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LET'S BE OFFENSIVE

By Mike Pace

I hope that the title of this article has caught your attention by the use of the word "offensive". The dictionary defines the word "offensive" as insulting, unpleasant; used in attack, aggressive action. It is the latter sense, i.e. "used in attack, aggressive action" that we use this word in this article. **CHRISTIANS NEED TO BE OFFENSIVE!!** We need to be used in attack, and we need to be of aggressive action! God's people, whether those who lived under the Old Law or those spoken of in the New Testament, have always been expected by God Himself to be responsive, active, aggressive people.

The Apostle Paul writing to Titus in chapter 2 and verse 14 speaks of Jesus "WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM ALL INIQUITY". And particularly notice the latter part of this verse when Paul says that Jesus gave Himself for us that He might "PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF A PECULIAR PEOPLE, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS." The word "zealous" as is used in this instance indicates the style with which a Christian is to exhibit his/her life. In other words as the word "zealous" suggests, we are to "seek or desire eagerly" those "GOOD WORKS" which characterize the life of a faithful Christian. Just the very use of the word "ZEALOUS" signifies an **ACTIVE** life as opposed to a **PASSIVE** lifestyle. I'm afraid that as Christians we sometimes take I Peter 3:15 too literal when the Word says we are to "BE READY ALWAYS TO GIVE AN ANSWER TO EVERY MAN THAT ASKETH YOU A REASON OF THE HOPE THAT IS IN YOU WITH MEEKNESS AND FEAR". Now I believe, as you do, that God expects us to understand that this scripture emphasizes the necessity and the significance of a Christian arming himself/herself with a knowledge of God's Word that we might at any time or situation be prepared to explain to other's God's will and His way for all

men. But do we "water" this passage down and dilute its power to mean that we are to be "passive", and that we stand in the wings, so to speak, ready should the occasion arise, to tell others about Jesus. Part of the **POWER** of the Lord's commission to all Christians in Mark 16:15 is to **GO**, not **WAIT!** We are to be on the "offensive". Instead of waiting on others to "come to church", we need to be taking the truth **TO** them.

Generally speaking, when we possess some "good news", we usually don't wait for others to come to us before we share with them our "good news". We often times call others on the telephone, we write letters, we see people and tell them by word of mouth our "good news". For example, at the glorious occasion of the birth of a child, the proud parents can't wait to call friends and relatives, to send out birth announcements, and shout on the rooftops of their joy. Should not we as "zealous" Christians be of the same mind in consideration of the gospel (GOOD NEWS) that God has given us!

The Word of God most assuredly instructs us to be "offensive" as Christians. Offensive in the sense that we are aggressive, deliberate and zealous. In II Corinthians 4:7 Paul informs us that God has entrusted us as "earthen vessels" with the Gospel. And that it is our responsibility as God's people to not contain that Gospel only within ourselves, but that we are to make it readily accessible to everyone upon this earth. Just as the cautious, "passive" servants that Jesus talked about in Matthew 25:14-30, who kept their talents to themselves and were denounced because of their attitude; we as Christians should take note, and not "bury" the truth within hearts and not allow it to bring fruition to our lives and to the lives of others. One of the great joys of being a child of God is the many opportunities we are provided to "share" the good news of the gospel with others.

While considering these thoughts, there is perhaps another idea we should ponder. To illustrate, allow me to employ certain analogies we might draw from a sports activity, e.g. a football game. For any football team to be successful, to be a winning team, it must possess many different strengths. Not to be specific, but rather in a general way, this team must possess both a good "offense" and a good "defense". A team that is strong offensively, and yet weak defensively won't be very successful. The reason is obvious. Being strong "offensively", they may score many points on the scoreboard; however, being weak "defensively", their opponent will also be able to score many points. If the team under consideration were strong "defensively", they might be able to contain their opponent to only a few points; however, if they are weak "offensively", they themselves will only be able to score a few points. The point being this - to be successful in their endeavor and to accomplish their intended purpose, this team must be strong "offensively" and must be strong "defensively". Now let's make the proper application to the subject under consideration. To truly be the kind of church family God wants us to be; to really be the type of individual Christians that God desires of us, we must be strong both "offensively" and "defensively."

