

## **Title: Don't Be Offended – Part 1**

Text: Luke 7:18-23

Date: March 8, 2026

Proverbs 3:23 tells us that if we keep our eyes firmly fixed on God's word, *"we will walk on our way securely, and our feet will not stumble."* And so, if you have your copy of God's word with you this morning, and I hope you do, please turn to Luke 7. We're going to be looking at verses 18-35. Well, begin looking at verses 18-35 this morning, which is a passage that I have entitled Don't Be Offended. And that's not only my title for this passage, it's also the opening admonition that I'd like to give all of you before we begin these next few messages. Don't be offended. And the reason why I feel the need to say this up front is because some of the truths that we're going to be looking at over the next couple of weeks might offend some of you. And I just want you to know it's nothing personal. So don't be offended.

As, and I know as I was thinking about this topic this past week, it actually shows me how intensely relevant this specific passage is to us and the context in which we find ourselves today because it deals with the current skin condition that has swept across our nation. It's a condition that's causing untold damage to countless individuals. And that condition is called being thin-skinned. Yes, friends, one of the biggest idols in America today has this title written across the bottom, our feelings. We see this all over the place. Our feelings is the ruling dictator of our culture's actions. If it feels good, do it. And it is the ruling dictator of our arguments.

We've all heard the phrase; you've hurt my feelings. Have you ever noticed whenever that grievance shows up, it instantly trumps everything else in its importance. It doesn't matter what was said, why it was said, or even how it was said. It could have been as simple of a statement as the sky is blue, but if it hurts someone's feelings, we're told it never should have been said. It doesn't matter if it was the truth. It doesn't matter if it was spoken out of love and concern. It doesn't even matter if it was communicated very carefully by the person who delivered it or whether the supposed slight was even intentional or not. The only thing that matters is you've offended me.

And what's really interesting when you think about it is for all of its supposed concern over the feelings, the argument, it hurt my feelings, is actually a form of verbal bondage because there's nothing that the other person can do about it. How can I control your feelings? I can't. You're the one in control of your feelings. And if I'm never to offend your feelings, then that means that I'm enslaved to do whatever your feelings want me to do, whether it is right or not because all that matters today is never offend, never hurt people's feelings. It's what our culture says. And then here we are, disciples of Jesus Christ, and we step into the picture. We who are followers of the one whom scripture calls a stumbling block and a rock of offense. We come onto the scene, bearers of divine truth that is universally binding on all people at all times. I mean, by the very nature of our calling and our message, when you look at how we as believers are described in scripture, you are confronted with the reality that we are going to offend people.

Now, to be clear, we do not set out to offend anyone, and we certainly don't want to. Deliberately making people angry at you is not generally a good evangelistic approach. As 2 Timothy 2:24-25 says, *"The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents even with gentleness. In hope that God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth."* So, while we never seek to offend anyone, the fact does nevertheless remain that even when we kindly and patiently and gently share the truth of God's word with other people, the fact is we are going to offend people by the nature of what we're sharing. And I'm speaking to all of you who have trusted in Christ as your Savior, you need to accept that believer.

As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1:23, *"we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block of offense to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles."* And again, as Paul says in Galatians 5:11, *"the cross is offensive."* And so, if all you're worried about is never offending people, then you will never be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Remember what Jesus said back in chapter 6, if you remember, the only people who never offend anyone is who? Do you remember? False teachers. As Jesus said in Luke 6:26, *"Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to,"* who, *"the false prophets."* You see, being a faithful disciple and sharer of Jesus Christ means that you will offend people even when being kind and patient and gentle and spirit filled. It's not a question of if, but of when and how.

And so, the real issue is when people do get offended at us for being disciples and followers of Jesus Christ and proclaimers of his truth, and they say to us, you hurt my feeling or you offended me, how are we as believers to respond to that? Well, there are three responses that we could give when someone comes up to us and says, I'm offended. The first response is to completely submit yourself to the slavery of their offended feelings and to live the rest of your life never saying anything that might ever offend anyone. Unfortunately, this is the approach that most Christians in our culture take today, and it is the approach that our culture wants us to have.

