

“I’m Fine...Clearly, You’re Not” Series – Part 2
July 31, 2022 – A Life at Peace

Welcome – Locations & Online family – anyone else feel like summer has flown by?

- God is on the move – thank you to everyone who serves & leads – Excel Leadership has # finishing. We’ve seen # people take their next step of joining the team over last 2 months.
- Pastor Matt sends his love – actually driving our son Will from Indiana back home for his Senior Year of College! **PICTURE**
- Next week is move-up Sunday, praying over Kids, Students & Faculty as we head back to school.

Excited to bring God’s Word today as we pick up where Pastor Matt started last week...series called, “I’m Fine...Clearly, You’re Not.” How to Deal with Offense!

ILL: How many of us have ever been mad, hurt, offended...and when someone asks, “Are you okay?” You’ve said, “I’m fine!” (What it looks like – crossed arms, rolling eyes, slamming doors)

- How many thought we were fine and realized later that we weren’t.
- How many knew we weren’t but thought if we said it out loud it would go away?
 - THIS WAS ME – “fake it ‘til you make it” “put on a strong front” “get over it”
 - BUT I wasn’t fine. And God was okay with knowing I wasn’t...so I’ve had to learn not how to fake it, or to be strong or to get over it...
- **But how to be weak and get through it with Jesus!**

Offense is real. Offense is a big deal for us as Christ-followers. Like Ps Matt said last week... It’s Satan’s strategy in our lives & when we live offended, it affects ourself & others.

- *Look at what the writer of Hebrews said about how we should live...*

Hebrews 12:14-15 “*Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.*”

- The goal is to live in peace with EVERYONE – not just those who are like you. Those who love you.
- The goal is holiness because if we aren’t holy (if we are impure) then people can’t see God.
- If we don’t deal with the bitter roots, they will grow up, cause trouble & defile many
 - Defile: to pollute...to contaminate...
 - Offense is the poison that spoils the taste of Jesus to others.
- We need God’s grace in our lives...not bitterness!

Title of Message: A Life at Peace

PRAY

One of the biggest strategies of Satan is to keep us blinded to what offense really is & what it really is. When we are blinded, then we are deceived.

Realities of our Humanity:

- **Every day there are opportunities for offense.**
 - Major offenses or minor ones...every day we can be let down by people.
 - We walk around with expectations:
 - “I bet my boss is going to walk in and say this.”
 - “I hope my spouse does this before I get home.”
 - “If only my kids would...”
- **We all have a natural (unhealthy or ungodly) propensity to how we deal with offense.**
 - Maybe we deal with it the way our parents dealt with it. **Dad yelled / Mom silent mode**
 - Or maybe we choose the way that works best to change everyone else. **(manipulate or control.)**
 - Stuffer – fake peace **(act like there is harmony or we collect retaliation rocks to use against someone later)**
 - What is your propensity? Do you know it first?
- **We all have “go-to” reactions (triggers) that can be signs (symptoms) to let us know that we are not fine.**
 - **ILL: Anger, sadness, feeling left out, rolling eyes, running to food, lust, alcohol, writing a response on social media, shutting down, isolation...**

We are human and Jesus understands. He lived here & dealt with it too.

- The beginning of cutting off the enemy’s plan of offense in our lives is to not be deceived & instead just see it.

We are human. BUT when we follow Jesus, we don’t have to lean on our own ways of dealing with offense. And the goal is not to REACT out of our humanity, but to RESPOND like Jesus.

Paul said it this way when he was writing to the church about unity...

Ephesians 4:2-3 NLT “Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, *binding yourselves together with peace.*”

How to Respond in Peace:

1. **Live in Holiness through Forgiveness.**
 - Hebrews 12 said...make every effort to be holy...don’t let any bitter root grow up
 - When we see the trigger...when we feel the temptation to be or stay offended...forgive!

Colossians 3:13 “Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”

- **Forgive Others. Upset that our friend or spouse did that (didn’t do that).**

- Find ourselves ruminating about how they should have or shouldn't have over & over...
- **Mad or Disappointed at God - that God hasn't answered our prayer.**
 - Closed off to the Holy Spirit and His gentle whisper.
 - Forgive & really repent of our own expectations that we've put on a Good Father & Sovereign God.
- **Forgive Ourselves.**
 - The power of the cross is for us – Don't allow shame or regret to leave you in bitterness toward yourself. *"Don't fall short of the grace of God"*
 - Ephesians 6 (full armor of God) – helmet of salvation - fresh revelation of our salvation (helmet) – son / daughter - it's a weapon against offense

ILL: I know Ps Sarah "I went through freedom..." Right, so are you free? Are we daily humbling ourselves, living in holiness through forgiveness? We can live unoffendable!

- Great question...take journal: Is my heart free from hurt & offense today? Respond daily!

