

Not being offended or causing offence (Quality: Good)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 April 1992

Preacher: Hitchcock, Raymond John (1934 - 2001)

[0 : 00] I will ask your attention to the gospel recorded by Matthew, the 11th chapter, and reading verse 6.

Matthew chapter 11 and verse 6. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in thee.

John Baptist had been imprisoned. Oh, how strange it must have seemed to this godly man to be thus cast into prison, having done nothing warrantable to be in prison.

And also being such a favorite character as he had been recently. Therefore, it is said of John Baptist that there is no greater prophet than he.

And how favored John the Baptist was in being he who should baptize our Lord Jesus Christ.

[1 : 39] Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. And yet, this same man who had preached so clearly and was now imprisoned, because he had reproved heretofore in a marital problem.

For he said it was not lawful for him to have married as he had. And so he is in prison. And how kind were the Lord Jesus' feelings towards him.

Go again and tell John. Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see, that the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor of the gospel preached to them, which no doubt would be an encouragement to him, cast into prison, awaiting.

He didn't know what would be the outcome of him being in prison, whether his life would be spared or no. And that is the great test of one's religion.

That when one is, like John Baptist, cast into prison or into some great difficulty, blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me, who shall so disbelieve, or who shall turn back.

[3 : 38] Or who shall deny me under the pressure of these things. Oh, how the soul is so tested as to the reality of that work that God has wrought in the heart.

It is rightly said that there is death upon the promises. And oh, how many places we have in Scripture which confirm that statement, that God has promised.

And then it looks as though it was impossible for the promise to be brought to fruition. And our faith must be tried.

It is the trial of your faith. And that, oh, what a blessing it is, although it's so uncomfortable to us. The trial of your faith, which is much more precious than gold, that perishes, the Scripture says.

The trial of your faith. Now, it is more precious than anything here below, that God is dealing with you and with me, and teaching us in this way.

- [5 : 05] Oh, the condescension of the Lord in this. To condescend, to so take us individually and teach us. As the Lord so taught Job, and took so much pains with Job, shall we say, speaking as men.
- Oh, how the Lord watched over Job in all his troubles, and delivered him. Yet the Lord did not see fit to deliver John the Baptist in the same way, but gave him a martyr's crown.
- For he denied not the truth, and was not offended, but in Christ. And truly blessed, blessed is he, blessed is John the Baptist, and that he was not offended, but was encouraged here by this, that the work of God was still continuing.
- And that these miracles were being performed. And not only the miracles, but the gospel was being preached to them.
- However wonderful miracles are, and they are indeed, yet not to be compared with the latter part, the poor of the gospel preached to them, that is even more important.
- [6 : 42] It is more important that our souls are cleansed and healed, that our souls are taught, that our souls are prepared for heaven.
- There are many ways, then, in which we can be offended. And as with our opening hymn, the question, will you go away?
- Will you also go away? But may the answer be with each of us, to whom else shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.
- Let there be no turning away from Zion's ways, whether we're young or middle-aged or older. It's a very sad thing to turn away from the truth, from where the gospel is preached. and to turn one's back upon the truth. And many do so turn away from the truth.
- [7 : 54] And if not arrested by God's mercy, oh, the solemn end, oh, the test of the life of God in the soul.
- Well, we have the greatest example of this in the Lord Jesus Christ himself. For the Lord Jesus Christ had been baptized in Jordan.
- An outward manifestation of the pleasure of the Father manifest upon him in the outpouring of the Spirit like a dove upon him.
- Presence of the Father realized by him. And then we read that immediately he was driven into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.
- And if you compare the gospels in this you will find that he was those forty days tempted and he fasted those forty days.
- [9 : 16] But the temptation was through those forty days in the wilderness withstanding the temptation of the wicked one.
- and realizing this dear friends that he had a human nature which was limited.
- Our captain stood the fiery test that him says and we shall stand through him. but see the temptation the temptations of Satan in the wilderness fasting forty days and all that terrible temptation to make those stones into bread and the devil well knew that the Lord Jesus Christ could do this as he could do all things and thus we believe that he can do all things as he resisted those strong temptations of Satan and this should encourage us when we are tempted of Satan we have this great example in the Lord Jesus Christ in the word of

God but then the Lord Jesus Christ said to those disciples later on he said all ye shall be offended at me this night and though we have the record of Peter and no doubt he was main in this denial of the Lord Jesus Christ we have the account of it but we read also that the disciples did the same as well in we read in the 35th verse of the 26th chapter Peter said unto him though I should die with thee yet will I not deny thee likewise also said all the disciples and again we read that all the disciples forsook him and fled but we read of that lapse of Peter a serious lapse and pride must come down if we think that we can stand we shall fall

