

# The Offence of the Cross

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[0:00] We're going to talk about something that's a bit offensive. It's a bit offensive this morning.

! Who's ever seen those when the news flash comes across and says the next thing is going to be offensive to some people? This is going to be offensive to some people too. It's going to be offensive to some people.

In Galatians 5 verse 11, Paul talks about preaching. He talks about the preaching of the cross. In Galatians 5 verse 11, he says, And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution?

Then is the offence of the cross ceased. Paul speaks about the offence of the cross. That's my subject today in this Lord's Table time.

The offence of the cross. The gospel is an offence. This book is offensive. In some countries, it's a banned book. It's so outrageous.

[1:05] It's so outspoken that the governments of some lands forbid you to have this book in your hands. The Bible. It's an offensive book. The cross is offensive.

Why is the cross offensive? So the Jews, it was a curse. It was a curse. It was a shame. It was a reproach. It was shameful. In Galatians 3 verse 13, Paul writes, Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.

For it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. The cross is offensive because it's a curse. It was a curse for the Jews.

Someone who died on the cross was cursed. It was a cursed thing. The cross is offensive. Why? The cross is ugly. We know even in present times, there's people being crucified.

It's an ugly sight, isn't it? To see someone hanging there, breathing their last breath, dropping their last blood. It's unpalatable.

[2:09] It's repulsive. It's graphic. It's horrible. And some would rather a crossless religion. And many tried and followed a crossless religion.

Because the cross is offensive to them. In Isaiah 50 verse 6, it foretells of our Lord. I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.

I hid not my face from shame and spitting. Offensive, isn't it? To think of someone with their face torn, of their back shredded.

Of spitting. These are offensive things. The cross is offensive. The cross is offensive because it is cruel. It's cruel. Yes, it is.

But it is necessary. There was no other way. No other way but the cross. The cruel cross. And there still is no other way. The cross speaks of Christ's bleeding love.

[3:08] It speaks of taste in death. In Hebrews 2 verse 9, it says, But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.

Dead. That's offensive, isn't it? We've all seen it. In some fashion. I've seen it. Some have seen it more than others. I've seen death.

It's offensive, isn't it? And it says that Jesus tasted death for every man. That's offensive, isn't it? It is.

It had to be. It had to be. The cross is offensive because the cross is uncivilised. It's brutal. It's rugged. Yes, it is. It goes against everything that religion and man's philosophy would say.

It goes against your pride in your own pathetic religious works and rituals and tradition. It's offensive to that.

[4:17] Some would rather have their religion and their philosophy, their cherished beliefs rather than come to the cross.

It's offensive. It's offensive. It had to be. Because there is no other way but the cross. No other way but the cross.

Basically. Basically. Basically. Basically. Basically. Basically. Basically. Basically. Basically. Basically. Basically. Basically.

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Basically. Basically. Basically. Basically. Basically. Basically. Basically. Basically. Still, it's sad to see people mocking God, professing not to believe in him, yet with the same breath, cursing him and mocking him, mocking the name of Jesus, mocking the cross, mocking his love, yet they stand in dread danger of judgment.

[5:26] Judgment. That's offensive, preacher. Yes, it is. Yes, it is. People stand in danger of judgment as they mock him still.

Mock him still. Curse his name. His name is just a curse word, falling from their lips. Despised and rejected still. He was wounded.

He was oppressed. He was afflicted. He hath poured out his soul unto death, it says. That's offensive, isn't it? Poured out his soul unto death.

That's offensive. The preaching of the cross is an offence. It still is offensive. It's an offensive message, but it's a message we need. The cross is offensive because the cross is hard, rugged, rough, painful, stark, severe.

Yes, it is. It had to be. It had to be. Isaiah 52, 14, as many as were astonished at thee, or astonished at him. His visage, his face, was so marred, marred, more than any man, more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.

[6:42] His face more marred, torn, damaged, brutalised, and his form, more so than any man. We can't picture him. You know, some would try to picture him in film, and yet, it just looks like he's got a few scratches.

No, he was more marred than any man. More than we can conceive. That's offensive, isn't it? The cross had to be harsh because God is severe and heavy against our sin.

He is angry at the wicked, it says, every day. He had to vent his full, righteous fury justly and fully. His holy justice had to be fully poured out, as offensive as it is to think. Why? So that now he can extend his mercy worldwide, humankind wide.

His abundant mercy is so much more precious because of the offense of the cross. As we come through the offense of the cross unto him, the cross is offensive.

[7:59] It's offensive because it's costly. Too costly, you say. There must be an easy way. There must be an easy way. Away from my own works, of my own trying, of my own striving, of my own doing, of my own belief, of my own self-righteousness.

There must be an easier way than the cross. Your self-righteousness will send you to hell. If that is what you're counting on, if that's what you're depending on, if that's what you're leaning on, that's offensive, preacher.

