

**Joke:** A guy walks into a bar with his dog. The bartender says, "We don't allow animals here. You're going to have to leave your dog outside." The guy replies, "No, you don't understand. My dog can talk." Amused, the bartender tells the man that's ridiculous and to leave his dog outside.

The guy says, "Fine, let me prove it to you." He turns to his dog and asks, "What does sandpaper feel like?" The dog goes "Ruff, ruff." The bartender says, "That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard in my life. That is just a normal dog. Now please put him outside, like I asked you to."

The guy goes, "No, wait! I promise, he really can talk." He turns to the dog and says, "What's on top of a house?" The dog goes, "Roof! Roof!" The bartender, fed up, tries to push the man out the door, but before he can, the man says, "Really! He can! He can speak! Just one more chance? Please?"

The now-irritated bartender says, "Fine. Just one more. But if he's just making normal dog noises, you have to leave." "Okay, okay, okay," says the man, turning once again to the dog. "Alright boy," he says. "Who was the greatest baseball player of all time?" "Ruth, ruth!" replies the dog. "That's it," says the bartender. "You're obviously crazy. Get out or I'm calling the cops."

As the man and the dog are standing outside on the sidewalk, the dog looks at the man and says, "Well, might've been DiMaggio."

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Altar Ego "My Right to be Offended"

We are in the third week of the series called "Altar Ego," based on book, Altar Ego, Becoming Who God Says You Are. By Craig Groeshel

Altar, ALTAR because throughout Old Testament history the altar has been a place where the people of God would come and make a sacrifice to God, or lay down something that was important to them.

And Ego, is what we think about ourselves. Our belief system about ourselves.

So, what I'm wanting to do in this series is each week sacrifice a characteristic that maybe we have held unto, and lay aside who we think we are so we can become who God says we are.

In the first week, we talked about our feelings of inadequacy and laying it aside so we could become who God says we are.

Last week we talked about laying down our need for control. Rather it be our control of people or circumstances. The truth is there are somethings that are simply out of our control.

Today, I want to talk about laying down our right to be offended because truth is we live in a culture where it seems to me that people get offended about the smallest of things.

We have schools changing their mascot they have had for years. NFL teams changing their names. And people needing to worry about what pronoun to use.

By the way my pronouns, are good looking, and intelligent.

In J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Boromir says concerning the one ring, "Is it not a strange fate that we should suffer so much fear and doubt for so small a thing?"

A computer tech told a story that one time he had a customer get upset with him over the use of the word icon. The customer said it had religious implications and insisted that he call the Windows icons little picture things. True story.

You never know what people will choose to be offended by.

If you can be offended by a cartoon, a lady on a syrup bottle, or a man on a rice box. . . maybe there's a different problem.

But if I'm being honest, for years, I was very easily offended.

And the truth is it was often, by some of the smallest and most insignificant things. Maybe you can relate.

I know some that can get so offended when driving in traffic, maybe you know someone like that, the person that you let merge in front, and they don't give a thank you wave, a thumbs up, nothing. And so you think "You could still be stuck in traffic right now if it wasn't for my grace and mercy."

You couldn't even get me a nod, or wave of thanks. . You jerk.

Some get offended when a friend doesn't respond to a text.

Or you're on messenger or your your texting app and you contact someone from there, and you see those bubbles that show you they are typing, but a response never comes. . Doesn't that just tick you off?

You can get offended just by looking at Facebook, what people post, how often they post, if they comment on your friends' post, but not on yours. That's not at all right, is it? If they unfollow you, that is the unforgivable sin in the social media world. But we live in an age of people finding it so quick and easy to be offended.

I recently was trying to purchase something through Facebook marketplace. I sent out a couple when can we meet up and let me see the item requests. And what did I get. . .no response. It took three different people until I found one that even responded. And then he even brought it my way from Comstock park. At a better price.

And listen church, if you're on a continuous search to be offended, you will not be disappointed. I can guarantee you success. It's easy to find the opportunities.

The word offend is translated from the Greek word Skandalon and it means to trap or bait. It's like the movable stick or trigger of a trap.

It is where we get our English word scandal from.

And the enemy would love for you to walk this life being offended. Trapped into thinking you have a right to be because of what has happened to you, or someone you love.