The second way to respond to those who are offended by the truth is to completely disregard their offended feelings and to live the rest of your life saying, whatever you want to say and however you want to say it. Sadly, many more Christians are starting to pick up that approach in our culture today. But there's actually a third way to respond to people who are offended by the truth, and that is as Jesus did with discerning love. And this is the approach that the passage before us today encourages and equips us to take. This account in Luke 7:18-35 reminds us that those who are offended when we speak the truth are often not offended for the same reasons. And therefore, we should respond to them accordingly with discerning love.

And we're going to learn from this passage that people can be offended by the sharing of truth in three ways. In three ways. First, because there is an ignorance of God's word. That's in verses 18-23. Second, because there's a rejection of God's word. That's in verses 24-30. And then third, because there's a disregard for God's word. And that's in verses 31-35. Now we don't have time to go through all three of those reasons this morning, so we'll just start with the first one. That people can be offended by the sharing of the truth first because of an ignorance of God's word. And we'll see that today laid out for us in Luke 7:18-23.

So, with that in mind, if you would please stand with me if you're able, out of attention and honor for the word of God as I get to read our passage before us today from Luke 7, starting in verse 18 on into verse 23. Our author, Dr. Luke, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit writes these words for us. In Luke 7:18.

*"The disciples of John reported all of these things to him. And John, 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?' 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?' In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. 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. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."*

Don't be offended.

This is the word of God whose law is our delight so that we do not perish in our afflictions.

Let's pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for this word that's set before us today. Father, we thank you for the author. We thank you for Dr. Luke, who all those years ago sought to write down all these firsthand accounts so that we would have record of them, so that we would have confidence concerning the things that have been taught. Father, we thank you for how your spirit superintended the writing of this book so that it would show us the glory of your son, Jesus Christ, and his significance to our lives and our day. Father, I pray that as we see the glory of Jesus Christ from this passage, that you would keep us from being offended, but rather that we would see Christ and love him more dearly. Father, I pray that you would work in our hearts and our minds this morning by your spirit for your glory.

We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

You may be seated.

So, how do we as followers of Jesus Christ respond to those who are offended when they are ignorant of God's word? That's in verses 18-23. And what we see in verse 18 is that after Jesus finished his sermon on discipleship, after he healed that centurion servant, and after he raised miraculously in the sight of the town of Nain, the widow's son, verse 18 tells us that *"the disciples of John,"* that is of John the Baptist, *"reported all of these things to him."* Now, you have to ask yourself, oh, wait a second, why is John's disciples reporting these things to John? I mean, why isn't John out there following Jesus for himself?

And the answer is, if you remember back in chapter 3:19, we were told there that *"Herod the tetrarch, who had been reprovved by John for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison."* So, John the Baptist isn't following Jesus directly as a disciple at this moment, because he is in prison, because he did something that was very John-like. He

walked straight up to Herod and rebuked him to his face concerning the sin that he was engaged in with Herodias and about all the evil things he'd ever done, especially that immorality, though, with his sister-in-law. I mean, John did not tread lightly. He got specific in his call to repentance. And that is why Matthew 14:3-4 states that *"Herod seized John and bound him and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because John kept on saying to him, 'It is not lawful for you to have her.'"* And so, John's in prison at this time, in an isolated place, according to the Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, in a wilderness fortress called Fort Machaerus.

And while in prison, John can't see or hear any of Jesus' miracles or teachings for himself. And that is why there's this back and forth that's happening here in this passage between John's disciples and Jesus in order to keep John up to date with Jesus' ministry. As Matthew 11:2 says, *"John heard in prison the works of Christ."* And so, it says, end of verse 18 into 19, *"And John, 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?'"* Now evidently, this report that John was receiving from his disciples about Jesus was giving him a little bit of concern. John was starting to wonder at this moment, is Jesus really the coming one, the Messiah?

If you remember, even John taught back in Luke 3:16, that there is someone *"who is mightier than I, who is coming."* And he was wondering, was Jesus really this person? Now you might ask this morning, well, why was John asking that question? I mean, wasn't he there when the spirit descended upon Jesus at his baptism and when the father declared, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* And wasn't John the one who declared to his own disciples, *"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!"* John said all of these things. So, what's going on with his question here?

