

“Does This Offend You?” (John 6:61)

A Companion Paper to the Sermon Delivered 11/13/2016 by James Moriello at Firm Foundation Christian Church, Woonsocket, RI

“Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.” These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum. Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, “This is a hard saying; who can understand it?” When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, “Does this offend you?”” (John 6:53-61, NKJV).

The context of our Scripture text is that of Jesus the Bread of Life, in which the Lord declares Himself to be the spiritual food and spiritual lifeblood of anyone who wishes to be near to God. In doing so, He offends the sensibilities of His audience. In verse 41 of the same chapter, we read that the Jews complained about Him because of the offense. And here in our context, His disciples are also complaining. Two areas in particular posed a problem for His hearers. The first is the divinity of the Messiah, and His equality with God. These truths are clearly taught in the Old Testament (notably in Isaiah 53:11, and also in other places), but in veiled form. “But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ” (2 Corinthians 3:14). The second is in reference to the drinking of the blood, which seemed to come into conflict with the Mosaic Law, where we read: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.’ Therefore I said to the children of Israel, ‘No one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who dwells among you eat blood” (Leviticus 17:11-12). The truth of the matter, of course, is that the blood of Christ is that which truly makes atonement for the soul. Today, in these last days (New Testament days), many people are still offended by Jesus’ sayings in particular, and God’s words in general. Indeed, Jesus Christ was, is, and ever shall be, to many, “a rock of offense” (Isaiah 8:14). So, let us bring

our attention back to the question that Jesus posed to His hearers, and poses to you and I today: “Does this offend you?”

1. The Exclusivity of the Christian Gospel

- a. “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6).
- b. “let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:10-12).
- c. “Does this offend you?” (that by definition, those of other faiths cannot possibly be going to heaven)

2. The Narrow Road of Christian Discipleship

- a. “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).
- b. Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it” (Luke 9:23-24).
- c. “Does this offend you?” (that God’s grace isn’t cheap, and the Christian life is not bunnies and butterflies)

3. Biblical Separation

- a. “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them” (Romans 16:17).
- b. “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14).

- c. “Does this offend you?” (that we need to avoid professing Christians whose doctrines and lives are off)
4. Sexual Ethics
 - a. “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites...will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).
 - b. “Does this offend you?” (that all relations outside of the marriage of one man and one woman are forbidden by God)
5. Prioritizing the Public Worship and Being Faithful to the Local Church
 - a. “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).
 - b. “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24-25).
 - c. “Does this offend you?”(that you are called to be accountable to the local church, just as the local church is accountable to lead its congregation according to divine precepts)
6. The Command to Forgive
 - a. “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do” (Colossians 3:12-13).
 - b. “Does this offend you?” (that forgiveness is never optional)
7. The Command to Love your Enemies
 - a. “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).

- b. “Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. Therefore “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:17-21).
 - c. “Does this offend you?” (that you don’t have the right to take your own revenge)
8. The Simplicity of the Christian Gospel
- a. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).
 - b. “Does this offend you?” (that the gospel is so simple that even a child can understand it)
9. The Availability of the Christian Gospel to All
- a. “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out” (John 6:37).
 - b. “For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved” (Romans 10:13).
 - c. “Does this offend you?” Do you think there are certain people that God ought never to save—that they deserve an eternity apart from God in hell? If so, you are right, but you are one of them! Would it be well with you if another person could exclude you from God’s grace and kingdom?

You see, friends, the truth stings sometimes. If you have been offended, I hope that you have been offended into the Kingdom this morning! God is love, but He loves you enough to tell you the truth. What you do with the truth is up to you.