I don't know about you, but I have never found myself saying, "Oh, I am so much better because I am bitter. Or my relationships are stronger because I'm carrying a grudge."

I love what Proverbs chapter 19 tells us. . .

Proverbs 19:11 (NIV) - <sup>11</sup> A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense.

It's what? It's to his glory to overlook an offense.

We live in a world that's quick to judge, quick to call a foul, quick to be offended, and very slow to overlook an offense.

Now let me pause here to say this, to overlook something doesn't mean to pretend like it never happened; to overlook it is more like a form of forgiveness.

Luke 17:1 (KJV 1900): Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!

It's what? Impossible but that offences will come. Things will happen. Events will take place, people will say things, there will be countless opportunities to be offended.

To overlook an offense, you need to understand that's not the same thing as pretending like it didn't happen. To overlook an offense is a conscious decision to just let it go.

It's saying I'm not going to carry this and wake up three weeks later and decide that it's tearing me up, I can't sleep because I go to bed thinking how upset and offended I am.

It's an in-the-moment decision to stay above the offense, to forgive it right now, not tomorrow, not next week, not next year.

The Hebrew word that's translated as overlook is the word Avor, and what it means is to pass over.

In other words, instead of focusing on the offense, replaying the offense, rehearsing the offense, going over and over it in mind what I could have said and should have said, and will say next time I'm in front of that person, instead what we do is we get above it, we pass over it, we rise above the offense because we have a more important calling.

My purpose lifts me. The devil wants to lower me into the offenses that would drag me down, but because my God has a higher calling on my life, because I'm an ambassador for Christ, because your an ambassador for Christ we rise above it.

Listen church I wish I could tell you I've always done that. God knows that just isn't true. But we must learn to let it pass over.

I choose forgiveness right now. I'm choosing to let this go. I'm not going to let this weigh me down and steal my joy. This isn't going distract me from my purpose. In the moment, I'm deciding. It's to my glory, and it honors God to rise above it.

Someone makes a snarky comment on your social media, instead of getting upset, I'm not letting that weigh me down. By the way yiu do know you can just scroll by all of the junk right?

It may take a minute or two, but I choose to make sure that the sun doesn't go down on my bitterness.

Wisdom, it yields patience. I've got a more important calling and that is to love. My calling is to represent Jesus. I refuse to let the enemy slow me down in that mission.

I believe this is one of the most divisive, destructive tools of the enemy. And in our culture today, people get offended by everything.

Imagine Jesus getting off mission because he was offended.

"You disciples I bring you out here to pray with me and what do you do? You fall asleep. I can't believe I choose you guys, calm the storm, can't do it because I go so distracted by your lack of concern."

"You Pharisees, I saw that one over there, he was giving me a dirty look, the evil eye, and he hurt my feelings. I'm just not in the mood to do any miracles today, he was so rude."

No, Jesus didn't have time to be sweat the small stuff he had to show His compassion, His love, everything He did was all about His love for humanity.

Ephesians 4:2 (NLT): Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.

Because of what? Your love. . .

Proverbs 17:9 says this. . .

Proverbs 17:9 (NIV) - <sup>9</sup> Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.

What does love do? Love gives the benefit of the doubt, love chooses to believe the best, love trusts the other person, believes the best in the other person.

Isn't it interesting how often we don't give others the benefit of the doubt? We want it. . .but what do we do? We judge others by their actions but we judge ourselves by our intentions.

it's "Well, look what they did. And then for us it's "But I intended to."

You should give me the benefit of the doubt, but I don't want to give you the benefit of the doubt.

It's funny how we will say, you should know me, you know my heart, you know what I'm like. I would never do that. And yet at the same time we attribute someone else's actions to their character.

You know what I'm talking about, if I did something to disappoint you, there's a reason.

Come on, man, give me a break, you know me, you know my heart. If someone else does something to disappoint me though, it's very tempting to attribute their action to their character.

How inconsiderate. That was just rude. Well, she just needs Jesus to save her soul.

It's a misinterpretation, and we do it all too often.

You walk into the store and your kid throws a fit. There's a reason, right? Your kid didn't get a nap today. Hasn't had their snack, it's been a hard day, you need to give me some grace.



