

Living a Life of Being Unoffended

by Don Courville

The sermon emphasizes the importance of remaining unoffended with God to experience His blessings and deepen our faith amidst life's challenges.

Duration: 51:14

Scripture: Isaiah 35:4, Matthew 11:1-19

Topics: "Unoffended"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of obedience and faith in following God's plan. He shares a personal story of how he had to obey and take a leap of faith in order to fulfill God's calling. The speaker also emphasizes the discipline of delay and how God uses waiting periods to teach us patience. He then talks about the providence of testing and how God sometimes allows desolation before bringing forth blessings. The sermon concludes with the message that as disciples of Christ, we must be willing to go all the way and not quit, even when faced with disappointment and challenges.

Transcript

Matthew chapter 11, Matthew chapter 11, verses 1 through 19. And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities. 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 ye do hear and see.

The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk. The lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear. The dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see, a reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see, a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see, a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet, for this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, that are not risen are greater than John the Baptist. Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of

John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And that ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath the ears to hear, let him hear.

But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is likened to children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced. We have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath the devil.

The son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified over children. Matthew chapter 11, Matthew chapter 11, and verse 6 is our pivot verse.

And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. Let's pray. Thank you, Father, for your word, the reading of this chapter this morning, at least the first 19 verses.

And I pray that the Spirit of God would bring the reality of Christ and your lordship and your sovereignty, and the reality of how important it is to love you and not be offended with your ways this morning to us. We thank you for life. We thank you for salvation, the blood of Jesus, which was shed for our sins.

We thank you for the opportunity to repent and surrender our life to Christ. Oh, Father, I pray if there'd be any here that do not know Jesus, have not surrendered their life to Christ, that they would come under the powerful conviction of the Holy Spirit and would do so, and then follow Him in obedience by being baptized. Thank you for your love now, in Jesus' name, amen.

We've been studying doctrine, going through different doctrines, and we've spent the rest of our life doing this, since you're covering the Bible and covering different things in the Bible, and it's very difficult to know what we should do for priority for studying different things because there's so many things important. I almost jumped over to something else yesterday. I got to looking at it, tied in with this and the part of going.

In looking at the doctrine of discipleship, you might think, well, this is not that important. As I said last week in church, if I was to write a book, I would write a book out of all the things, out of all my experiences and what I see, I would write a book on the discipleship methods of Jesus. And I shared with you some things last week.

And there's about 24 areas in this, and I didn't bring my little sheet of things because one time I sat down and I began to just go through the gospels. I was going through Matthew and I was writing down the areas where He was discipling His disciples. And it's an honor if you have somebody to disciple you, but at least if you don't, then you have to take upon yourself the desire and the get up and go to draw off of others, even though they may not consciously say I'm going to disciple you, you draw off of them what you can.

That's what I did after the Lord sent the first one to disciple me. Last week, I just I covered the priority of discipline, how important it is that we have our priorities right. And we don't always have them right, to our shame, but we just make mistakes.

We don't always choose the right way. And some of the greatest mistakes in my life have been because of putting myself first other than God. And, you know, we got the illustration of Peter there when it come down to it.

If he was going to save his hide or identify with Jesus, he was going to save his hide. I don't know him. And so we went through that and looked at those things, the discipleship of priority, what makes the disciple looking at those things.

And I was just going to go over through here. There were, I think, four things that I had here. Choice choices, making choices.

Christ was choosing them. And then also he leaves. He wants us to choose him in return.

But there's the cost. And we took that. And there are some lessons on choices statement that somebody made.

God always gives his best to those who leave the choice to him. But let God, one thing I said, let God guide you in your decisions. Let the superior lead.

One of the areas of discipleship is you let your leader lead. But if you're trying to jump ahead of your leader, then you're trying to be the one in charge. And we need a leader, and that's the Lord.

Something else I just covered was the cost. What will it cost you to be a disciple of Jesus? Just everything. Absolutely everything.