The Apostle Paul spoke not only of the aggressive nature that a child of God should have, but he also spoke of our **defense** of the gospel. In Philippians 1:17, Paul said, "I am set for the defense of the Gospel." In his letters to the Ephesians, in chapter 6 and beginning in verse 10, Paul informed us as to **how** we might prepare ourselves for this "defense". "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For

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LET'S BE OFFENSIVE!

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we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." By properly equipping ourselves as Paul described will be prepared to **defend** against any foe or enemy of the cross.

It appear to me that the terminology Paul employs in I Corinthians 15:58 reveals both the "offensive" and "defensive" natures that a child of God is to possess. *"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable (there's the "defensive" characteristic we are to possess), always abounding in the work of the Lord (there's the "offensive" nature we should each have), forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."* (And there's the **reward** if we follow the Lord's pattern).

In the life of a truly committed child of God there is no reason or excuse for not possession both the "offensive" and the "defensive" qualities. In other words, we must not only be prepared to defend the truth, but we must also be on the offense, aggressive in seeing the seed of the

word scattered abroad. Perhaps this is part of what our Lord had in mind when He said in Matthew 12:30, *"He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad"* There is not any room or place for indifference, for complacency, or uninvolvedness for a devoted soldier of the cross. May God grant within each of us the desire to not only be DEFENDERS of the truth, but the ambition and will to be OFFENSIVE servants. "Offensive", not in the negative sense, as insulting or unpleasant; but in the positive sense, aggressive with the gospel of our Lord, knowing that it is the power of God unto salvation.

And now let's conclude by mentioning how this "offensive" nature can be acquired. Very simply stated, pray God that He will grant you this characteristic, study the Word to arm yourself, and keep heaven as your goal!

HOW TO BE SOMEBODY

By T. V. Samson
Raj Hyderabad, South India

"Achieve" is an inherited drive by which a man wants to be somebody in this world. It costs a man to think with his mind in order to be somebody or to achieve something in his life. A man who will not think to be a nobody, is a lunatic or mindless. A mind of a person can achieve something he desires with correct thinking.

I want you to think with me on one question, that is, what kind of somebody can we be with surity of satisfaction? The answer comes in different thinking of different minds. Some people think to have name, fame, position or peace and happiness. But who can say which is easy to achieve except the correct thinking of a good mind?

You can adopt the mind of Christ and the attitudes of His life as you read (in Phil 2:5-11) from the Bible. God said: that He exalted His son Jesus Christ because he obeyed God's mind. By this we see the mind of Christ is the answer for our achievements given by the true living God, Jehovah.

We read in the scriptures that because of Adam's sin, Christ died on the Cross.

But He won the victory and because He is the author of the Eternal Salvation (Heb. 5:8) and He is the Head of the Body (Col. 1:18) to which he paid the price and bought it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). We need to die to our sins in order to de exercise the sin by the knowledge of Good and Evil which has come from Adam and Eve.

To please God and to achieve something to be a nobody one needs Faith in God (Heb. 11; 6:1). Faith is trust and obedience towards His Son's commandments. If you have faith, there is repentance. Faith is a change of mind with reference to God and his offer of Salvation through Christ, as revealed by the Holy Spirit while repentance is a change of mind with reference to sin; and when they are both genuine, the result is death to sin. This can be proved by the regenerated life of BAPTISM by which your sin will be purged (Rom. 6:4-8; Acts 2:38).

By this you will be somebody in the body of Christ which is the kingdom of Jesus Christ by being reborn of the Water and of the Spirit (John 3:5).

Now! you are no more a sinner! You are a Saint, Christian or a Citizen in the Kingdom of GOD. What a lucky man you will be if you would be in the body of Christ. In this area you can develop the attitudes like Jesus Christ and you are fully a new man with new quality of life and new conscience. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit will lead you to the whole truth and you can be a living stone in the Living Temple of God.

