

Call to Obedience #383
 PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
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I Have Been Hurt By The Church, Therefore...

By Pastor Reimar A. C. Schultze

The devil loves this statement but Jesus is grieved by it. The devil likes for everyone to be hurt by the church. He will do everything to make it happen to you. If you harbor hurt feelings you do the devil a favor, you are relinquishing your place in the Army of God. And once he has helped you to come to this miserable state he will do all he can to keep you there. He will help you to justify yourself for being hurt. He will find people who support you in justifying yourself. Then the devil will introduce you to a world of self-pity, anger, resentment, criticism, slander and self-assertion. This is not the kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

"I have been hurt by the church, therefore I will do such and such," is a *retaliatory statement*, leading to a retaliatory attitude and retaliatory actions. All the decisions of the offended person once rooted in "not I but Christ" now become rooted in a "not Christ but I."

The Greek word from which we get our English word "offended" (having our feelings hurt) is *skandalon*. Do we see a connection here? When you are offended, you are scandalized and become a scandal to the church and your God. Because you have lost the joy of the Lord and the light of Jesus, you will now become a disappointment to your spouse, your children, your parents your neighbors and the church as well. And if you think that once you leave the church to go to another one, or that quitting church altogether will be the end of hurt feelings, you are deceived. There will be non-church people who will say or do things to you that will scandalize you. **The problem of your hurt feelings is not with others, it is with you.**

You are scandalized because there's something within you that responds to the devil. Jesus said: *Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me* (John 14:30). By this, Jesus means that there's nothing in me for the devil to do anything with, nothing in me that belongs to the devil to give him a foothold. Jesus did not have carnality. There was no pride in Him. When He came from heaven He emptied himself of everything that He was. He took on the form of a servant.

We are born with carnality, but Jesus gave us a cure for our carnality. He gave us the cross. We need to die in order to live. Jesus said: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit* (John 12:24). When we crucify the Self-life, the old man dies and pride that is the cause of every offence dies with him.

A dead man cannot be offended. This is what Eliphaz meant when he said, that the saint is in league with the stones. You can kick a stone, you can cover it with filth,

you can freeze it, you can put it in the fire, no matter what you do with it will not react. Likewise, a saint does not respond to whatever people throw at him or say to him. Is this life really possible? Ask the apostle Paul. Here is his answer: *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me* (Gal. 2:20). Marvelous! That is real Christianity. If you don't have that you have not been baptized by the Holy Spirit. It is only when we are empty of Self that we can be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Paul said of the Corinthians that they *were yet carnal* (1 Cor. 3:3). They had been carnal too long. Paul said, to be *carnally minded is death*. After we are born again, we need to be sanctified. The first step towards sanctification is the slaying of the old man. **Again, if you are carnal you will not only be offended at church but whenever and wherever someone steps on your self esteem.**

Church people called Jesus a drunkard and a glutton. Church people called Him deceiver, rebel, the son of the devil. He was mocked and spat upon. Did He have hurt feelings? Was He offended? Did He call for a pity party? Did He ask for sympathy? Was He justified to say, "I have been hurt by the church, therefore...?" Yes, He was justified, but what did He do? He wore the crown the world gave Him, He went to the cross the religious leaders wanted for Him, and He let God slay Him (Is.53:4). *When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously* (1Pet. 2:23). Hanging on the cross He said of those who put Him there: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*. He loved the church, He gave himself to her despite all her spots, blemishes and wrinkles and He continues to do so to this day. My friend, **the problem of hurt feelings is never their problem but always your problem**, a problem of your disconnectedness with God. You need Christ in you, the Hope of glory.

Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them (Ps.119:165). Do you notice the word *nothing*? If Joseph had been offendable he would never have made it from the pit to the palace. To get to your palace you have to get what Joseph had (see Gen. 39-41). Peter was not offended when Jesus said to him, *Get thee behind me, Satan*. (Matt. 16:23) He stuck with Jesus and because he did he saw the glorified Christ! The Syrophenician woman was not offended when Jesus called her a dog. She kept right on "barking" until she had what she wanted (Mark 7:26-30). This was all before Pentecost. How much more do we have in the Holy Spirit to be "offense-proof?"

Although Jesus was never offended, He offended almost everyone. Don't dream about getting to the point where you don't offend anyone anymore. It will wear you out and you will never succeed in it. The closer you walk with God the more people you will offend. Noah offended the whole world. The prophets offended nations. Jesus offended His family (Matt. 11:57), the religious leaders (15:12) and nearly everyone else (Mark 6:13). **If your eye is on trying not to offend people, then your eye is not on Jesus.** *You cannot serve two masters.* You have to keep your eyes on Jesus. *The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light... Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets* (Matt. 6:22, Luke 6:26). Don't try to be a man-pleaser, be a God-pleaser.

Let me now list a few things that are the fruits of an offended life.

1. An offended person lives in a world of negatives.
2. An offended person has given up his pursuit of spiritual maturity.
3. An offended person sees only the speck in his brother's eye and not the log in his own eye (Matt. 7:3).
4. An offended person is defeated and has rejected the power of God unto salvation.

What is it that those with hurt feelings want from us?

1. They want us to help them justify their actions.
2. They want us to sympathize with them. That is, they want us to feel their pain.

What is it that those with hurt feelings need for us to give them?

1. Instead of sympathy we need to give them compassion and instructions for they are stray sheep. *Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him... he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death* (James 5:19, 20). If we sympathize with people who have been offended we make them feel that their problem is with others and not with them. We don't get to the root problem.
2. We need to help them restore their relationship with God and man.
3. We need to love them with the divine love of God and not the permissive love of man.

Having said all these things, we must remember that not being offended does not mean that we are insensitive to the negatives around us. We must make a distinction between a disappointment and an offense. A disappointment is like a bump in the road; we notice it but we keep going. An offense is like hitting a pothole in the road; the tire goes flat, the rim is bent, and we call a wrecker and start focusing on the problem. We stop going. Jesus is disappointed with nearly all of mankind, but He's not offended with any of us. You need not be offended.

Friend, there is a place of healing, of cleansing from all your hurts, a place of quiet rest near to the heart of God. Flee there and begin a new day with love for all mankind.

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