You have to be willing, and sometimes you do have to give it up to be a disciple of Christ. Because the principle is laid out, no man can serve two masters. And either it's going to be Christ that you're serving or you're going to serve yourself.

You may have another master or whatever, but it's really for you. And all kinds of battles are entailed there. Someone said, while attending the Lord's work, he will attend to our comfort and advantage.

But we forget that sometimes and think that we're supposed to put our comfort and our advantage first. And it's seek first the kingdom of God. And so then we looked at the area of convenience.

It's not always convenient. Because it's our schedule that we are looking at and not God's schedule. And so we looked at that.

And if you're going to be a disciple of Christ, you need to plan on finishing it. Going all the way. It's just not going to work to go 90% of the way and then wash out.

You lose everything in your life that's invested. And it's always too soon to quit. I've got a little thing on that that came from Henry Ford that I guess that he had given a speech somewhere.

Sometime I may read that. It's too soon to quit. Well, let's take off now.

And I have quite a bit of stuff. The more I kept meditating on this, I kept coming up with more stuff. So I may have to cut out some things or we may have to go a little long.

We'll see. But I want you to at least get one thing. If I come up to you later this afternoon and I say, what did you get? Oh, I got this.

Get at least get one thing out of this and maybe you might get some more things. Here's the title. It's better.

The blessedness of the unoffended. The blessedness of the unoffended. And this is the discipline of not being offended with God.

Zero in and would not be an offended with God. We get offended with man. I offend you.

You offend me or whatever. But if we get offended with God, we're in trouble because we're actually saying, I don't like the way you're doing things. I don't agree with this.

Why don't we do it this way? And we have some problems because God knows what he's doing and we don't. And one thing we learned in revival when we had that revival out in western Nebraska many years ago. And the evangelist was saying this all the time.

It's better to offend man than offend God. And one thing I've seen is many people get offended in revival ministry. And if the spirit of God, we've seen this many times.

If the spirit of God is leading and working and it's obvious he's doing it and somebody gets bent out of shape about this and we and they get mad at us or somebody else or what. Hey, it's God. That you're getting offended at and it's showing where you're at.

And some of them can get really pretty highly irritated. And of course, we would never do that. Would we? All right.

Are you already? I'm going to give you eight points. And with that point, there's going to be some other stuff. And when we're done, if you want to look at my notes, you can.

But the eight points about being offended are these. I'm going to go through them quickly. I don't have time to wait for you to write each one down, but I'll come back each one and catch it.

But in the area of being offended with God, there's disappointment. There's darkness. There's delay.

There's desolation. There's difficulty. There's discontentment.

There's disillusionment. And there's doubt. Got it.

OK, let's move on. All right. It is to stumble at the will of God when we get offended with God, basically.

And it's OK to ask God some questions. This is what John did in the passage. When he's sent to ask about Jesus, he's in prison.

And it's said in verse 2 of John chapter 11, Now when John heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said unto them, 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. Here's my credentials. Here's my credentials.

What are they? The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear. The dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. It comes from Isaiah 35, 4, and 6. But it's not all of Isaiah 35, 4, and 6, because there's more going to happen when Christ comes back into his kingdom.

But go tell John these things are going on. And by the way, he says, And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. John got that part, too.

And we're going to cover that part today. Now here's the background. The leaders of Israel are rejecting Christ already.

Up in chapter 11, we're really moving along quite a ways into his ministry. And he's being rejected. He's been rejected in his hometown.

Back up in Capernaum, in the area where he had his headquarters. He did all kinds of miracles. They're rejecting him.

And not only that, John has been taken and put in prison. Now let me put it across to you like this. It's not looking good.

From John's perspective, looking out the bars. It's not looking good. He was popular.

He had been preaching hell, fire, and damnation, thunder, and they are trembling. And they are repenting. And John is the number one evangelist of the day.

He's popular. They're coming out there, except with the scribes and Pharisees who come out there with their notes and taking notes. You're not doing this right and doing that and criticizing.

You vipers! Another one there. Critical spirit. You brood of vipers.

And so then they finally, actually they didn't get him. Herod got him. Because one day he preached against, what was it? Herodias.

