

**A Broken World and Jesus Loves Me (US):
March 3, 2021**

It's hard to be a parent.
I think the problem...
Has something to do with...

You've lived so much life.
You're older..
And been through some serious stuff...

Then you see your children...
Fixing to make a mistake.
Heading toward a cliff.
Embracing a bad decision.

And you want to yell...
At the top of your lungs.
Stop!... Just stop!
Hoping to protect them... yes?

But maybe something a little more...
Maybe we want to assert our authority.
Claim greater wisdom.
Show them... who we are...
And what we know.

So... subconsciously...
Or sometimes consciously.
We want them..
To acknowledge...
Our superiority.

And hear us when we say...
That's not the way you do it.
That's not right.
That is clearly NOT what I would do.

Maybe that's ok...
When you're raising children... at first...
When you're trying to teach them...
Right from wrong.

But... it doesn't work forever.
Eventually... they will resent your sanctimonious opinions.
They will need to make their own decisions.
They need to be responsible for their own lives.

And we... need to understand...
They will make mistakes.
They will be hurt by this mean old world.
They will come to us...
Crying in the middle of night.

Just like us.

Ok. Now... the impossible task of the night...
Summarizing Chapter 6-10...
Of the book Unoffendable...

Let's begin with the truth...
That the world is broken.
It's not the way we want it to be.
And it's definitely not the way...
God wants it to be.

But... like we said last week...
At some point...
In the course of our faith journey...
We should begin to understand...
That we all sin and fall short of the glory of God.

The brokenness...
Of the world..
And of other people...
Should not surprise us...

And saying that...
Is not cynical...
Or giving up...
Or anything sad like that.

It's just living with realistic expectations.

And once we seriously embrace...
The brokenness of the world...
Then... we can stop being offended by it.

And we can THANK GOD...
That God has intervened...
INTO our brokenness...
Through Jesus.

And we can rejoice...
That God is still... breaking through into our lives...
Even today.

So.... it's not just pain and suffering.
There is good stuff too.

The way Brant Hansen writes it:

War is not exceptional; peace is.
Worry is not exceptional; trust is.
Decay is not exceptional; restoration is.
Anger is not exceptional; gratitude is.
Selfishness is not exceptional; sacrifice is.

Defensiveness is not exceptional; love is.

And judgmentalism is not exceptional; BUT GRACE IS.
And the exceptional stuff in our lives...
Reveals the Kingdom of God.

That's why... at our house...
We watch the last 5 minutes...
Of the NBC Nightly News...

Because we know...
That Lester Holt is going to have...
A heart-warming positive story...
At the end of the news.

After all the hard things...
He just told us about...
Going on the world...
Around us.

He ends the broadcast...
With a positive story.

To give us a glimmer of hope.
And a glimpse of...
The Kingdom of God...
Breaking through.

So that's the battle for us... right?
It's a battle between...
Being thankful for the incredibly Beauty...
That God reveals to us...
When the Kingdoms is breaking through.

As opposed to...
Focusing on our anger and frustration...
With situations...
And people...
And stewing in our own stench.

Those are the choices.

Hansen writes... they can't coexist.
Anger drains your life...
Gratitude fills your life...
With wonder.

And he invites us...
To choose wisely.

And besides...
Being angry...
And offended...

And self-righteous...
All the time...

Is exhausting.
When we realize...
That we can not control other people...

When we come to grips...
With the fact...
That our outrage...
Toward a neighbor...
On the next dog neighbor website...
Or whatever social media...
Really does not make a positive difference...
At all.

When we understand that hating someone...
Usually doesn't lead...
To greater understanding...
Between you and the hated person.

Then.
Maybe it's just a good idea.
To give it up.
Let it go.
And come to Jesus.

I mean... aren't you tired...
Of being frustrated and angry?

Ain't you tired?

Come to Jesus...
And he promises...
That he will give you rest.

Which means...
When we trust that Jesus is the Savior of the World...
Which includes all people... us...
And even people we don't like.