To be somebody you need to be reborn of water and of the Spirit in order to enter into God's Kingdom (John 3:5) where even the Almighty God cannot say you are a nobody but a son of God and by this rebirth you will inherit the eternal life that nobody else in the world except somebody like you.

**SO BE A CHRISTIAN
AND BE A SOMEBODY!**

Tell Us Plainly

By Bill Graddy

In John 10:24-25, *"Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ tell us plainly. Jesus*

answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." Jesus told the people who he was with his first miracle in Cana, (John 2:11); He told Nicodemus the truth relative to the new birth (John 3:3-5); He plainly demonstrated that he was the son of God on many occasions. (John 3:16-21). Study John 4:42; 7:14-16; 8:32-38; 10:17-18. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John 20:30-31). With these "signs" we are amazed that any could disbelieve, but many of them "believed not" and they crucified him. (John 19:6, 15, 16, 18).

Is it not the same today? In John, chapters 14, 15 and 16, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to the apostles empowering them to "reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." (John 16:8-13). With this absolute truth, (John 17:17), the apostles "turned the world upside down" telling it plainly. (Acts 17:6).

JESUS CHRIST, THE LORD HAS TOLD US PLAINLY HOW TO BECOME CHRISTIANS. Jesus, the Humbled One, "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil 2:8). We must die too! (Rom. 6:4-7) We must humble ourselves by believing that Jesus is the Christ, repent of our sins, confess Him before men, and be baptized into Christ for the remission of our sins, thus, permitting Christ to add us to His church. (John 8:24; Acts 17:30; Rom. 10:9, 10; Acts 2:38; I Cor. 12:13; Acts 2:47).

JESUS CHRIST THE LORD HAS TOLD US PLAINLY HOW TO WORSHIP GOD. By his obedience, Jesus became Christ, the Exalted One. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." (Phil. 2:9). The Exalted Christ with all power in heaven and in earth tells us plainly that we must meet upon the first day of the week to sing, pray, teach and preach, give of our means, and partake of the Lord's Supper. (Matt. 27:18; Eph. 5:19; I Thess. 5:17; I Cor. 16:2; Acts 20:7). This worship must be in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24.)

JESUS CHRIST THE LORD HAS TOLD US PLAINLY HOW TO LIVE AS

CHRISTIANS. Jesus, the Humbled One, who offered himself as a lamb without spot for the sins of the world, became the victorious and Exalted One over hell, death, and the grave, to become our Lord and Master — Ruler of our lives. (Acts 2:36; Heb. 2:14; Matt. 23:8; John 13:14; Eph. 6:9; Col. 4:1.) Have you received both Jesus and Christ as Lord? Many people believe that there was a man named Jesus, but how many believe that there was a man named Jesus who was born of the virgin Mary who humbled himself and died on the cross? How many really believe that this Jesus was resurrected on the third day and thus became the Christ? (Rom. 1:4.) How many **Christians** really believe that this Jesus was the son of God, born of the virgin Mary, died on the cross, was raised from the dead, ascended back to God, and now He is Lord and Master of our lives? If we know him as Lord and Master, then we are doing the things which he says (Luke 6:46), relative to marriage and divorce, worship, money, time, alcohol, sex, etc., and are obedient to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (Matt. 4:4). How do we know all of this? Jesus told us plainly and confirmed it by miracles and the Bible is the evidence.

If people want the truth, they can find it! (Matt. 5:6; John 8:32).

Does Man Have A Soul?

By Harold Turner

I have, on numerous occasions, encountered a religious doctrine which denies that man has a soul. This doctrine affirms that man is a soul rather than having a soul. This doctrine also affirms that the soul dies and ceases to exist at death. Since man is the soul, when man dies and is buried, the soul is buried. Does this doctrine hold true in light of the Scriptures? Does man have a soul, or is man the soul?