Because there was an adulterous relationship going there. Taking another man's wife and marrying her before the man died. It wasn't right.

And so he got thrown into prison. She wanted to take his head off. She wanted to get him and kill him.

Herod, he liked him. He was afraid of him. But John's in prison.

They're right there behind the bars. So, number one evangelist in prison. Shut up his ministry.

The one he's proclaiming, the Messiah. Things are not looking too good out there. Okay, that's the setting.

Now, let's go into this a little bit. I've got a statement. I can't remember who said it.

I wrote it down from somebody this week. And I wish I could have. But it's this.

One of the greatest perils of the Christian life lurks in the common pathway of discipleship. It is the peril of being offended in Christ. We've had a lot of church fights and church splits because of somebody getting offended with so and so or whatever.

And some of those things, people were offended with what God was doing. And they didn't like it. And all kinds of bad things have come out of that.

Being offended with God. And Jesus is coming. He's sending back to John and said, don't be offended.

Don't be offended. Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended to me. John, you're being blessed.

Doesn't look like I'm being blessed, you know. But just hang in there and don't be offended. Isn't that amazing that he would say that to John? And but the rest of the verses, he goes on commending John, holding him up.

He's not really putting John down at all. He just sent a little message back there to encourage him because things were looking dark. So there is a point.

And I I've seen this even. Even then, you've seen it, too, when the strongest of the strong and the purest of the pure have been brought to a point of being offended. It can happen.

It can happen. And many make it. Most make it, but some get tripped up.

That's what it means. You know, David had his neighbor. Boy, he got really offended.

And that was, you know, he got stopped on that. But when he got offended with God for zapping Uzzah, that wasn't good. And the whole thing shut down.

But he was sort of mad at God for killing Uzzah when Uzzah reached out to touch the ark. That was Uzzah's fault. And he took up an offense.

And different things. You know, Job had his friends, and he got offended with his friends because they were coming along, choosing him things that were not true. But when God showed up on the scene and he began to speak, and Job began to get his eyes open and his ears open, he went, uh-oh.

This is your deal, God? You've been doing all this. I've been upset with you. I've been kicking against my friends, but I'm really kicking against you.

I am vile. That's the first thing he said. Because he is just kicking and snorting.

You wouldn't do that. But I would, and I have. And when it was God doing it.

Now, here's the definition of offended. It's scandizo, scandalize. That's what it means.

If you ever see a scandal, you know, that's what it means. It means to commit that which leads to the fall or ruin of someone, causing someone to stumble. Don't let God's ways cause you to stumble.

Now, here's these points to observe on being blessed in the will of God and not being offended. And actually, it really goes down deep to loving God. It just really goes down deep to loving God.

Now, there was a lady back over in France. I've got a lot of connection with France since my dad's side came over. And they were full of French and even still speak French down in South Louisiana.

But there was one lady that made it to Jesus in the Catholic Church. She couldn't get out. She was in that.

And she was a very prominent lady. Here, let me read you about her. There's no more beautiful illustration of an impartial love of God's will than that which is found in the life of Madame Gagnon.

She was imprisoned for Christ's sake. She found Jesus. She's just filled with the Spirit of God, filled with the love of God.

And they hated her. They just couldn't stand her. It was Jesus living her life.

She found Jesus amidst all of that false doctrine and all of the idol worship and everything. And so she was imprisoned for Christ's sake in different French prisons from 1695 to 1705. Add that up.

Went a few years, didn't it? Good chunk of her life. She was a cultured, refined, educated, and until smitten with smallpox, an exceedingly beautiful woman. For ten years, she endured the indignity of different French prisons, including the celebrated Bastille.

This is what she wrote in 1698. While I was a prisoner in Vincennes, I passed my time in great peace. I sang songs of joy, which the maid who served me learned by heart as fast as I made them.

And we together sang thy praises, O my God. Then comes a sentence, which is just an amazing sentence. He said, I never read without amazement.