But when it is someone else's kid that throws a fit, we look like we have never seen such an incredible bad parent, their child must have a demon or something.

Make allowances, give the benefit of the doubt for others because of your love.

Because God loves you, because Christ forgave you, because there's grace for you, have grace for others, make allowances because of your love.

Hear this church not everything is about you.

The driver cuts you off in traffic, you go to work and find your co-worker in a bad mood. You need to stop to think just maybe they are having a bad day, just maybe they are fighting a battle of their own that you don't know anything about.

There are times however. . .(talk about the truck on our trip)

You want others to give you the benefit of the doubt, and so you need to do the same for them.

Why, because of your love?

So, as a follower of Christ, here's what I want. I don't want to be easily offended. I want to have a soft heart and a patient spirit and give people the benefit of the doubt.

Proverbs 10:12 (NLT): Hatred stirs up quarrels, but love makes up for all offenses.

I'm sure you have heard the phrase, hurt people hurt people.

If you have find a wounded animal that's cornered, what does it do? That animal just defends itself because it's wounded and threatened. And that's what wounded people do.

So, instead of just jumping on the get offended bandwagon take a moment and say, "I wonder what they're going through that they would act that way?" "I wonder how I can pray for them?"

And rather than be offended by them, because of my love I can give them the benefit of the doubt.

Love elevates me. And my purpose in Christ lifts me.

There's always a choice, so choose love.

We assume the best, even if they are angry and mean and hateful. Well, maybe they are going through something. So, instead of choosing to be offended by, I need to have compassion for.

I'm forgiving in the moment.

We're called to stay above it and we are called to love through it. That's what we do as followers of Christ.

Don't get in on those social media battles, don't get offended by which politics they like, and get all hateful. Don't defend your theology with anger and hatred. Where's the fruit of the Spirit in that?

Galatians 5:22–23 (NIV): But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

We're called to love. When I'm tempted to be offended, to be angry, to be hurt, to be self-righteous, to gather with others who are equally offended, I can't attend church because I was so offended by the church. You want to know something, me too. . .But I'm so over that.

I've got a purpose; I've got a calling. I don't know about you, but I've done so many things to offend the heart of God, but His Grace was sufficient for me, and the grace that He's shown me is the same grace that I need to show others.

I'll stand up for truth, but I will stand up for the truth in love.

You won't see me holding up some sign on the corner saying how much God hates this lifestyle or that. Listen I will not condone sin, I still believe God has called us to live different as followers of Jesus, then those that don't know Jesus. I will not compromise the message. But I will love people enough to draw them to God's love and grace.

Romans 2:4 (NIV) - <sup>4</sup> Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?

It's to your glory to overlook an offense.

The second thing, Is because of the grace given to me in Christ, I will not label others.

Can you imagine if God labeled us?

Think about that. If God took isolated events from different seasons in our lives and labeled us because of the way we behaved.

Before I was a Christian, I used to steal and lie and you may find this hard to believe but I cheated on a few tests in school. Shhh, don't tell my teachers I don't think they know.

Could you imagine God labeling me, Potter's House here's your pastor the lying, cheating, thief.

He doesn't do that. He forgives and gives us second, third, and so many more chances.

And yet we, so often, take one or two moments in a person's life and label them based on that place in time when their behavior, or their response was less than Godly.

"Well, he's nothing but a jerk." "Well, she's a "this." "And "he's a that." And we label people permanently over a temporary lapse of not so good judgment on their part.

So, because of the grace Christ has given to me, I will not label others. I will show them the grace I have received.

I'm going to give others the benefit of the doubt. Because of the grace that Christ has extended me, I'm not going to label others.

And the last one and this is a big one, because of the grace Christ has given me, I will forgive as I've been forgiven.

Colossians 3:13–14 (NLT): Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. 14 Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.

Wait what did that say? Forgive anyone who offends you.

Why? Because the Lord forgave you.

And maybe your thinking Ok, I get it. . .someone cuts me off in traffic, I can forgive them. I can do that. Someone forgets to say, "thank you", I'll overlook that as well."

But God doesn't mean forgive those big offenses does he?