Well, let's take a step back and appreciate the fact first that John, whom Jesus is going to say shortly, was the greatest man who ever lived. Even John wrestled with doubts sometimes. That is so encouraging. He did. After a lifetime of faithfulness, John's rewarded with imprisonment and eminent threat of death. And he's got some questions. He's trying to figure out how does all this make sense in light of what I know to be true about the Messiah.

You see, John had been taught by his father, Zechariah, who said all the way back in chapter 1, this is a long way back for you guys, that the Messiah's arrival would be heralded by deliverance from their enemies and by the shedding of light to those in darkness in the shadow of death. And you know, just as Jesus declared in Luke 4, that the coming of the Messiah would be marked by *"setting at liberty those who are captive and oppressed."* And so, John declares the arrival of the Messiah and what happens? He's thrown into prison by his enemies and into darkness and is facing the shadow of death. Where's the liberty? Where's the conquest? Where's the deliverance? None of what John has been teaching is happening.

If you remember, John taught these very things back in chapter 3. John's preaching had a very distinctive style. He came up to the Jewish crowds, or they came up to him, and he began with an unbelievable introduction. *"You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"* And then he proceeds to teach them that when the Messiah would arrive, he would immediately baptize everyone with the Holy

Spirit in fire, that his winnowing fork was already in his hand to separate the wicked under furious judgment, to burn the chaff, to be burnt like chaff, and that his gleaming ax was already laid to the foot of the tree. These are the things that John had taught.

And now John is doubtlessly anticipating all of that to happen when this person arrives. This person arrives and all of these things that he had been taught and prophesying would immediately come to pass. And so, when John starts hearing these secondhand reports, that Jesus, rather than burning sinners, is feasting with them and healing them and offering them mercy and forgiveness, John's a little confused, perhaps even a little upset, as can be seen later by Jesus's warning in verse 23. And you can understand why John might be a little bit upset and confused.

He's just faithfully announced him who sets the prisoner free, only to then be imprisoned. He's announced him who drives away the darkness, only then to be thrown into darkness. He's just announced him who is the judge of the nations, only to find that this one is offering salvation to them. Jesus wears the winnowing fork, wears the axe, wears the fire. This doesn't seem to match Scripture's eschatological expectations. None of them are necessarily in contradiction with them, but it doesn't seem to be in total conformity with what John was expecting.

So, what's the deal? John needed, as Peter put it, a more sure word of testimony. He needed to hear the truth from the mouth of the Lord himself. And so, in verse 20, John sends two disciples to Jesus, because remember, as Deuteronomy 19:15 states, *"in the presence of two or three witnesses should all things be established."* And so, these disciples are carrying a very, very important question. It is the question, by the way, that all the world asks of Jesus. Who is this miracle-working prophet of Galilee? Everyone says he is a great prophet, but how great is he? Verse 20, *"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?'"* That is the pressing question, ladies and gentlemen.

Ever since Deuteronomy 18:15, when Moses predicted that there would be a prophet who is greater, that would come after him, one who would not just speak for the Lord, but who would speak God's words directly to him, you must listen. Ever since that day, all of redemption history has been wondering, *"Is this the one who was to come, or shall we wait for another?"* This goes all the way through the Old Testament. As you're seeing, certain people seem to start matching the criteria and then fall short. This expectation leads up to Christ himself, and they ask the question of Christ, *"Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"* Are you the hope of the ages or not? This is a very important question.

It is a question that is answered in the negative by Orthodox Judaism, by Islam, by Mormonism, by every cult and false religion on the face of the earth. They would all say, Jesus, he is a great prophet. He is not the final revelation from God though. Eternity depends on the true answer to this question. Who is Jesus? *"Is he the one who is to come, or are we still waiting for another?"* And so, they come up to him, Jesus, I just want to hear this from you. Are you really the Messiah, the anointed one that we've been looking for the ages, or are you not? And I need to be clear here, John was a little confused and upset at Jesus perhaps, not because he was an unbeliever, as we'll see with the Pharisees very soon, but because he didn't have, or

he wasn't considering all the information. John thought that the fullness of the kingdom of God was going to be established right then.

