

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS - 72554 EDITION

BI-MONTHLY PERIODICAL OF MAMMOTH SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2022

“Does This Offend You?”

Kyle Butt - www.apologeticspress.org

“I’m offended!” “That is offensive to me!” “You must not do that, because it offends me!” You will often hear statements such as these on television, the radio, or any number of media outlets. Those who use these types of sentiments throw them down like a gauntlet, daring you to continue. It is as if the fact that they are offended should cause you to stop whatever it is you are saying or doing that offends them. Somehow, “I’m offended,” has become the verbal alarm that signals some sort of mistake or misstep on the part of the speaker.

The fact is, however, just because a person is offended is not necessarily a reason to stop saying or doing something. Jesus often offended people, but that did not stop Him from preaching and teaching the truth. When a person takes offense at something, it often says much more about the heart of the one who is offended than it does about the person who supposedly “caused” the offense.

On one occasion, after Jesus taught about how the Pharisees had abused God’s Word, His apostles came to him and said, “Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?” (Matthew 15:11). It is almost as if the apostles thought like many people today. They seemed to be indicating that, because Jesus had offended the Pharisees, He should stop teaching those ideas or change His message. Jesus, however, thought nothing of the sort. He knew that His message offended the Pharisees because of the hardness of their hearts, not because of the way the message was delivered. Jesus understood that the hearts of the Pharisees needed changing, not His message or even the way He delivered it. He responded to His apostles by saying, “Let them alone. They are blind leaders of

the blind” (Matthew 15:14). Surely we can agree that the Pharisees would have been further offended by Jesus’ follow up comments. Their offense, however, was misplaced. They were blind to the truth. They should not have been offended at Jesus’ message. Jesus’ message was the truth that God had sent to set them free (John 8:32).

Mark 6:1-6 tells about a time Jesus returned to His hometown of Nazareth. He went to the synagogue and preached the Word as He often did in other places. The townspeople who heard Him murmured, “Where did this man get these things?... Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?” The text then states, “And they were offended

“Jesus did not feel the need to stop preaching or change His message because His audience was offended.”

at Him.” The fact that they were offended did not mean Jesus had done anything wrong. It did not mean that He should have taken a different approach to preaching in His hometown. It meant only that the hearts of the hearers were calloused, sinful, and refused to recognize God’s message when it was preached.

Jesus never cowered to the “I’m offended so you must stop” tactic, and neither should we.

At one time Jesus preached to a great multitude of His disciples. Many of His own disciples did not understand the message and “murmured” about Jesus’ preaching (John 6:61). Jesus then asked them, “Does this offend you?” (John 6:61). Many in our day would say that if Jesus offended the crowd, He was sinning and should change His message, change His delivery style, or re-word His statement to

...continued on top of next page...

Do you have a
Bible question
you would like
answered?



Send us an email!
We’ll write a
response or record a
podcast episode!

Does This Offend You?

be less offensive. Jesus, however, responded by saying, “What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?” (6:61). What was Jesus’ point? If the people were offended with Jesus’ message that He was the bread that came down from heaven, just think how they would react if they saw Jesus ascend back into heaven, which was what He planned to do in the near future (Luke 24:50-53).¹ Not only did He refuse to quit preaching or change His message, He added something to the message that the audience would have had more problems accepting! Obviously, Jesus did not feel the need to stop preaching or change His message because His audience was offended.

It is certainly true that Christians should let their speech “be with grace, seasoned with

salt” (Colossians 4:6). It is also true that Christians should avoid unnecessary offense (Matthew 17:27; 1 Corinthians 8). The Gospel, however, is exclusive and offensive to many people. Those with dishonest, sinful hearts will always be offended at the simplicity and straightforwardness of Christ’s Truth. As Christians, we should follow the example of our Lord. We must never be bullied into silence or intimidated into changing our message simply because a person or group is offended at the truth.

Endnotes

1. It is interesting that when Stephen was martyred, he exclaimed that he saw Jesus in heaven “standing at the right hand of God” (Acts 7:56). This statement so offended the mob that “they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him” (Acts 7:57).

Aren’t you “Church of Christ?”

Barry O’Dell

To deny that the religious world is divided would be like denying that water is wet! Any person can easily see that there are many different religious organizations that teach and practice different things. Now, a question which must be asked is, “Is this God’s will?” Does God desire that there be literally hundreds of religious groups/movements that are diametrically opposed to each other? Did Jesus spend His time on earth teaching and then to die on the cross just so we could believe and practice whatever our parents and grandparents believed and practiced? Listen to what He prayed to God about: “*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me*” (Jn. 17:20-23). Religious division is not a part of God’s plan to save the world.

In over 25 years of preaching, I have been asked many times, “Aren’t you that Church of Christ preacher?” While I understand what the person may be asking, the question is framed from a wholly denominational mindset. It is as if we are so used to a divided religious world that the only way we can identify someone is by a religious title. The idea of a “Church of Christ preacher” or a “Baptist preacher” or a “Methodist preacher” is completely foreign to the New Testament and is not a part of God’s will.

What do we read about in the Bible? You will not read of any of the things I just listed as examples. You will not find denominationalism. You will not find man-made churches from the time of the “Protestant Reformation.” You will not find Roman Catholicism. You will not find Reformed Theology.

Here’s what you’ll find in the New Testament...