The stones of my prison walls shone like rubies in my eyes. I esteemed them more than all the gaudy brilliances of this vain world. My heart was full of that joy, which thou givest to them that love thee in the midst of their greatest crosses.

And she has a poem that she wrote. If I don't forget, I'll come back and read this poem to you. But it has to do really with loving God.

And nothing will offend us. Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them. Psalms 119, 165.

Now, John has a question. He has a question. Am I on track? He just said, because it didn't look good.

And he's just basically saying, are we okay? Am I on track? He was just convinced. And, you know, the first time he met Jesus, he sort of stumbled a little bit. Jesus said, I want you to baptize me.

Oh, no, I need to be baptized by you. And he said, suffer it to be so for now. And he did.

He suffered. And so John's a very careful man, a very exact prophet. And he has a question.

He just wants to know. And so Christ sent back. And, you know, sometimes we have dark days with God dealing with us.

It was a very dark day for Mary and Martha when Lazarus died, wasn't it? When Jesus heard about it, what did he do? Did he jump in the chariot and go roaring off right away? Does he always do that with you and me? No. We'll get to this one. He just delayed two more days because he wanted Lazarus good and dead.

And maybe that's what he wants with you and me. And our situations are some, you say, I don't have a situation. Well, hang around.

You may get one one day. And the way things are going around our country, you may get one sooner than you want. But he delayed two days.

And so when he shows up, here comes Martha. She jumps out there. If you'd been here, my brother had not died.

And basically, Jesus is this. That's the point. That's the whole point.

If I had been here, he wouldn't have died. If he hadn't died, we wouldn't have had a resurrection. We wouldn't have had all the what you're fixing to see something.

And you just wouldn't see it. Without the trial that God is taking you through or has taken you through or will take you through. You won't see his glory.

But so many times we get offended at his ways. And so let's get into this first point. What's the point? Here's the first point.

How far will you go with Jesus? And it's disappointment. How far will you go when you've been disappointed? Will you peel off somewhere? A lot of them did. A lot of them did.

How far will you go? How far will you go? You know, in John chapter 6, Jesus is doing this. He's fed the multitudes and they're back for more. And he's going to take them to the cross.

And he takes them right down to the nitty-gritty. Are you willing to eat my flesh and drink my blood? Are you willing to let me be your life? Are you willing to let me be your all? Are you willing to put everything you have into my hands? Surrender yourself totally to me. You see, they left.

I don't think it was because they didn't understand. I think it was because they did understand that he was going to have to be all. And so he put it out to them in such a way that those that really wanted him would wait around.

And they would stay with him. We don't always understand what he's doing. He says, does this offend you? Well, yes, it offends us and we're leaving.

How far will you go? John, come on, hang in there. We just got a little bit more and you're going to get out of that prison. He didn't tell him he was going to get his head cut off.

But he did. Have you ever noticed how sometimes when God uses people for their reward, they get bashed and criticized and all kinds of stuff comes against them. Sometimes they get martyred or they get just shoved out of sight.

Why does that happen? My personal opinion is sometimes it's so that there would be no chance of them getting the glory because it's been so powerful what's been done. It doesn't always happen, but I've seen that on some occasions. OK, the first point is disappointment.

How far will you go? Will you go all the way? Will you go all the way? Now, let's move on to the second part. You know, I believe hell is going to be full of professing Christians because of these three reasons. And Jesus taught these three reasons.

First of all, he said there's no root. And what happens in Matthew three and verse, I think, is twenty one. It says they are offended.

They're offended. And another thing is because of the underbelief, verse 57, Matthew 13. I wasn't going to go there, but I'll flip over there.

It's because of unbelief. And then a third thing is because they never knew him. They never knew him.

John or Matthew 7, 21 through 23. I never knew you, but they had no root. And there was unbelief there in verse 57.

Now, let's go to the second point. Jesus is saying, and blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. What's the point? Another point is to not be offended with God's way when it goes in.

It's dark. It's just dark. You just don't see.

And maybe he had no prison. You know, I might just been dark literally in the prison. Who knows? But it's just dark.