John did not understand that Jesus first, as the Old Testament prophets have predicted, that Jesus first must be rejected by Israel, turn to the Gentiles, establish the church age, which has gone on for almost 2000 years, and then come back to set up the fullness of his earthly kingdom. He was ignorant of what Paul would later call the mystery of the gospel, the church age, the saving grace of salvation being extended to all people. John was and perhaps had been taught to be ignorant of certain parts of God's word. Now, John could have understood, this is why Jesus says later in Matthew 22:29, "*You are mistaken, not understanding the scriptures.*" And that is the truth.

See, the scriptures do more than just talk about the Messiah ruling, don't they? If you spent any time in God's word, you know that it's like in Isaiah 53 of the suffering servant or of Psalms 22, God talks about the Messiah first suffering before he would ever rule. God talks about the Messiah dying as the final and ultimate sacrifice for sins, just as John himself had declared, "*the lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!*" John could have understood, and Jesus could have been very frustrated and impatient with him. Jesus could have been irritated that John was so ignorant of God's word so as to be offended potentially by his teaching. But Jesus isn't.

Jesus responds to John being offended out of ignorance with discerning love. And he responds in a very kind and in a very gracious way. Notice Jesus doesn't answer immediately. It says in verse 21, "*In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight.*" The phraseology here is to suggest that Jesus just kind of, they asked the question and he just kind of keeps on carrying on with what he's already doing. Healing many people from all sorts of afflictions and diseases and demons, even giving sight back to the blind. And finally, after a period of exhibiting inexhaustible and infinite power to those two disciples of John, I can almost imagine kind of Jesus turning to them and then saying, I'm sorry, what were you asking again? And they're like, well, to be clear, it's not us, it's actually John. Do you want to ask the question again? But he was wondering, not us, whether you might be the Messiah, right?

I mean, imagine the weight of the argument that has been silently building up as they see Jesus silently and effortlessly sending out this unstoppable healing power to absolutely everyone who's around him. By the end of it, I am sure that those two disciples felt absolutely ridiculous for ever having asked the question. I mean, how can you walk away from such an explosive display of power like that and still think that Jesus is just a good teacher? Can I ask the same question to that, to you as well? How can people look at the person of Jesus today in our culture and say, you know what, he taught some really good morals let's look at that. And not consider the person who spoke those teachings, who went and healed people of every disease. He is not just a good teacher. He is something far, far greater. That's exactly Jesus's point.

After he displays all that power, look at verse 22. And it says, "*And he answered them, 'Go and tell John what you have seen and heard.'*" So, John's wondering if I'm the promised one sent from God, then go and tell him what you have seen and heard today. Notice how gently Jesus gives John the truth that he needed

to cure his offended ignorance. He just slowly and quietly shows those two men all the evidence that John would ever need. What a loving and patient savior we have, do we not? Because sometimes we ask stupidly obvious questions of Jesus too, do we not? Oh, I'm alone, okay, that's good.

Sometimes we're confused about all the details of God's word, right? Sometimes we confuse what's supposed to happen and when it's supposed to happen too. And even like John, sometimes we wish our life was different than it's currently happening as well, don't we? And yet Jesus is so kind and gentle in never giving up on us. And he just keeps on patiently giving us the truth we need to see life from his perspective. And so, Jesus does that here. John's wants to know if I'm the Messiah, then go and tell John what you've seen and heard today. *"The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them."* Notice Jesus doesn't say, hey, tell John he's got his eschatology all wrong. Tell him to go read Henebury or some other book like that. No, he just says, tell John how everything that you have seen and heard today was one grand display of supernatural divine power that the Old Testament has made very clear that only the Messiah could perform.

For example, in Isaiah 26:19, we're confronted with a messianic promise of physical resurrections from the dead when the Messiah comes. We're told in Isaiah 26:19 that when the Messiah comes to earth, *"Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead."* And then three chapters later, in Isaiah 29:18-19, we see a messianic promise of physical healing. *"In that day the deaf shall hear and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see."* And again, six chapters later after that, Isaiah 35:5-6, 700 years before Jesus ever came, *"the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; and shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute shall sing for joy."* And again, in Isaiah 61:1, which Jesus already quoted back in chapter 4, we're told that when the Messiah comes, he would be spiritually empowered to preach good news to the poor. Believe me, as the son of a priest, John would have known the Old Testament. And after studying John's preaching already here as a church, we know that he knew well the prophet Isaiah.