- A church promised by Jesus (Matthew 16:18).
- Congregations in various places that were called “churches of Christ” (Rom. 16:16), “churches of God” (1 Thes. 2:14), “the church” (Acts 11:22), “the body of Christ” (1 Cor. 12:27).
- These churches were located in a variety of places, such as Corinth, Rome, Ephesus, etc., etc.
- The church is married to Christ (Rom. 7:4). Such being the case, should it not wear His name?
- Jesus purchased the church “with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). Should it not wear His name?

So what? My point is this - I’m not a “Church of Christ preacher.” That is simply a denominational concept. Those who preach the gospel are just that - preachers of the gospel. A Christian is just that - a Christian (Acts 11:26; 1 Pet. 4:16). There is no such thing as hyphenated Christianity. There is no “Church of Christ Christian” or “Baptist Christian” or “Methodist Christian.” Calling yourself by one of those names indicates that you’re dedicated to a particular religious movement. How about we just be Christians only and dispense with the man-made churches, practices, and doctrines? It can be done! You can follow just the Bible. Not the Westminster Confession of Faith or the Catechisms. Just the Bible.

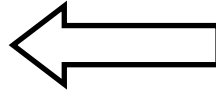
Questions?

mscoc251@gmail.com

Would You Like to Study the Bible?

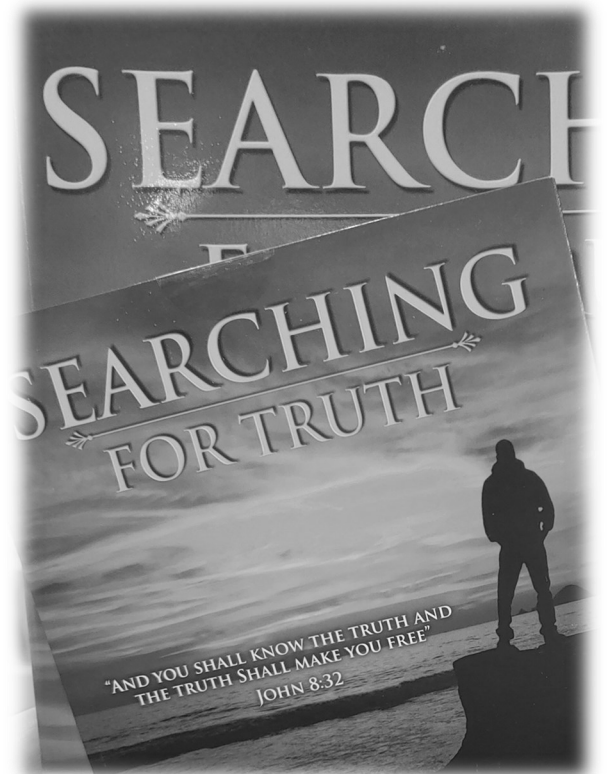
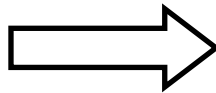
Teacher's Guide

Becoming a
CHRISTIAN
Leading accountable young people to salvation



We have workbooks for young people who would like to learn more about becoming a Christian.

A DVD and workbook combo to aid you in the pursuit of truth...



*All of the material that we offer is absolutely free!
If you're interested, let us know by using the contact info on the back.*

LOCAL POSTAL CUSTOMER

Unique features of the Church of Christ

- We use the Bible only (2 Pet. 1:3). We have no creed book, convention, or central headquarters.
- Our name is after the One who died to establish His church (Rom. 16:16).
- The church of Christ began in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3; Acts 2:1-4).
- Jesus promised to establish His church (Matt. 16:18).
- That church was purchased with Jesus' blood (Acts 20:28).
- The church is married to Christ (Rom. 7:4).
- It was established in the first century (Acts 2:41, 47).
- Jesus is the one and only Head of the One Body (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23).
- You can only be added to the church by God Himself (Acts 2:41, 47).

What about being saved?

- All people are saved by grace, though faith (Eph. 2:8-9).
- No one is saved by faith alone (Jas. 2:14-26).
- No one is saved by grace alone (Matt. 7:21).
- Jesus said that belief plus baptism will produce salvation (Mk. 16:16). That is a promise, not a command.
- The Bible teaches that repentance plus baptism produces remission of sins (Acts 2:37-38).
- Belief, confession, and baptism is seen in the account of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:37-38).
- The Corinthians heard, believed, and were baptized (Acts 18:8).
- Christ is "put on" in baptism (Gal. 3:26-27).
- The apostle Peter said that "baptism does save us" (1 Pet. 3:21).

Find us on the internet...

www.mammothspringchurchofchrist.com

Facebook - Church of Christ at Mammoth Spring

YouTube Channel - Mammoth Spring church of Christ

Instagram - mammothspringchurchofchrist

Send us an email with your Bible questions - mscoc251@gmail.com

Fulton County Gospel News Podcast is now on Podbean, Spotify, and Google Podcasts

Mammoth Spring church of Christ
110 S 3rd St/PO Box 251
Mammoth Spring, AR 72554
(870) 625-3217

Sunday Classes for all ages - 10 AM
Sunday Worship - 10:45 & 6:00
Wednesday Classes for all ages - 7:00 PM
Facebook Live Stream Study - Mon-Thu - 11:00 AM