In Genesis 2:7 the Bible states, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." This is one of the passages used to show that man is a soul. If this were the only passage dealing with the soul, one might conclude this to be the case,

but there are numerous other passages which show that there is a distinction between the body of man and the soul. The soul is pictured as an inner man, or the scriptural nature of man.

Let's consider several Scriptures that show a distinction between the body and soul. In Job 14:22 Job makes this distinction, saying, *But the flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn.* This pictures the soul as being something within man. Jesus also made such a distinction in Matthew 10:28, saying, "And fear not them which kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." If man can kill the body but not the soul, there must be a distinction. Then in Genesis 35:18 we read about the death of Rachel, and in this passage it is clear that the soul departs from the body at death. *And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni.* This passage presents a problem for those who hold that man is the soul rather than having a soul. They try to explain that the soul in this passage has reference to her breath departing from the body. But this is inconsistent with the view that man is the soul. The Bible also teaches that the soul sins (Ezekiel 18:20). Is it the breath that sins? Such an explanation is absurd. Another similar passage is in I Kings 17:22 where the son of a widow had died. Elijah prayed, "Let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived." This passage also shows that in death the soul departs from the body, and thereby shows that the soul is distinct from the body.

The above Scriptures show that the soul is the inward part of man that cannot be killed by others, and that the soul is a part of man that departs from the body when the body dies.

Those who deny that man has a soul affirm that the soul is not immortal and that it dies. The proof used to support this is found in Ezekiel 18:20, (*"The soul that sinneth, it shall die . . ."*) What does this mean? Does it mean that the soul ceases to exist when the body dies? In what sense does the soul die? The word death literally means a separation. Note this in James 2:26, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without words is dead also." The body is dead when the spirit separates from it, and faith is dead when works are separated

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from it. Since death means a separation, and the soul dies because of sin, in what way does the soul die? From what is it separated? Perhaps Isaiah 59:2 will shed light on this question. Here it is stated, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God . . ." Because of sin the soul dies, that is, it is separated from something. Our sins separate us from God. The soul dies in a spiritual way, by being separated from God. It does not die in the sense that it ceases to exist.

In John 10:10 Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life . . ." Were the people that he came to give life to dead? Yes. But in what sense? They were not dead physically; because in John 5:40 Jesus said, "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." They were dead, but they could still come to Christ. They were dead in sin, and thereby separated from God. In Ephesians 2:1 the writer states, "And you hath he made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins." And in I Timothy 5:6 Paul describes the sinner, who lives in pleasure as being dead while living.

Ezekiel 18:20 does not teach that the soul dies when the body dies and both are buried in the grave. We have already seen from Genesis 35:18 and I Kings 17:22, that the soul departs from the body when the body dies. The soul dies to God because of sin, however, the soul can be redeemed from this death. James 1:21 states, "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your soul." The body cannot be redeemed from death by the word, but the soul can. Man does have a soul, and that soul can be lost or saved. If the soul is lost when we die, it will be destroyed in hell (Matthew 10:28). We can save our soul by receiving and following the word of God. Where our soul spends eternity depends upon what decisions we make in this life.

How to Become a Christian

The most important question ever asked is: "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). Then, the **HOW** becomes equally as important. Notice the step by step process. First, we must have faith in the Author and Finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ. (Heb. 12:2). This faith comes by the hearing of the word of God. (Rom. 10:17). "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6). With the belief and trust that Jesus is the Redeemer, we must repent of sins. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17:30). In repentance, we turn from sin, **STOP** serving Satan and **START** serving the Lord. (Matt. 3:8, Luke 13:

3). With this new attitude we are ready to confess our faith, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:9-10). Read Matthew 10:32-33. Acknowledging our faith, repentance and confession, the last step into Christ is baptism. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:27). Read Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38. Now that our past sins have been forgiven, the Lord has added us to His church and we are Christians. (Acts 2:47; Acts 11:26).

BECOME A CHRISTIAN

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