Yes, it is, but it's the truth. Your self-righteousness will send you to hell if that's what you're depending upon, if you're depending upon your own good works in one skerrick, in one iota.

If you're hanging on to your own good works, you're going to hell. If that's what you're counting on to save you, because it cannot do it, it cannot do it. That's offensive, preacher.

Yes, it is, but it's the truth. It's the truth. I tell you the truth. There is no other way but the cross. No other way. Your self-righteousness, your works, your depending on yourself is insufficient.

[9:09] It falls short, far short. Matthew 26. And he went a little further and fell on his face and prayed saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. He knew that cup in the garden as he sweated, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground.

O Lord, take this cup, but if it be your will. Our Lord had to drink that bitter cup, that bitter cup, that's offensive, that bitter cup of suffering.

There was no other way. The cross is offensive. The cross is offensive. The cross is negative. It's negative. It's too bold. It's too insensitive to others' feelings.

It's too limiting. I say to you, the cross is an offense. Some will say, let it, let's water it down. Let's make it more palatable. Let's make this message more sweet.

[10:09] Take the bitterness away. It says, Acts 4, verse 12, neither is there salvation in any other. For there is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved.

None other name. No other name at all. His call is unique. His claims of saviour are unique. They stand alone. He stands alone as the only saviour.

There is no other saviour. That's offensive. Yes, it is. But it's the truth. It's the truth. It had to be offensive. Preaching, you may say, that's too exclusive.

You know, Christians are just an exclusive little club, an exclusive little group. You may say, there must be other ways, other saviours, other religions, other beliefs, other paths to God.

No. Your best works are as filthy rags. The best you can do are just rotten, stinking, torn, filthy, scum-ridden rags.

[11:16] Neither is the salvation in any other. He is the only saviour. The only saviour. He says, I am the way.

No other. I am the way. You must believe on Him. Believe on Him. That's offensive. Yes. But it's the truth.

It's the truth. Take it up with God if you disagree. Better yet, come and reason with Him and fall at His feet and come to the cross.

Yes, it's offensive. The offense of the cross. You may say, there must be some other way. I can save myself. I can pull myself up on my own bootstraps. I can reform myself and turn the new leaf and try to be good.

Good enough. You may say, I don't have to bow the knee with these other simple wretches around me who don't deserve salvation as much as me.

[12:20] No, wretched man. Wretched man. You are just as guilty. Just as guilty as the foulest you could think of. As the worst of men. You are just as guilty.

Just as guilty. And you must have the offense of the cross to bear your guilt. You cannot wash away your stain of sin by yourself. You cannot substitute another.

You must have Him to be your substitute to provide your forgiveness. Some will mock the cross. Some mock the preaching of the cross. They will consider it foolishness to believe this.

1 Corinthians 1.18 it says, For the printing of the cross is to them that perish foolishness. But unto us that are saved it is the power of God. I urge you.

You need the offense of the cross and tell others of it. You must see it. See the offense of the cross. See it for what it is. The horror of it. The starkness of it.

[13:17] The cross is offensive when we consider how painful a death it was. It speaks of it being a travail. Now as a man I don't know what travail is.

But some of you women know what travail is. It speaks of childbirth. That pain of bringing a life into the world.

It's a travail. It says of our Lord He shall see the travail of His soul. There was a travail that went on at the cross. You must recognize the offense of the cross.

You must hear the nails pounding into quivering flesh. You must taste the bleakness of it. You must see the darkness envelop the world as the sun is blotted out.

You must sense His agony. You must taste the vinegar. The pain. His pain. You must see it the offense of the cross in all the raw bright color of it.

[14:20] The redness. The rawness of it. In all of its pulsating, shocking, heart-wrenching, heart-rending, gut-wrenching, agony.

The offense of it. It's offensive. Yes it is. It is the offense of the cross. Don't you see it? See it for what it is.

And the vilest thing of it all, the vilest thing about it all is of this awful sight of a man hanging between heaven and earth.

The awful sight, the worst of it all is that it is your sin, your sin that nailed him there. It is you who hung him there.

Yes you, me, who his own self-bear our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness by whose stripes ye were healed.

[15:27] You, you may ask who, me, my sin. Yes you, that's offensive, that's offensive.

Yes it is. It is you and your sin that is offensive to our holy God. So offensive that he had to bear it in all of its heaviness and ugliness and heartache.

The offense is because of you. You may say, preacher, that's coming on a bit too strong now.

You're coming on a bit too strong. That's way too close and personal.

That's getting a bit too close, a bit too close to the bone for me. That's offensive to me, highly offensive to me and my own sense and my own self importance.

You know, we can talk about a cross, a cross, in abstract terms, as if it's some little chain around your neck or whatever it be or an article hung on a wall.