Surely, I'm justified in carrying bitterness with the big things that got me offended.

Ephesians 4:31–32 (NLT): Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. 32 Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

That's how we can forgive those small, they cut me off in traffic offenses, and even those big ones that have the potential to really get you angry, bitter, and hurt.

We do realize, that Christ has forgiven you right?

Maybe you didn't do something as big as that person did to you or your family. But God still forgave you.

So, whenever someone's unnecessarily harsh, what we need to try and tell ourselves is, I wonder what they're going through because I know hurt people tend to hurt people.

So instead of being offended by, I want to have compassion for them. Instead of being offended by what they did or how they acted or what they didn't do, I want to try to make allowances because of the love that Christ has placed in my heart.

If you put accusations in the gap, you're always going to be offended, you're always going to carry a grudge.

We looked at Proverbs 19:11 remember it. . .

Proverbs 19:11 (NIV) - <sup>11</sup> A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense.

It is to one's glory to overlook an offense. It's God-honoring to overlook an offense.

Church realize that the calling ahead of you is greater than the offense that you choose to leave behind.

When you think about how God forgives. If you go back to the Old Testament times, how would people be forgiven?

They would take an innocent animal and they would sacrifice the animal at the altar. And with the shedding of the blood of that animal, they would be forgiven, just for a year mind you, but they were forgiven.

There's a story about the passover when they would actually take the blood of a lamb and put it on their doorpost, top and side, and it would run down the doorpost.

And there hidden in the Old Testament, was a foreshadowing of what the Cross of Jesus would do. In that Old Testament story as the lamb's blood would be shed and the death angel would come by, then what? It would pass over the house that was covered by the blood of the lamb.

Then along comes Jesus, the perfect lamb of God who shed His blood that not just removes our sin just for a year, but God now passes over and forgives our sins once and for all.

Not because of what we've done, but because of what Christ did.

Hebrews 9:22 (NIV): In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

And watch this. . .verse 24

Hebrews 9:24–26 (NIV): For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. 25 Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. 26 Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

And what we need to understand, and when we understand how we've been forgiven, we can acknowledge hurt people hurt people. But forgiven people forgive people.

Luke 7:47 (NIV): Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.”

Because, it's not about us, it's all about him. I don't have a right to be offended, I'm not justified in my anger, and it's not all about me winning.

Because of what Christ did for me, I can give people the benefit of the doubt. And not label others because I was never labeled.

I'm righteous by new birth and not by behavior. And again church we need to walk in that righteousness. I believe when you have truly come to Jesus you will walk worthy of that calling. Your new heart loves what He loves.

But because of what Christ did for me, I can forgive others as I've been forgiven. It doesn't mean it's easy but it's right.

1 Peter 4:8 (NIV) - <sup>8</sup> Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

Father, we pray today that your spirit would bring healing in our lives and where there have been offenses bring forgiveness.

God, supernaturally give us the ability to forgive as we've been forgiven. Even when we don't want to and don't believe we can. God, because of your grace and through your power, I can do all things. God, set us free. Help us to let it go.

Maybe someone here, or listening online, you are carrying a burden of guilt; you have done something you're ashamed of or that you're embarrassed by. And you wonder if what you have done offended God so much that you don't know he can overlook it.

Understand, God has never overlooked sin. Ever.

Remember without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

And Jesus, the Lamb of God, became sin for us.

But here is the good news of the gospel. . .



Hebrews 10:17–18 (TPT): And then he says, “I will not ever again remember their sins and lawless deeds!” 18 So if our sins have been forgiven and forgotten, why would we ever need to offer another sacrifice for sin?

2 Corinthians 5:19–21 (NLT): For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. 20 So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, “Come back to God!” 21 For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

God didn’t overlook sin, He sent Jesus to take our place for our sin.

When you come to God, He will no longer hold your sins against you. His blood covers your sin, he passes over you, he remembers your sins no more. You become a brand new creation.

Next time the devil tries to pull you down, keep you offended, you say, Not today, by the power of Jesus, His power lifts me, his grace sustains me, His love allows me to rise above all that other stuff.

And I’m choosing to forgive it, right now not next week. For the glory of God, we have more important things to do. And it’s for my glory to overlook an offense.