And it's God's will for him to be in prison. It's God's will for you and me to go through trials. At certain times.

Have you ever been through a trial that you liked? Hey, boy, God, I really liked that one. No, usually every one of them we just seem not have. But if you look back and we look at the blessing that came afterwards.

Wow, I never got that blessing if I hadn't gone through that trial. John, I'm blessing you. It's a blessing that you're in prison.

It doesn't look like it. And he didn't tell him you're just fixing to check out in a little bit of time. All right.

This point here to not be offended with God's ways. It was God's will. It was God's will for him to be in prison.

He's basically saying, don't worry about the details. John, we're on track. I know it doesn't look good, but we're on track.

And you got to remember that John was like everybody else. He's ushering in the Messiah. He is convinced without a shadow of doubt that Jesus is the Messiah.

And they all thought that Jesus was going to come in and set up his kingdom and set on the throne. John did, too. They didn't understand there was going to be a little more time involved in there.

So the Jews are offended with him. And John is just beginning to sort of wander. Are you really the Messiah? Well, it's not.

It's looking sort of dark. Talk about somebody being in the dark. Fanny Crosby.

She lived in the dark, but she had more light than all of us probably put together. Because of the darkness. And look at all the blessing that came out of the darkness.

John the Baptist. Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. He was faithful.

He was courageous. He was self-sacrificing. He was humble.

I'm not even worthy to unloose the shoestrings on your sandals. All of that. All of that.

And lonely. All of the loneliness. And what's he get for his reward? Bars.

And then a hatchet. He was being blessed. It was such a blessing for him to do what he did for Jesus.

Do you realize that it is a blessing for you and me to suffer for Jesus? And so don't get offended at him. Yet I just wonder if he had a little doubt there. Here's the fourth point.

The third point. Excuse me. The second point was darkness.

And I didn't tell you that the third one there was delay. We will be blessed when God's ways have delays. When God's ways have delays.

There's a verse in Psalms 103, 7. It said, He made known his ways unto Moses and his acts unto the children of Israel. God understood God's ways. I mean Moses understood God's ways.

And so he got along a lot better. And he was able to go a lot farther. But all they were seeing was the actions.

But God, because of 40 years of being best, he was ready to go when he was 40 years old. He knew that God had raised him up to lead Israel out. 40 years of delay out in the desert.

That wasn't in his plan. And delays are never in our plans either. You know, we don't even, we hate red lights.

Because why? They delay us. How many times have you prayed when you're approaching a red light? Say, God don't let it change, I'm running late. How many of you have ever done that? Am I the only one that does that? I don't like to wait, but he did.

And so this was the discipline of delay. And when Jesus is discipling us, this was one of his techniques. Is to get us to hang up and hold off.

Actually I did a little study on one of the 24 on patience. How Jesus was trying to teach his disciples patience. Just wait, John.

Just wait. Here's the fourth one. In the pathway of blessing, the providence of testing will always be experienced.

And it's the word desolation. Sometimes it just seems like it's totally hopeless. Mary and Martha with Lazarus.

They had no conception in their mind. They had no plans in their mind. It was all done with Lazarus.

Four days he's been dead. And this is the ways of God. Sometimes he allows total desolation before he brings the blessing out.

And it just sometimes drives us up the wall. We just can't really handle it. What's the point for John? Don't be offended with God's delays.

Don't be offended with my delays. Matter of fact, over in John, in chapter 16. These things have I spoken unto you that ye should not be offended.

What kind of things he's talking about? Not good things. They shall put you out of the synagogues. Yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God's service.

And he goes into these things. These things I have told you that when the time come, you may remember that I told you, John 16.4. Of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning because I was with you.

But now I go my way to him that sent me. He's trying to get them ready so they won't be offended at these things. The Bible says in Matthew 24.10. And then shall many be offended.

There's going to come a day when it all falls apart. And it says many are going to be offended. Can be offended at God.

Here's a fifth one. A fifth one that I noticed. A fifth point.

