

## Luke 17:1-10; More Mustard Seed Examples

**Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! <sup>2</sup>It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.**

### Verses for the offender

For a long time I didn't really understand this. Jesus is saying, you are going to be offended, sooner or later it will happen.

There are consequences however, for those who do the offending. Let's discuss what it means here to offend. The Greek interpretation of offend means to put a stumbling block or impediment in the way to cause another to fall; to cause someone to stop trusting in God; to entice someone to sin, etc.

David Guzik gives a couple examples such as giving out false council or leading someone to sin through your liberty (Romans 16:17).

So it appears that this is no ordinary offense. It makes sense the importance here, if Christ will leave the 99 to save the one and if God is not willing that any should perish, it seems logical there is a serious consequence if we cause others to fall short of His glory.

Be careful out there. Bringing glory to God by following the steps will keep you on safe ground.

**<sup>3</sup>Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. <sup>4</sup>And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.**

### Verses for the offended

After dealing with the offender, Jesus gives instructions on how we should respond when we are offended or someone sins against us. We should be careful or take heed that we respond the right way.

If another believer offends us, we should let them know. Be careful, the purpose of letting them know should be with the intent of helping them to understand and repent; perhaps not to get revenge on our part.

If the brother repents, then we are obligated to forgive them.....even if they offend us 7 times and repent each time, we are then supposed to still forgive them.

Come on and let's be for real....in the world, you might get two or three times to offend at best....seven times, you might start swinging on someone. This is not something the world teaches...but instead of showing weakness, it shows considerable strength.....supernatural strength!

**<sup>5</sup> And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.**

There may be different opinions on why the disciples responded this way, but putting myself in the story, I can easily find myself making the same statement....Lord if you want me to do this, which is next to impossible and unheard of, you are going to have to increase our faith. I just don't have that kind of faith and spiritual maturity to be able to pull off forgiving someone who has offended me seven times in one day.....seven times over two year period might be pushing it.

It seems like a sincere and quite logical request as they must have recognized, their current level of faith was inadequate to perform this task.

**<sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.**

Jesus response reveals that while the apostles might have been logical, they missed the spiritual application. They didn't need greater faith to pull this off. Instead they just needed to take a small amount of faith and make sure it is planted in the right source. Only a little bit of faith is needed.

Now the next part used to confuse me because people typically don't defy nature and just through the power of the tongue cause a tree to be transplanted to another location. **Matthew Henry clears this up by indicating this was probably a proverbial expression to indicate that nothing is impossible with God.**

So, it was probably not intended to literally move a tree, it was probably meant to show them that with just a little faith, the impossible or unlikely can happen.

This is important because you don't have to be a super saint or have been a Christian for 20 years in order to do the impossible. Success starts with the small seed of faith. I don't believe that we are to stay of this level of faith. Just as a mustard seed can grow larger into a great tree, so too our faith should increase in the same manner.

**<sup>7</sup> But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? <sup>8</sup> And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?**

**<sup>9</sup> Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. <sup>10</sup> So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.**

Next, Jesus provides another natural example to reveal a spiritual application. The example and question is, if you have someone working for you and they did a portion of work but they still have work they need to finish, do you tell them don't worry about the rest of the work, you can knock off for today? The answer probably not. It is much more likely that you will say to them when you finish all of



the work assigned for today, you can knock off and relax. Basically, you don't expect to be paid until you have finished.

Jesus goes further with the example by asking another question, would you generally thank the worker for doing what they were being paid for or supposed to do? Probably not. I didn't thank my kids for doing their homework, I didn't thank my employees each for putting in eight hours of work. It was expected.

So likewise, when we as His servants have done everything we are supposed to, we should not become prideful or think that God owes us something special. Instead, serving Him in the right mind is the least we can do based upon all that He has done for us. It is His pleasure before our own.....which step is that?

We still get a reward for being faithful servants.

So, let's think of why Jesus felt the need to address this? Put yourself in the story.

- We need to have the right attitude of service.
- Our success in doing some work for God can lead to our downfall through pride and self-righteousness.
- If I forgive someone two times in the same day, I might expect that this is good enough and that I'm deserving of some special recognition because I've done what I was asked to do.
- I will get a reward, but I don't want my pride to slip in or act like God owes me something special because of the work I'm doing.
  - I know that He promises to bless, I know that there is a great reward and inheritance reserved for me.....but I don't want to have the wrong attitude about His grace and mercy towards me.

How has this helped me? It has just become a lot easier for me to forgive others.

Example, the reasonable service example from my wife.....making the bed is the least I could do.....it is my reasonable service.

Will Smith/Chris Rock Case Study

Category	Will Smith	Chris Rock
Kick-off	Offended	Offender – initial success
First Response	Violence, flesh, pride	Shock, surprise, hurt
Result	Offender – initial success	Offended
First Response	Justification to support actions	Some justification, sorrow, played it off
Result	Judgement, loss, negative impact on others	Gain – getting paid, support
Challenges	Impact on others, doubling down, world view	Hurt pride, sting that stays with you, world view

Gospel solution – 7 steps	Humility leads to repent and restoration	Humility leading to healing
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When God is involved.....the slap turns into a ministry opportunity.

Based upon these scriptures, how should the offender, offended respond? How would you handle this situation before Christ; after Christ?

#### Case Study Summary

- Will Smith got played. Who played him?
  - The devil, his emotions, pride of life
- It's all about perspective. There are several different perspectives from this. There is a Black perspective in particular. There is some element of truth in these different viewpoints, however, I've found them to be a distraction from the viewpoint that is most important.....God's perspective!
  - God's perspective is the viewpoint we need to see. From His perspective the Will Smith slap is a missed opportunity. To be specific, a missed ministry opportunity.
- One class member suggested, what would have happened if instead of a slap, Will Smith simply walked up calmly and explained to Chris Rock that the joke was offensive to his family due to his wife's condition. The question he had was, I wonder what would have happened then?
  - Everyone that I've posed this example to have each said it would have been a total game changer.
  - Chris Rock probably gets convicted and humbled, probably repents, and gets ministered to.
  - This huge opportunity was missed. This is the God perspective.
- What would Will Smith have needed to do to pull off the God perspective....follow the first 4 steps of the 7 step process. You cannot do ministry correctly without humility.
- We need to stopped getting played by the enemy....follow the steps.
- Our challenges are usually God trying to get our attention for more personal time with Him and/or is going to be used to help deliver and minister to others.
- If only Will had followed the steps, he would have protected what he gained, would not have suffered loss, would have become much greater and made God proud.