



Fresh Start – How Offense Makes Us Fools

Icebreaker: What do you remember most about your High School graduation?

Discuss:

- What was the Holy Spirit saying to you as Pastor Mark spoke this week?
- What is offense? - An annoyance or resentment brought about by a perceived insult to or disregard for oneself or one's standards or principles.

“You know you are a true servant when it doesn’t upset you to be treated like one.”

- Unknown

Read Together: Ecclesiastes 7:9 (ESV), Proverbs 17:9 (ESV), Proverbs 18:19 (ESV), Proverbs 18:17 (ESV), Proverbs 19:11 (ESV)

Discuss: How Offense Makes Us Fools:

- What do the Scriptures for this section say?
- **Offense makes me angry.** - Can you think of an offense that still makes you angry?
- **Offense distracts me from the relationship.** - What relationship that you value has been affected by an offense?
- **Offense hardens my heart.** In what ways have you hardened yourself due to an offense?
- **Offense distorts my view of reality.** Give an example of a time when you were convinced you were right to be offended and then you heard the other side and were humbled.

Read Together: Philippians 2:5-8 (ESV), Proverbs 10:12 (ESV), Colossians 3:12-15 (ESV), Matthew 6:14-15 (ESV), Ephesians 4:29-32 (ESV), Proverbs 18:17 (ESV), Matthew 7:3-4 (ESV)

Discuss: Four Strategies to Overlook an Offense

1. Give up your rights.
 2. Choose to Love.
 3. Choose to Forgive
 4. Ask a Question
-
- What do the Scriptures for this section say?
 - What do you fear you will lose if you give up your rights?
 - How can you choose to love when you have been offended?
 - Have you shown hatred by loving yourself more than you love others?
 - What would it look like to Forgive as the Lord forgave you?
 - What questions could you ask to bring clarity to your offended situation?

Take time to Consider:

You can discuss these with your group or journal them with you and the Lord.

Are you often offended by others?

Examine...

What rights or entitlements might Jesus be inviting you to release?

Maybe you've been holding onto an offense for a long time...

What does Jesus want you to do as a first step to resolve the matter and open the door for forgiveness?

Maybe you know that you have offended someone else...

What is Jesus asking you to do first to bring healing to that relationship?

Pray:

As you pray as a group, ask God to open your hearts to see what he wants to show you about offenses you may have in your own heart or those you have taken up for others who have been wronged. As a group, pray for open hearts, and humility to allow God to work in your brokenness.

After the group meeting, take time to ask God what rights or entitlements He sees you holding onto. Then, ask Him for a first step to take toward resolving the matter. Ask God if there is something you need to do to bring healing to the broken relationship.

Give yourself time to listen and then ask the Holy Spirit to equip you with the power needed to accomplish the first step, then the next step, and so on.