I mean... you know that right?
Jesus loves the whole world.
All the people.
Not just you and me...
And the people we love.

Jesus loves all people.

Anyway... when we trust that he is the Savior...
Then we can STOP.

Brant Hansen writes... we can...

Quit thinking it's up to you to police people,
And that God needs you to "take a stand."
God "needs" nothing.

Quit trying to parent the whole world.
Quit offering advice when exactly zero people have asked for it.
Quit being shocked when people don't share your morality.
Quit serving as judge and jury, in your own mind, of that person who just cut you off in traffic.
Quit thinking you need to "discern" what others' motives are.
And quit rehearsing in your mind what that other person did to you.
IT'S ALL SO EXHAUSTING.

Jesus invites us...
To give it all up...
And come to him...
And rest.

Ok. One more point tonight...
From the book. Hansen writes:

Our sense of entitlement to anger...
Is directly proportional to our perception...
Of our own relative innocence.

Which is a lovely way of saying...
We feel like we can judge other people...
And be angry with them...

Because...
In our heads...
We are morally superior.
And not as guilty as them.

But you know...
That is NOT biblical.
Not at all.

As a matter of fact...
It's one of the main points...
Of the ministry of Jesus.

The idea...
That we actually don't have any right...
To judge other people...
Because judgement...
Is a task reserved...
For the one who is worthy.
And the only one who is worthy...
Is God.

And you and I are NOT God.

And then Hansen writes about the biblical support...
To this idea of being... just as guilty...

As everyone else.

And one of the stories he points to...
Is the Unforgiving or Unmerciful Servant.

You know the story.
About a king...
Who was settling up accounts...
With his servants.

And there was this one guy....
Who owed him... 10,000 bags of gold!
I'm not even sure how you build up that much debt.
But he did.
That's what he owed.

But he wasn't able to pay the king back...
So the king ordered that his wife and his children...
Be sold... in order to pay back the debt.

How terrible is that...
Your family sold because of your debt.

The servant begged for mercy.
And to his shock and amazement...
Mercy was granted.
As more than that...
The entire debt was forgiven.

BUT... when the servant went out...
He found a fellow servant...
Who owed him... one hundred silver coins.
Not much compared to the servants forgiven debt.

But the first servant would not let it go.
He grabbed the other man..
Around the neck...
And started choking him.

He had him thrown in prison...
Until he could pay the debt.

Doesn't this story upset you?
Doesn't it make you angry...
That the servant...
Who has been given...
Freedom.
And life.
And second chance.
From the king...

REFUSES... to see himself...
In the other person...

REFUSES... to understand...
That he has stood under greater condemnation...
Than the person he REFUSES to forgive?

Doesn't that just make you want to scream...
YOU HYPOCRITE!
YOU JERK!
YOU COMPLETELY UNAWARE MORON!

Then. In the silence of our souls...
In much more gentle tones...
Doesn't it make us think...
About ourselves?

Doesn't it make you think...
I do that.
I do that exact same thing.
To other people around me.

Listen.
I can't even begin to tell you...
How good God has been to me.

And I can't even begin to tell you...
How much I don't deserve...
The grace and love...
That I have received.

How much I owe God.
And how I cannot pay...
What I owe.

Have I told you.
How Christ.
Had mercy on me.
And paid the debt I owed.
And did it... for me.

My debt is gone.
I am free.

Now. Knowing that about myself.
Don't you think...
It should affect...
My attitude toward others.

That instead of being angry...
With them all the time...
That I could stop.
And think about...
What God has done for me.

And what that same kind of grace...

Could really mean...
In the life of someone else.

Refusing to be offended...
By other people...
Is a powerful door-opener.
To actual relationships.

What would happen...
If I gave up the pretend...
"HOLIER THAN THOU" act...

And just loved people...
Without thinking that it's up to me...
To judge them.
Or to change who they are.

What if I really loved them.
Met them where they were.
And let go of my need...
To fix them.

And instead commended them...
To the love and power of God.

Isn't that the kind of love...
That could change the world?