I call it difficulty. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended with me. Have you ever got into a difficulty? And you begin to sort of get upset with it? Impatient with it? Or whatever.

Is there a difficulty that comes along? Something just didn't quite go your way? I know that wouldn't happen to you. But just think about this. One day.

Naaman went to see a prophet. To get himself healed from that leprosy. And Naaman.

The prophet doesn't even come out. He sends a servant out. Says go wash yourself.

Dip yourself seven times in the Jordan River. And what happened? Did Naaman say. Oh okay.

I'll go do it. No. He got red around the neck.

And he began to get mad. He was offended. I'm a great Naaman.

You want me to go wash in the dirty Jordan? There's a lot cleaner rivers. I thought the prophet would come out. And smite around and do all this stuff.

And heal me. He was offended. He was offended.

It was a difficulty. And he wouldn't have got. If he hadn't had a wise servant.

He wouldn't have got healed. But maybe there's been a failure. Of some expectation.

Or an unanswered prayer. It's been a difficult thing. And you're in a difficult bind or whatever.

Or a broken heart. It's been something very difficult. Maybe your yoke is a little bit uncomfortable.

Maybe your yoke is irritating you a little bit. It's a little difficult to wear a yoke. Have you ever tried it? I haven't.

But Jesus said my yoke is easy. And my burden is light. And basically is saying if you'll let me pull the load.

But it becomes difficult. When I'm pulling. And you're pulling.

Stay in stride with me. And I'll carry the weight for you. And so it's a difficult thing.

For John here. And I don't think there's probably anything that offends more than the cross. I mean when Jesus went to the cross.

There wasn't many around. When he got down to it. A few ladies in John.

One thing thou lackest. It was a difficult thing for that young man. To go sell all that he had.

And gave the poor. It's a difficult thing. Let me give you a sixth one.

A sixth point. What's he after? What's the point? I had the word discontent. But I changed that word.

For maybe discomfort. I don't know if he was discontented so much. It was just not very comfortable.

So what's he after? What's Jesus after in John? To move all doubt about who he was. Jesus is telling John. And he's telling you and me.

When things are very uncomfortable. There's discomfort there. Keep your focus.

John. Keep your focus. Keep your focus.

We always have something that's not very comfortable. Because he says. And blessed is he.

Whosoever shall not be offended in me. This thing of self-love. Self-pride.

Self-sufficiency. All of these things are getting our focus off of him. And on to ourself.

Think about this. One of my favorite missionaries. Hudson Taylor.

Went to the mission field. With great difficulty. All kinds of discomfort.

And darkness. And all of that. And it brings us up to this next point.

He came back. Five, six years later. He came back home.

His health was about broken. He goes over to the east end of London. His health is bad.

And he spends five years off the field of China. And he moves into what I call the point of disillusionment. To not be offended.

Is to believe. And not to be disillusioned. And finally out on the beach.

One day. He met God. And he got his focus back on.

And when he went back. He went back a new man. I mean he lost support.

Missionary going to China. And he came back. You know I believe this is the problem with Judas.

He got disillusioned. Things are not looking good. He hung in there for three years.

Even after John the Baptist has already been killed. And Jesus is preaching. He hung in there all the way to the end.

If he had just gone a little bit farther. It is always too soon to quit. He would have made it.

But he is through in the hat. Sold Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. You know deep spiritual fruit usually takes time.

A lot of time. How long does it take to grow a wheat? Give it a week. Mine is nothing about a week.

Give it a day. And it will grow. But God is growing you.

You young people. God is growing you. Into spiritual giants.

So. You are going to go through all of these. Dirty D's.

Disillusionment. And all of this. Let me quote you a little something here.

From T. Austin Sparks. You might want to read this. The blessedness of the undefended.

Barred the title. Hope you didn't mind. In spiritual work.

When results are least visible. They are often most real. The worker who will go on without the stimulus of outward success.

There is John in prison. Will continue his witness even when he is met by cold indifference. Who will carry out Christ's work in the unfailing inspiration of knowing that it is his work.

John. It's my deal. Don't get offended.