Peter thought he could withstand but he must be shown that flesh and blood cannot stand here and we ourselves must be shown this that we have no strength at all in ourselves and if we rely upon ourselves we shall fall and falter and make some great mistake and return with broken bones like Peter did for he was offended he gave offence in his so sad and so complete denial for a time a complete denial of the Lord Jesus Christ I know not the man he said I do not know what you say but thou was with him thy speech bereath thee all how he was so put to and so sadly did offend but oh the mercy of the

[13 : 06] Lord Jesus Christ for he knew that Peter would fall like this and he said I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not and when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren oh how different the case with Peter and that of Judas we read also concerning Judas there was no prayer for Judas there was no return there was no repentance there was remorse but there was no repentance in Judas but lost eternally lost I read an article a while back and in this article they were seeking to propound this that even in some way Judas Iscariot might be saved and meaning this of course to make it that eventually a universal salvation that everyone some way or other would be saved for how solemn this is for we have a clear directive in the scriptures that that son of perdition is lost eternally lost there was no hope for Judas

Iscariot there's no hope for the wicked who remain in that wickedness to the end of their days and are not arrested by the almighty hand of God there is no hope for them eternally so and this is a solemn consideration blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me and it easy it only needed a maid did it for Peter to fall surely thou was with him you've been seen with the Lord Jesus Christ and with his disciples and how easy it is to so fall in some unguarded moment there's a wonderful mercy if we can be more like Daniel in the scriptures who would withstand stand and boldly to stand against this offence and we could call it apostasy there's a great danger in our day of apostasy of compromise with Rome and with all the erroneous teaching of the day which is undermining the if possible it cannot undermine the truth but oh to apostatize to really apostatize is to not be lost but then there are things which can cause us to offend there are many ways in which we can offend a blessed is he that does not offend and I was thinking of this and I thought of the word losses and we could begin there with losses for Christ's sake and then the o for obstacles that there are in the way and then sin and sufferings and the evil one the devil and then the slights of men and if we consider those headings losses for

Christ's sake what a mercy it is that if two ways meet we are willing if need be to lose for Christ's sake why the very fact of being in the house of God upon the Sabbath day say in the middle of spring or in the middle of summer why it's a sacrifice others are doing their own pleasure and going their own way unconcerned but how small that loss is on the Sabbath day compared with other losses and there are losses for Christ's sake the loss of reputation there may be the loss of position the loss of custom and with Paul the apostle the loss of all things for Christ's sake loss of money he said

I count them but dumb and dross that I may win Christ he was not offended in the gospel or offended with the gospel though it was so assailed I suppose the apostle Paul was assailed as much as any man in the profession which he made he suffered as much as any man in enduring hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ there are many obstacles in the way which could cause offense there's the obstacle of ourselves that stands in the way there's the obstacle of human reasoning that stands in the way not this way

Lord this way it is too hard this way it is too difficult how can I go this way the obstacle of self that stands in the way and it is opposed to faith it is to pose to the walk it is opposed to the walk by faith for we to walk by faith and not by our sight not by sight and we cannot see far ahead can we and the Lord intends that we cannot see far ahead in our path and it is not by our sight the sight of the natural understanding natural mind we in ourselves want to see ahead we want to see things settled in our lives we want to make sure there is an inheritance for our children if we have children and that is right an inheritance is for children's children but some might be so keen to make sure there is but the

[20 : 50] Lord can provide for them shall we mistrust he who can provide as he has provided for us and can he not make even a better situation for our children than ours is the Lord can do these things and we can stand in the way of the will of God you can say well we cannot go this way we are going the other way and in the other direction and the Lord will reprove us if we do he will chide us he will have us obey his will and way blessed is he who shall not be offended offended in this path of faith and walking by faith before the Lord it's good for us it's best for us to walk in this way to walk by faith before the

Lord and then there may be sufferings and reproaches for Christ's sake and surely this can cause offence and one can be offended here and this is where real strength is needed from above if sufferings and reproaches are in the past not for our own faults there's no nothing thankworthy in that as we read from the word of God but when you are when you suffer reproach for the name of Christ happy are you if sufferings must ensue to bear those sufferings and the reproaches of Christ and not be offended this is honouring to God all the reproach that came upon the

Lord Jesus Christ what an example there is in the word of God for us an example for those who fear God not to be offended the disciples at one time were offended at him they walked some walked no more with him the disciples went away this is a hard saying who can hear it there's sin I mentioned sin earlier before the suffering really but there's sin and this is an offence to the natural mind the knowledge of sin and it's not pleasant to our human nature to be told this that we are sinners in the sight of God it's an offence to some it's an offence to be told this but it's not an offence to those who fear