And so, Jesus says, go and tell John the things that you've seen and the things that you've heard, not only of my teaching, but the things that you've been hearing your whole life long. Tell him that Isaiah is being fulfilled to the letter. *"The blind are receiving their sight, the lame are walking, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf are hearing, the dead are being raised up, and the poor are having good news preached to them."* The 600-year-old texts are being fulfilled before your eyes, and so go and tell John that the king of the kingdom has arrived. Go and tell John that the Messiah, the one who is to come, is here.

Did you notice the progressive importance of everything that is mentioned here, by the way? The blind see, cool. The lame walk, wow. The lepers are cleansed. The deaf hear, the dead live. And here's the most significant part. And the poor have good news preached to them, just like was prophesied. See, the good news is being preached to those who are spiritually bankrupt. The good news of salvation is being preached to sinners, that there is a way of forgiveness being offered. And that is the most important part, if you remember.

Back in chapter 4, Jesus had healed an entire town of their diseases, but the point wasn't his healing power. They asked him to stay and keep on doing that forever, free healthcare. And he says in verse 43, no, "*I must,*" go and listen to this, "*preach the good news to other towns as well.*" That was why he had come, to offer salvation and new life eternal for the forgiveness of sins through faith in him. Do you know what Jesus has just done here for John? Jesus has authenticated the message he is preaching by his miracles. Remember, John was having a hard time accepting that salvation and forgiveness could be the Messiah's message, because at first glance, it looks so different than John's own. And so, Jesus kindly gives John the truth he needed. "*The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news preached to them.*" This has always been predicted, John. I am the Messiah. I am the promised one. I'm the saving sovereign of all. So don't be offended, believe. That's what Jesus says in verse 23, and here we come to the crux of the matter.

After Jesus tells John that he's simply preaching the good news to the poor, as Isaiah foretold, with the immediate focus on the message that Jesus is preaching, Jesus then says in verse 23, "*And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.*" See, the person who is eternally blessed by God is the person, is the same person who is not offended by what Jesus has said or done. That word *offended* is the same word from which we get our words scandalized, and it is a word that means to cause someone to stumble or to fall into ruin.

You know, it's very possible for a person to be offended by Jesus. In fact, we see that in our culture everywhere. People can't stand the fact that Jesus actually said marriage is between one man and one woman. They can't stand the fact that he actually condemned divorce. They can't stand the fact that Jesus actually sent out messengers telling the entire world that unrepentant sinners will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Yes, even the sins of homosexuality, adultery, drunkenness, and deception. They can't stand the fact that Jesus would actually call them sinners, that he would actually say that he is the only way of salvation. "*No one comes to the Father but by him.*" The world is scandalized by this teaching. And we can actually look at this even more from John's perspective this morning.

People can't stand the fact that Jesus actually calls his followers to show godly love and respect to everybody. They can't stand the fact that Jesus calls on them to love their enemies. They can't stand the fact that Jesus actually fills churches full of people who though saved are nevertheless still sinners and hypocrites in many areas of their lives. They can't stand the fact that instead of praying for judgment upon our political enemies and nation, Jesus actually calls on us to pray for their salvation and for the revival of our country. People on every side you can imagine are offended by Christ's person. He's not God. They're offended by his preaching of what he taught, and they are offended by his providence. This is the life that he has called me to live. Whatever it might be, Jesus's words ring true today. Blessed is the one who is not offended by me.

John, by your disordered expectations and ignorance of God's word, do not be upset by the good news that I am preaching. Don't be offended at it. Believe it. Humble yourself. Recognize you are one of those sinners that needs to be saved and come to me. Come to me and believe. And John did, by the way. He absolutely did. We know this because the end of his story is given later in Matthew 14. After Jesus gives

John, through those two disciples, firsthand witness to all that he did and after Jesus ties it right back to Isaiah's prophecies, John never asks another question of Christ in that prison. And John is faithful unto death.