2. Have Honoring and Honest Conversations.

- Honoring & Honest
 - Some of us are like "Oh, I've got the honesty thing down – I'll tell you..." That's why it's honoring & honest.
 - Honor says "you are of value" (your heart, your life...I hold it with great value)
- We can Forgive & then go to them...Share how you were hurt, upset, let down...
- **Matthew 18:15** *"If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over."*
 - Go: go to them... Just the two: not gossiping or telling everyone.
 - He goes on to say if that doesn't work, go find someone else (work to get to peace)
- **ILL: Cancel Culture is so prevalent (it's the opposite of Matthew 18) - you said something I don't agree with (CANCELLED) – you have a thought different than mind (CANCELLED) – you didn't come through on what you said (CANCELLED)**
 - What about God-honoring and honest conversations?
- Reconciliation is God's #1 plan – to be reconciled to Him and us to each other
- Reconciliation is different than Forgiveness.
 - **One person can forgive, but it takes two to reconcile.**
 - Forgiveness is an interior decision; reconciliation is an outward process that God can use to restore a relationship.
 - Reconciliation requires two humble forgiving people to talk, listen, empathize and forgive like Jesus forgave us.
 - Through honoring and honest conversions, God will turn this for good & he will restore what was broken, but remove what was ungodly. That's how relationships grow!!!

Romans 12:18 *"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."*

3. Develop Healthy Boundaries and tear down walls.

- **Boundaries are different than Walls.**
 - Wall keeps the bad out & the good out -- we are left to ourselves.
 - Boundary keeps the good in & the bad out – **ILL: boundary is like a fence with a gate...**
- I think often times we get caught up in thinking that it's unloving to put up a boundary, but that's not true. Even Jesus put up healthy boundaries to keep the bad out.
 - **To others Demands.** Luke 5:15-16 He withdrew from the crowds who wanted him, for one-on-one time with the Father.
 - **To others Abuse.** Luke 4:28-30 He fought his way through the crowd that was trying to throw him off a cliff for claiming to be the Messiah.
 - **To others Entitlement.** Matthew 12:46-50 He didn't give in to his mother and brothers who tried to use their relationship with him to pull him away from the crowd he was ministering to.
- **A boundary is knowing and understanding our limits.**
 - Limited time, energy, limits on how much our heart can take from others.
 - We can reconcile with someone and still put up a healthy boundary so that trust can be rebuilt.
 - We are never commanded to trust people. But we are commanded to love.
 - Sometimes we have yoked ourselves to a relationship that is not God-honoring. We can close the fence and put up a boundary with how much time we are spending with them.
 - **ILL: Sex outside of marriage. This is where I end and you begin. I've decided to keep myself pure. I can love you & put a boundary up to say "no."**
 - **And all of the sudden we are experiencing a LIFE AT PEACE!**
- Be careful because when we've been hurt and we don't slow down with our heart - we will create WALLS instead of healthy boundaries.
 - "No one is getting in here again." "I'll never trust anyone else." "I'll never trust you."

4. Keep Forgiving what you haven't Forgotten.

- Psalm 55 David writes about the pain of betrayal from a friend who was close to him.
 - If it had been an enemy, I could endure it...but "it's you."
 - Loss of Marriage, Lost of a Close Friend, someone walked away...you can't forget...but you can forgive!
- Matthew 18 – Peter is starting to "get it" and he says how many times should I forgive?
 - **Matthew 18:22 "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!"**
 - **ILL: Continual forgiveness (daily until the wound is healed and you can touch the scar)**

5. Bless Others and Trust God.

- We can respond in our life and be a fragrance of love for others to see God through us!

Romans 12:14, 16 ¹⁴ *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.* ¹⁶ *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.*

- Some of us are offended by family members & co-workers because they have acted Ungodly...Stop expecting the world to act like Jesus.
 - They aren't following Jesus ...but we are! You aren't in control of them. You're not responsible for them.
 - BUT we are with our own heart...our own life... and if we fall for Satan's strategy of offense then we negate the love that God gave us that could be available for them!

Romans 12:17-21 ¹⁷ *Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone.* ¹⁹ *Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.* ²⁰ *On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."*

- It's time to stop the reaction of evil for evil.
- Let God be God. We don't get to decide what kind of revenge is required for our pain.
- Some of us are one act of kindness away from feeling breakthrough in our lives.
- Reconciliation is not the same as love & praying blessing (*they won't reconcile...you've tried...we can still love, pray blessings*)
 - We don't have to have a relationship in order to pray and bless
 - ILL: Sent our landlord a card with a gift card

²¹ *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

- We don't have to fight like the world fights. We don't need to react like we've always reacted.
- We overcome the evil one in our lives, Satan's attempt to get us bitter and troubled and closed off from God and His love for others – we overcome with God's goodness!!!
- ILL: Woman who had been abused for 36 years...left husband...5 years of healing...another 9 years of walking that healing out...after 14 years, sat at a dinner table (will you pour him water?)

John stayed close to Jesus. Peter walked away but their relationship was reconciled and restored. Judas got hateful/divided, led to death. But Jesus...he paid it all...for you and for me.

INVITE EVERYONE TO STAND & WORSHIP TEAMS TO JOIN

SALVATION

CHALLENGE FOR ALL OF US: Two paths for our lives - path that leads to peace (loving others) or leads to bitterness, resentment, anger

- Do you want to choose the path of peace? If that's you...invite you to get out of your seat and join us at the altar! It's a call to live in holiness through forgiveness, courage to have conversations, tear down wall, Bless Others, Trust God...