

GG Discussion Questions

Don't Be Offended - Part 3

Read Luke 7:31-35

Select among the following questions those most helpful to you:

1. Jesus says the people of "this generation" are like children in the marketplace who won't play along no matter what game is proposed. Read the fable in vv. 31-32 carefully. What is the deeper spiritual condition Jesus is diagnosing with this image – beyond mere stubbornness? Why is apathetic disregard for God's Word described in the sermon as more dangerous than outright anger at it?
2. The message defines "this generation" as a broader term in Scripture than our modern 20-25 year cultural category – typically meaning everyone alive during the period being referenced, used as an example and warning for future generations. Read Psalm 78:8 and Hebrews 3:10. How does understanding this biblical usage change the way you read Jesus' words here – and how does it apply the warning to us today?
3. The crowd criticized John for being "too serious" and "too separated" from culture, yet they criticized Jesus for being insufficiently serious and too socially inclusive. The sermon argues the real offense was never the preachers' style – it was their shared message. Can you think of a time when you (or someone you know) critiqued a preacher's delivery, tone, or style in a way that was actually a deflection from the discomfort of the message itself? How do we guard against this in ourselves?
4. The message references Ezekiel 33:30-32, where God warns Ezekiel that people come to hear him as if attending an entertainment performance – moved by the artistry, but unchanged by the truth. In what ways does

contemporary church culture risk producing this same dynamic? What habits or practices help us come to the Word of God as nourishment rather than as consumers seeking an experience?

5. The message makes a striking claim about John the Baptist: he grew up in the wilderness knowing "absolutely little to nothing about the culture in which he lived," yet God drew all Israel to his ministry. The application drawn is: "We don't need to know our culture half as much as we need to know our God." How do you respond to that claim? Where is the line between being culturally informed for the sake of communication and over-investing in cultural relevance at the expense of knowing Scripture?
6. Jesus' response to the fickle crowd in v. 35 is striking in its simplicity: "*Wisdom is justified by all her children.*" He doesn't argue, doesn't try to re-strategize his ministry, and doesn't agonize. Read Proverbs 30:5, Proverbs 20:11, and Isaiah 55:10-11. What does it look like practically to trust that God's Word will prove itself true in people's lives – especially when you're being criticized or dismissed for sharing it?
7. In Luke 9:5, Jesus instructs the disciples to "*shake the dust off their feet*" when a town refuses to receive them – a command to move on without bitterness. Yet in Luke 9:54, James and John immediately leap to wanting to call down fire from heaven when people reject Jesus. The message diagnoses this as what happens when you stop trusting the power of God's Word. What are the modern equivalents of "calling down fire" – the extreme measures people resort to when they lose confidence in the gospel's power?

8. The message presents three categories requiring three different responses: patient instruction for the ignorant, bold confrontation for the militant rejecter, and moving on for the apathetic disregarder. What makes it difficult to accurately diagnose which category someone is in? What questions might you ask yourself – or even the person – to help discern which response is most appropriate?
9. Philippians 2:15 calls us to *"shine as lights in the world in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation."* Given everything in this passage about how the crowd projects their own fickleness onto the messengers of God's Word, what does it look like to be a faithful, non-defensive witness to the truth in a culture that will always find a reason to dismiss the message? What does faithfulness look like when results are not visible?
10. The message ends with a direct personal challenge: Are you a member of this fickle generation, or a child of wisdom? Reflecting honestly on the three kinds of offense covered across this entire series – ignorance, rejection, and disregard – which of these has been (or currently is) most characteristic of your own posture toward God's Word at some point in your life? What was the turning point, or what would a turning point need to look like?

NOTE:

In light of the sermon communicating that the spirit or tone of a message is not sufficient basis for critiquing a messenger, nevertheless, there are still three positive biblical criteria by which a Christian should use to judge those who would be spiritual leaders/teachers of God's Word: content, character, and conduct.

1. **Content** – is this person speaking in agreement with the revealed Word of God (Isaiah 8:20; Deut. 13:1-4; 2 Tim. 4:2)? Are they handling and interpreting the word of the truth rightly (2 Timothy 2:15)? What is the basis/foundation of their message? What is their authority? Are they plainly teaching

what the Bible is teaching, or are they using the Bible to teach what they want to teach - even if what they want to teach is not necessarily outright heresy? Preachers are to preach the word (2 Tim. 4:2; 2 Cor. 4:2).

2. **Character** - is this person meeting the qualifications mentioned in 1 Timothy 3? Are they living in such a way that they are being an example of the believers (1 Tim. 4:12)? This is often difficult (if not impossible) to assess when only interacting with someone from a distance, which is why God designed that our primary (not only, but primary) spiritual mentors and influences be local, not distant (Hebrews 13:7). This is why a local church with it's local members, leaders, and fellowship is so important.
3. **Conduct** - is this person behaving in the way God has told them to behave? When God says they should or should not do things, do they obey and submit to his order and authority over His church (1 Tim. 2:12; 1 Cor. 14:40)? A true follower of Christ is shown by whether they submit to and follow Jesus when it's difficult to understand, not just when it's easy.

Now, there are several negative "red-flags" of false teachers I could share as well, but Romans 16:17-18 is probably the best summary, where Paul says, *"I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive."*

So false teachers speak contrary to what the Bible. They come up with "unique interpretations" that sound good to the ear, but don't line up with the Bible. They have smooth talk that flatter - that build up people's sense of self-esteem and self-importance... and the center of their messages are always you (and bettering your life), not God (and advancing his glory). Yet their messages always have just enough truth to deceive those who are not careful and discerning with the Word of God.