It's his work. Is the one who gets the blessedness of the undefended. Isn't that good? The worker who will go out without the stimulus of outward success.

Who will continue his witness even when he is met by cold indifference. Who will carry out Christ's work in the unfailing inspiration of knowing that it is his work. Is the one who gets the blessedness of the undefended.

Right there in the... John. You have done your job well. But don't get offended with the last little bit.

Hang in there. So, disillusionment. That's a hard one.

That's a hard one. Mary and Martha. They got disillusioned there.

Some of you may not have heard this story and I've told it. I don't know, umpteen times. But I'm going to tell it for those of you who are new so at least you hear it.

But when I wanted to go to Israel. I wanted to go bad. I don't know when I started but I wanted to go.

And in 1967. 66. No, 67.

All my friends got to go. And I was last on the list. I was probably late to sign up.

Don't be late. Be on time. But anyway, I got cut off.

And they all got to go to Israel. All my buddies. You know, they can go down there and have a great time.

And they go flying off into the wild blue yonder. We were in the Air Force. Some of them were Army guys there.

And so I got to stay home. So one year later. I've come back off the... I was in... We were on a tugboat.

We went to the Greek island of Patmos and a few other islands. And I'm sitting on my bunk with my suitcase. I have leave papers with enough leave.

I have some money. And I was just disillusioned. I said, Lord, I'm leaving in about 30 days.

And I want to go to Israel. And I'm not kidding you. The Lord spoke in my heart and said, get up.

And go over to the terminal. So I grabbed my bag. I walked down three flights of stairs.

I walked across the base over there carrying my bag to the terminal, walked in. And I said, you guys got any planes going anywhere? You know, you start off, you're out in the boondocks, basically. He said, yeah, we got one going in 15 minutes to Athens.

Okay, where I was in western Turkey, Athens was the opposite direction. But if you wanted to go anywhere, you went over to Athens. I said, put me on it.

So I hopped on that thing in 15 minutes. And I flew over to Athens. And I walked into the terminal there.

And I said, you guys got any planes going to Israel? I'm about out of time. And they said, yeah, we got one a week that goes to Israel. And it went yesterday.

And my disillusionment still, oh, my. So I went around to the other side of the runway, over to the civilian side. Went in there.

And I said, do you guys have any planes go to Israel? They said, we got one a week. It goes in three hours. And we got one seat.

I feel led to take it. And I bought that seat. I rushed back around, got my visa stamped over there and rushed back.

It takes like 45 minutes on the bus trip to go around. And so that's how I got there. But I had to obey.

I had to get up. And I had to walk by faith. Or my disillusionment would conquer me.

Now, let me give you one more point. He was discipling John and discipling us to basically believe in him. And this last one is doubt.

Not to doubt. Not to doubt. And these points, I hope I didn't miss one for you, of disappointment.

They all go together. You notice that? Doubt, darkness, delay, desolation, difficulty, discontentment or discomfort. Disillusionment and doubt.

You can put them all in the same shell. They're all in the same family. Unbelief.

And so basically when Jesus is discipling his disciples, he's discipling them to not be unbelieving believers. But to be believing believers. And not to doubt.

And look at his techniques. Look at what he does with them. All the different things.

It's really a fascinating study just to go through and see how Jesus disciplined his disciples. It's a fascinating study. But he's doing it with you and me.

And so he's saying, don't doubt. He's discipling them to believe. When circumstances say impossible, he says, don't doubt.

He said, look in my dictionary. You see the word doubt? I mean, you see the word impossible? Well, no, God, that word's not. He said, that's not in my vocabulary.

I'm God. John, if you are locked up in a prison, don't get offended with me. If you are locked up in a prison, don't get offended with me.

I forgot to turn this mic on. If you are locked up in something, don't get offended. If you have a disappointment, don't get offended with your brother or your sister.

Because really, we get offended with God. Because he's sovereign. And he might send somebody like me along to irritate you and to irk you.

Who might make a lot of mistakes and not do things right. And all these things. But it's God.

