of the promise that God gave to you. He's going to bless you. He wants to bless you.

He wants you to remind you of it. You see, by the day, what's the cure? You're speaking to my heart. I want to go to James.

The book of James, chapter one. Folks, I'm going to close in five minutes. This is not a long message, but here is the cure.

My brethren, count it all. What joy when you fall into diverse temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh. Say it.

Patience. God is doing a work. This waiting, this apparent slowness of God.

God is working something in you that couldn't be worked in any other way. It's working patience in you so that when the times that are really hard, when the world is spinning out of control, when you're in a time like this, when what happened in the Asian nations, an eruption, one million times more powerful than the bomb that dropped on Hiroshima, one million times more powerful. And when we're going to have to bow,

the whole world is going to have to bow one of these days.

At the immense release of a power they don't understand. And even scientists now, thinking men all over the world are saying, somebody somewhere is tinkering with nature. They're tinkering with nature, with nature.

Someday, God is going to be known for who he is. And God is going to shake everything that can be shaken. Now, friends, those times are at hand.

The beginnings of sorrows are upon us. And God is trying to raise up a people without offense. He's trying to wake up a people.

I believe that before John stood before the executioner, I believe he stood up and made a confession. Jesus is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. And I believe John stood up and said, I am John.

I am the prophet called and anointed. And I've made his path straight. And that's what God's trying to produce in every one of us right now.

If we're going to reach New York, we're going to be the testimony. We're not going to be straggling around in unbelief. You're going to have to know who you are in Christ.

And the world begins to shake. You stand still because God's tested you and your patience. If you don't get it.

I forgot to get the rest of that. Go back to James. Back to James 1. Faith, work with patience, but let patience have her that you may be perfect in entire wanting means lacking nothing.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God. Oh, he's a giving God that God give it to all men liberally, upbraideth not and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering for he that wavers like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

Let not that man think he's achieved anything of the Lord. If you don't get anything else, let this out of the message. I'm speaking in the spirit to so many here.

Be patient. Faith without patience is not faith. It's not faith.

Let God finish the work and hold on. The answer is coming. And one day you'll be able to stand up before the whole world and say, I don't have to be afraid anymore.

God took me through the worst trial of my life and he'll take me through anything now. And he'll do that. Will you stand, please? No clapping, please.

Jesus, I. I don't want to be that kind of person. That's so offended. I couldn't be reached.

Become so hard and so bitter. God, don't let it happen to anybody within the sound of my voice. And I pray, Holy Spirit, you come in loving kindness as you did with John.

Come speak lovingly to our hearts. Lord, you know what we're going through. You know the trial and some of it is so painful and so difficult.

But, Lord, you've heard every cry in your time and in your way. And even now, you're working behind the scenes that we don't see. You're convicting.

You're doing things that are miraculous. And we have no sight. But the Lord saying, I'm not going to show you what I'm doing.

I want you to believe. And I want you to let this working in you be finished. I was praying while you were coming.

This is what I received from the Holy Spirit. Listen closely, please. This won't be long.

Very short, right to the point. Holy Spirit, show me that many of you that stand before me never meant to be impatient with God. It never wanted to feel left out or that God was not answering you.

But fear, see, fear has torment. You allowed fear into your heart. You got afraid.

Maybe God will not answer. Maybe God will let me down. And then you say he wouldn't do it for any other reason.

But I'm not worthy. There's something in me. Because you wouldn't dare blame God.

But you blame yourself. I guess I'm not seeing it right. I'm not getting it right.

Or I don't know the Scriptures. Or maybe there's some sin in me that's holding God back from giving me what the Bible caused me to expect and believe. But it's fear.

And you're going to confess fear. Right now. Lord, I've been afraid.

Wait till I lead you. But you're going to have to get this out of your heart. He said, I'm not giving you a spirit of fear, but love and power in a sound mind.

You have the power and the authority in the name of Jesus to let the spirit have access to your heart and pluck out every spirit of fear. Bow your head and pray this with me right out loud. Dear Jesus, I have been afraid.

I'm really not mad at you. But I've had doubts. I've had doubts about you.

But I've loved you. And Lord Jesus, I'm asking you to forgive my unbelief and my impatience. But most of all, take out the fear and bring the spirit of calmness and rest and confidence.

Forgive me, Jesus, for everything that's offended you. Anything against you, Christ, cleanse me. And by faith now, I lay hold of the promise of God and I believe.

Say it again. I believe. Convince your heart right now.

Lord, I will step out in faith and patience. What did what did we just read? If you need this wisdom, let him ask what in faith. But if you don't, he said, don't let that man woman think they receive anything from God.

If you prayed in faith now, Father, I pray for those that have come forward, those who are yielding their heart to you, Jesus. Some maybe for the first time, some that are coming back to their love for you. Some Lord laying down their offended spirit.

Lord, whatever it is, we pray you accept repentance. You accept our brokenness before you and our willingness to confess and open our hearts to you. And I pray now for the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon every one of these, not only at the altar, but those within the sound of my voice.

Send the anointing of the Holy Ghost. Lord, let us not be afraid of the future. We're going to see things now, Lord, and it's going to be coming to the United States shortly.

And when we see and hear these things that Bible says, we will have come through and we shall not be shaken. We will not fear. Nothing then shall move us from our confidence in you.

Oh, Lord, prepare our hearts and confidence in faith. We pray. I want you to raise your hands and just give God thanks.

This is the conclusion of the message.

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