We read in Matthew 14:10 that Herod sent and *"had John beheaded while in prison, and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came and took the body and buried it."* And here's the important part. *"And they went and told Jesus."* Now, why would they tell Jesus? It's because Jesus was John's Messiah, the one that he was trusting in, even unto death. And he died, not offended by Christ, but believing in him, knowing that he was the one to come. And in Christ and in Christ alone, John found eternal blessings. This is the discerning love that Jesus shows John when through ignorance of God's word, he was in danger of being offended.

So, in conclusion, the first thing I want you to think about today is to not be offended. Are you offended by some of the things that Jesus has said or done in his word? Then I would encourage you, rather than holding on to that offense, understand that your eternal destiny hangs on it and seek the truth and seek Christ while he may be found. Do what John did here. Come to Jesus with your doubts and fears. Come humbly to his word and he will give you, as he gave John, the truth that is needed to turn your heart from being offended to believing. And if you need help with that, if there's a particular area that you are stuck in, I would encourage you, the body of Christ exists for a reason. Talk to one of us and we would love to sit down and talk to you about the truth of Christ, of who he is, of what he taught, and of the new life that he offers. Don't be offended. Come to Christ and believe. Don't be offended.

Second, for the rest of us, I would encourage you, follow Christ's example. We are seeing here in these next few chapters how Jesus approached making disciples. Brothers and sisters in Christ, don't you dare try to make disciples any other way than Jesus did. I want you to follow Christ's example. John the Baptist was in a sense in danger of being offended by Jesus's message and mission because he was ignorant of God's truth. And so how did Jesus respond? Did Jesus back away from the truth? Did he say, well, I gave you the Roman's road, what's wrong with you? Or did he sit there and say, hmm, maybe there's something else I need to talk to them about the word of God. Jesus didn't back away from the truth, and he didn't treat John like an unbelieving Pharisee or an apathetic crowd member.

No, Jesus in discerning love knew that John's offense sprang from ignorance and so he patiently gave John what he needed, a fuller view of the truth. He doesn't grow impatient. He doesn't rebuke John for a weakness of faith. He just calmly and patiently gives him more truth. Like the two doubting disciples on the Emmaus road or like Pilgrim in doubters castle, all John needed was the key of truth. He needed the scriptures open, and he needed the word of God shared with understanding patience. We who are disciples of Christ need to follow in his footsteps. As we declare that Jesus is the rock of offense, the chief cornerstone, the saving sovereign of all, we need to be prepared not only to offend some people, but also then to respond to their offense with discerning love and patiently giving them truth as they are yet ignorant of God's truth. That by God's grace, they might understand the truth and join us in being faithful to Jesus Christ, even unto death. Do not be offended, follow Christ.

And this is the word of God from Luke 7:18-23, which I consider a great privilege to be able to share with you today, in which I commit to your further study and your faithful obedience until Jesus who is the Christ comes.

And to that end, let's pray.

Father, I thank you so much this morning for revealing to us once again, the glory of your son, Jesus Christ. Father, as we live in a culture that would like to make Christ the mascot for all our movements, I pray that you would remind us once again today that Christ is no servant of man, but he is Lord of heaven and earth. And the truth he speaks is a double-edged sword piercing the dividing of sunder of the soul and spirit of the joints and martyr and is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And so, Father, I pray that we would recognize that Jesus is not someone that we try to match to our ideals, but he is the Lord to whom we bend the knee and listen. So, Father, I pray that if there is someone here today who has been walking in the pride of their heart and trying to make Jesus in their own image, I pray that they would confess that sin this morning and they would commit themselves to coming to know Christ as he truly is.

Father, I pray that you would give that soul the truth they need to see Christ in truth. And I pray the same for all of us who have been walking with Christ for many years, may we, Father, continually bow the knee to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and listen to him direct from his word so that we might be changed by it. Father, help us also to follow Christ's example as we go into this next week, as we are surrounded by many people who have a deficient view of Jesus. Help us to declare the truth of who he is, but with patience, kindness, and gentleness so that we might discern where their hearts are, that by your grace, you might perhaps lead them to a knowledge of the truth. Help us to be tools for the gospel, not obstacles this week, we pray.

In Jesus' name, amen.

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