[16:30] Just a cross in an abstract sense of it. And talk about Jesus and his claims in an abstract kind of sense. But to talk about me, well that's offensive.

That's offensive. Really it's the most loving thing we can do though. To speak to others, to present to others the claim of the crucified man, now risen alive and extending love still to a world that rejects him.

To tell others of this glorious gospel, of this saviour and his marvellous mercy and great grace. I beg you, friends today, I beg you to see your need of him.

And Christians, be reminded again, that's what we love to do, to be reminded of our need of him, of the offence of the cross. We needed the cross and it needed to be offensive and the message is offensive still, but it is a merciful message because his mercy is extended.

As we see our need, as we see the cross and its ugliness and its offensiveness, that we see that, yes, we must be offended so that we can see we have need of him. We must realise it was our sin that nailed him there.

[17:40] And I'll just defend you to talk of heaven, of hell, of damnation, of God's coming wrath against you, so that you see the great grace he extends to you and how glorious a gift it is that is extended freely for us.

And seek him and find him today. Won't you come to him today? Come to him today. The cross it speaks of the holy character of God, of the holy judgment of God, of the condemnation rightfully of our sin.

It declares the world guilty before God. Romans 3 19, it says in part all the world guilty before God. That's offensive, isn't it?

You'd like to think, well, I'm not that bad. No, you're guilty, guilty, guilty before God. The cross says you're helpless, you cannot save yourself.

The cross is uncomfortable, it's confronting, but it's true. And the cross says you need a saviour, it's the truth. Think of it, the cross it shouts out your sin, it shouts it out, you can't hide it anymore, it's there exposed, laid bare, hanging there, hanging there, nailed there, suffering there, exposed in all of its ugliness, says that in his own body on the tree, our sin, in all of its ugliness, the mountain of your guilt was laid on his shoulders.

[19:13] My sin? Yes, your sin. Wow. Isn't that cause for joy? Isn't that cause for he's dealt with it, he's paid for it, he's nailed it, nailed it there, and taken it, taken it off my shoulders.

And the cross, it declares his holy love, written in blood. The cross, it speaks of the evil of your sin and of your dying need for the saviour, for atonement.

You are a sinner. That's offensive, preacher. Yes, it is. You have offended a holy God.

That's offensive. What's more, you can do nothing about it. But the good news is that the cross sets us free.

The saviour of the cross who died, rose, and is coming again. For those that have known him, for those that trust upon him, the good news is the cross deletes sin from God's memory banks.

[20:27] It says in Hebrews 8, verse 12, for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. That's good news, isn't it?

He says, your sins, your iniquities will I remember no more. We'll call the ushers to come just now. We've got those appointed. Ian, Peter, Guttridge, Florian, Edmund, come and hold together. We'll pass together and hold the cups together and serve one another. That was, yeah, everyone's there. This is a time for those that love the Lord and know him.

And you might think, I want to trust him right now. I realise it now. I see my sin there. You can become a Christian now in the click of my fingers, in the blink of an eye, as you say, yes, I believe now.

I believe my sin was nailed there. I believe my sin was paid there. I believe in Jesus as my Lord, as my Saviour. you can come to him, even now, by simple faith, by simply trusting him now.

[21:35] I urge you to make that step of trusting him now, of turning to him, turning away and turning to the Saviour, turning from your own way and turning unto him and trusting him forever, for time and for eternity.

He says that he is despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and we hid, as it were, our faces from him. He was despised and we esteemed him not.

Esteem him now, esteem him now, honour him now for the offence of the cross. Honour him now because it was his life's blood that was shed for your life's forgiveness, for your saving grace.

He came and he extends grace still to those that will trust him. Offensive but true.

Offensive but needful. My sin nailed at that cross. See it there today, see it there this morning. And the offence of it, he's taken the offence of your sin away through the offence of the cross.

[22:43] He's taken it away such that he will remember it no more, no more. God's forgotten about your sin as you've trusted him and trust him now, trust him now.

now, now, praise his name. Let's spend a few moments just dwelling on what he has done for us. it was that same night, that same offensive night, night, in which he was betrayed, that same night in which he would be forsaken, that same night in which he would be wrongly accused and unjustly condemned, where his suffering would begin, even in the garden, as he prayed for us. that same night in which he was betrayed. And he simply took bread and a cup and blessed it and gave it.

And we were reminded again, he tasted death, a bitter cup, blood. He bled real blood and suffered real pain and died a real death, but he rose again.

[24:38] And he is our saviour, if we trust him now, praise his name. He was despised and we esteemed him not. Let's esteem him now, esteem him now for who he is.

In all the glorious wonder of who he is, great majestic saviour, worthy is the land. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord. Esteem him, saviour, coming king, risen Lord.

Praise him. desde desde desde desde