He's working. He's working. Pray and hide.

One of those giants in prayer. And I told you this story. He was at a Keswick convention.

And they brought him up from India. Nobody up there had heard about him much. But the man that got him there knew that he was a giant in the Lord.

Greatly used of God. Pray and hide. And so when he'd come up to the Keswick convention, he comes in.

And they have him up to speak. And he wasn't a real great speaker. And so he sort of starts stumbling along.

I was doing that one time. I was sort of stumbling along when I was starting off. And I was doing that because God had told me that morning I was going to take a beating that day.

And I'm thinking, Lord, I want to be careful what I say. So I started going. And somebody jumped up and started yelling at me.

Oh! But so he starts off. And he starts off sort of slow and sort of bummed along. And a lady jumped up, stood up, and started singing.

Because he was not doing a very good job getting started. He was sort of slow. And she started singing.

And somebody else joined her. And somebody else joined. And then pretty soon, they're singing.

And they sang him down off the platform. He could have went anywhere in India and that part of the world. And they would have said, Oh, wow! John Hyde is here.

The man of God. The man of God was offensive to her. He was offensive to her.

And she took it upon herself to start something. And it took off. And they sang him down.

He went back in the back. And the man that got him there came back there and he said, Oh, Brother Hyde, I'm so sorry for what they did to you. And he turned around and his face was beaming like a light bulb.

He said, It's the Lord. Let Him do what He wants. Let Him do as seemeth Him good.

Let Him do as seemeth Him good. We don't dare get offended with God. We just don't dare do it.

And here's the poem. Here's the poem that Madam Gunion wrote as she's in that prison. Her crime was loving Jesus.

And the priest hated her. They would interrogate her. They didn't know what to do with her.

They never did kill her. But they'd throw her in prison and torture and all this. And her crime was she just loved Jesus.

She had been born again inside this corrupt system full of false doctrine and idolatry. And here's the little poem she wrote. A little bird am I, shut from the fields of air.

Yet in my cage I sit and sing to Him who placed me there. Well pleased a prisoner to be, because my God it pleases Thee. Nought have I else to do, I sing the whole day long, and He whom most I love to please doth listen to my song.

He caught and bound my wandering wing, but still He bends to hear me sing. My cage confines me round, abroad I cannot fly, but though my wing is closely bound, my heart's at liberty. My prison walls cannot control the flight, the freedom of the soul.

Oh it's good to soar these boats and bars above to Him whose purpose I adore, whose providence I love. And in Thy mighty will to find the joy, the freedom of the mind. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

Let's pray. Oh Father, forgive us for getting a little irritated, or highly agitated, or just flat out angry at Your providence. And I pray that You would build into us through this message today, strength for tomorrow, and maybe even today, to recognize that You are God.

And though we be in a prison, like John the Baptist, shut in, asking a question, I'm sure that when he got the message back, he was just filled with peace and joy. And he sat there in that prison, totally in love with God. And that You would take this message as my prayer and challenge us to the bottom of our soul to get all our joy in Jesus and to let nothing offend us.

We need this. I need this. We need Your grace.

We need Your strength. We thank You that You have provided all that we need through Christ. And Lord, if there's been somebody that's listened to this and realizes that their life is focused on themselves, and they're highly irritated, they have doubts, they live in the darkness, they live in fear, and all kinds of things.

I pray that You would show them that there's an easier way, that they need to surrender their heart to Christ, trust Him with their sins, and make that commitment of their soul into Your hands. And Lord, as Christians, Lord, if You've nailed our hide to the wall today about some specific thing, thank You that You love us enough to send a message into our prison and to tell us not to be offended with You. Thank You

for speaking.

Thank You for the opportunity to worship You and to serve You. And maybe we only have one more day. Maybe we only have one more year.

We don't know how much time, but may we do it in a way that we reflect the reality and the presence of God and the fact that we love You with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, with all our strength, and we're not offended with Your ways. Thank You for the Word. Thank You for the opportunity to sing songs and to worship You.

In Jesus' name, amen. Thank you.

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