



## WEEKLY STUDY

### WEEK THREE

We live in a time and place where it is normal to quickly take offense at every word spoken or written by anyone. We are less likely to consider context, personhood, or ramifications before we react to every bit of news. Jesus wanted would-be followers to know that many people considered him to be quite offensive. What he was teaching and doing was counter to anyone's expectations. By walking through this teaching, I pray that we will become more aware of the truth behind Jesus' words and actions, as well as the actions of others in our day to day life. We encounter both good and bad in this world on a daily basis. May our eyes, ears, and hearts stay focused on the Kingdom of God in the midst of it all.

Peace of Christ,  
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected visit [prov.church/smallgroups](http://prov.church/smallgroups).

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt.

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### DAILY STUDY

#### MONDAY: LUKE 7:18-23 (ESV)

*The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John,<sup>19</sup> calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"<sup>20</sup> And when the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'"<sup>21</sup> In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight.<sup>22</sup> And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them.<sup>23</sup> And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."*

- Earlier in Luke we learned that Jesus and John had an encounter before they were even born. John leapt in Elizabeth's womb at the presence of Jesus in Mary's womb. Years later, John declared that Jesus was the lamb of God. And here John asks if Jesus is indeed who he thought he was. Why this line of questioning now? At this point in the story, John was imprisoned and still eagerly awaiting the impact of the Messiah's presence on earth. Days tend to slow down in prison

and he was probably hoping for freedom. The disciples of John were told to report to him what they had seen Jesus doing and teaching...not just who Jesus said he was. **How do you share with others about what you've seen Jesus doing?**

- *Jesus, I sometimes forget what it means that you are the Son of God, the Messiah, sent by God to rescue and redeem the world. Forgive me and give me words to share you with others. Amen.*

## **TUESDAY: MATTHEW 13.11-13 (NIV)**

*"Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.<sup>12</sup> Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.<sup>13</sup> This is why I speak to them in parables:*

*"Though seeing, they do not see;  
though hearing, they do not hear or understand.*

- Jesus wasn't *trying* to confuse or offend his audience. He was speaking to those who had ears to hear and eyes to see the truth. That's not everyone in the crowd (as Jesus was aware). He was not trying to trick anyone, rather he wanted to communicate to those who didn't get it. There is a kindness in that. Those who truly long for the secrets of the kingdom of heaven have been given a heart that is prepared to live them out, therefore, consider, **do you truly long for the kingdom of heaven?**
- *God, I long for the secrets of the kingdom of heaven. Or at least I want to long for the secrets of the kingdom of heaven. And so I will remain—I will abide with Jesus—give me knowledge of your kingdom. Amen.*

## **WEDNESDAY: ISAIAH 6.8-10 (NIV)**

*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"*

*And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"*

<sup>9</sup>*He said, "Go and tell this people:*

*"Be ever hearing, but never understanding;  
be ever seeing, but never perceiving."*

<sup>10</sup>*Make the heart of this people calloused;  
make their ears dull  
and close their eyes.*

*Otherwise they might see with their eyes,  
hear with their ears,  
understand with their hearts,  
and turn and be healed."*

*Then I said, "For how long, Lord?"*

*And he answered:*

*"Until the cities lie ruined  
and without inhabitant,*

until the houses are left deserted  
and the fields ruined and ravaged,  
<sup>12</sup> until the LORD has sent everyone far away  
and the land is utterly forsaken.  
<sup>13</sup> And though a tenth remains in the land,  
it will again be laid waste.  
But as the terebinth and oak  
leave stumps when they are cut down,  
so the holy seed will be the stump in the land.”

- This is the call and commissioning of Isaiah to serve as a prophet to God’s people. At first, Isaiah’s road would be difficult because of the hardness of heart (*hear but not understand, see but not perceive*) he would encounter. “How long?” he asked. God answered, until everything is leveled out and everything constructed by humans is laid to waste. Would you be excited to share this message? But there is hope that out of the stumps remaining in the land, God would grow a new people with the seed of a great nation. The seed of evil will be overcome by the holy seed that will lead to future generations hearing about the Kingdom of God that Jesus came to proclaim. **Have you ever been frustrated by your own lack of understanding of the teachings of Jesus?**
- *God, give me ears to understand and eyes to perceive your redeeming work through Jesus. Amen.*

#### THURSDAY: PROVERBS 18.19 (ESV)

*A brother offended is more unyielding than a strong city,  
and quarreling is like the bars of a castle.*

- Just as those offended by Jesus find themselves confused and disoriented, so does offense among close friends cause division and brokenness. This proverb contains a warning against allowing unnecessary offense to cloud relationships that otherwise bear good fruit. **Do you have a relationship that has been hurt by unnecessary offense? Can you trace that offense back to one conversation or action? Can you imagine the necessary steps to end the quarreling?**
- *Almighty God, reveal where my own hardness of heart and callousness has contributed to a broken relationship. Give me the grace to avoid unnecessary offense. Amen.*

#### FRIDAY: MATTHEW 13.53-58 (ESV)

*And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there,<sup>54</sup> and coming to his hometown he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works?<sup>55</sup> Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?<sup>56</sup> And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?”<sup>57</sup> And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household.”<sup>58</sup> And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.*

- Jesus taught in a manner that was well beyond his upbringing. People knew his mom! They knew that he was the son of a carpenter. How could such teaching come from such a man? Who did he think he was? It was as if they were too close to be able to see the big picture of who Jesus truly is. *We don’t live in Jesus’ hometown, he lives in ours.* But his ways are just as offensive to the status quo and way of the world. Ultimately, people are still asking the same question—how could a man also be God? How is it that God could be walking around on our streets? The tragedy of the

inability to see who Jesus truly is, is that his mighty works will be less evident. **When we recognize Jesus as Lord, we create space for his miracles to be made known. In what ways does this truth create concern? In what ways does it produce hope?**

- *Jesus, you are the Son of God. Your willingness to put on flesh, love your mom, learn from your earthly father, are simply signs of your love for me and for the whole world. Come and work your mighty works today! Amen.*

## **SATURDAY: 2 PETER 1.10-11(NIV)**

*Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble,<sup>11</sup> and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

- Everything we need to live a life worthy of God's calling is given to us through the grace and peace of Jesus. Therefore, our confidence in him is on an entirely different level than the confidence we gain from any earthly relationship or invention. **Read 2 Peter 1.3-11, what are the "these things" in verse 10 that, when practiced, can keep us from stumbling?**
- *Lord, give me knowledge of Christ, self-control, and perseverance so that I can stand strong in your eternal kingdom. Amen.*

## **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

Walk through the following points from Sunday's message.

- Being offended by Jesus keeps you from hearing what he is really saying.
- Being offended by Jesus keeps you from seeing who he really is.
- Being offended by Jesus keeps you from accepting Him for who he truly is.
- Being offended by Jesus keeps you out of a true relationship with Jesus.

Who or what is most likely to offend you in today's world?

When are you most likely to be offended by Jesus and his teaching?

What steps can you take to avoid reacting out of offense?

Consider if these three points from Pastor Jacob ring true in your life.

- Offense is easier than truly listening.
- Offense is easier than truly seeing someone.
- Offense is easier than seeking to accept someone for who they truly are.

The spiritual practices that we learn from Jesus can help us to truly listen, see, and accept the people that God places in our lives. Consider practicing Sabbath, fasting, intentional prayer and scripture study this week and record how these practices impact the way you see others. Plan to share these reflections with your group.