God who have been shown by the Holy Spirit that they are sinners in the sight of God it is then no offence oh what an offence the knowledge of sin is in this day in which we live if we reprove for some hateful sin himself or if they're shown that their path and their walk is wrong in the sight of God it gives an offence how many go away offended over marriage troubles and this point here needs speaking amongst us in the denomination sadly oh how sad it is marriage according to the scriptures is for life there is no remarriage allowed in scripture except on the death of one or the other and this can give an offence does give offence to some and you see a disobedience to the holy law of

God in these things and what do you see next that those people are no longer in the house of God they've gone away they've gone somewhere else and I know one in particular in this he said I'm not coming to your chapels because you will not marry me again he went to somewhere else where they would marry him again and it causes an offence it's the downward step and it is an irrecoverable step as to status in this life I do not say that such cannot be saved no I will not say that before the woman of Samaria is an example who had had five husbands and the one she now had was not her husband a difficult case indeed that salvation can come even to such but oh how sad these things are and many go away offended because of this because of sin because of outward sin some are offended but blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended and if one is caught in these terrible difficulties marital why one must then remain celibate and this is the word of

[27 : 13] God at whatever cost that may be and this is that which we must stand by in in our churches and then there's the evil one the tempter and he does all he can to cause these people to offend oh he's cast me down in the past he's had the better of me at a time for a time oh yes he tempted me to despair he put heaped upon all that he could upon me to overwhelm me and it overwhelmed the billows overwhelmed my soul oh let us not belittle the temptation of Satan the power of Satan or see the power of Satan in Job in those first few chapters in

Job particularly the power that was given to Job particularly the power that was given to Satan for a little season over the wind and fire the deep things and see the power of the evil one this could cause offense oh we need the Lord to withstand for us withstand Satan for even the archangel Michael dare not lift up a railing accusation against Satan but said the Lord rebuke thee or see the power of Satan there but blessed is the man that endures temptation or blessed is this person and the Lord has these words here blessed is he and in the sermon on the mount there are these blessings proclaimed these are blessed characters who stand and withstand in the evil day and there are many temptations many temptations come in the path of those who are young and you who are here who are young you realize this the great temptations there are and there are things in this day which were unheard of when we were younger

Satan is very busy what is the answer the answer is the word of God the scriptures are the answer the fear of God is the answer so did not I because of the fear of the Lord and the temptation is greater when the standards are lower as they are in this day in which we live it's easier to keep the law when the law is generally maintained but when there's a slackening of the law then an apathy can creep over us and it's easier then to break the law but the sting is in the tile still oh yes the sting is there there's guilt that comes after sin after the committing of sin of any form of evil why the conscience knows it's wrong and I believe there is a consciousness in everyone that realizes that it's wrong oh what a mercy it is when there is an inward conscience spiritual conscience within us which is the very life blood of the soul which resists which we're not give any allowance under temptation lest we be offended and turn away lest we cause offense also to others and oh what danger there is here not only if we sin ourselves but also be the means of others going astray or what evil

David brought upon his people when he sinned or what judgments he brought upon others who are innocent of it even withstanding David when he sought to number the people it was obnoxious in the eyes of the other leaders and so we can cause not only God's displeasure upon ourselves but upon others blessed it is he whosoever shall not be offended in me and then there is the slight of men you may be slighted because you profess and only a week ago when someone acknowledged that they believed oh they said oh they believed to that religious lot that lived down there yes that religious lot the slight of men and it's still there and if you fear

God men were slight and deride and this can cause offense they laughed at it and that's a good thing they laughed because they knew that this had been said concerning them that they were religious lot and so it is better that it should not hurt us but that we might withstand and not be offended and rather take it is take it as from the Lord being willing to suffer in this way of reproach for the name of Christ truly blessed then are these who are not offended in me says the Lord Jesus Christ and what did the Lord Jesus Christ say in the

[34 : 08] Beatitudes he says blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake rejoice and be exceeding glad for great is your reward in heaven for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you blessed are ye when men shall separate you from their company for Christ's sake let us be clear for Christ's sake not for anything in ourselves not for any unkindness or dishonesty or unlikeability but for

Christ's sake when we are when they separate you from their company for Christ's sake
blessed are ye for the Lord Jesus Christ will own these he will own you now he will own
those who are not offended in him now and he will own these before all men in the great
day before all men before devils before angels they will be owned he that endureth unto
the end shall be saved may the Lord bless these things and encourage us that we give no
offense and that we are not offended because of the why because of the difficulty of the
why may the

Lord give more grace and grace equal to the day may the Lord add his blessing amen you
you