**Cut it off!**

**Mark 9:33-** talks about how to deal with offenses. The disciples had a dispute among themselves over who was the greatest.

Jesus told them that anyone who desires to be the greatest in the kingdom of God becomes the servant of all. That servant receives others in the name of Jesus. In other words, the servant ministers to others the same love and acceptance that Jesus ministers to him.

***Mark 9:37*** *Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.*

John and the disciples encountered a man casting out devils. They did not accept him because he did not do things the way that they did. Not only did they not accept him, but also they refused to let him fellowship with them.

***Mar 9:38*** *And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us.*

Jesus said that this was not His way.

***Mar 9:39*** *But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.*

***Mar 9:40*** *For he that is not against us is on our part.*

We spend so much time trying to disqualify others because they are not like us. That is not our place. Out job is to connect people to the God who loves them and let God do his part. **Romans 14**

How do we handle it when offences come?

***Mark 9:42*** *And whosoever shall offend* ***[fall from grace, entrap, cause to stumble]*** *one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.*

***43*** *And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:*

***44*** *Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

***45*** *And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:*

***46*** *Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

***47*** *And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:*

***48*** *Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

Offenses come and we begin to judge the performance of others [and ourselves] according to Old Testament law and the flesh. The offense becomes our point of focus and we play it over and over again in our minds. We compare ourselves with one another. Who is greater? They did this or that and therefore they are wrong! That justifies my response!

When we judge others according to the law, we subject both them and ourselves to the condemnation that the law produces.

**Matthew 7:1** Judge not that you be judged.

 “If thy hand offend thee, cut it off; If thy foot offend thee, cut it off; If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out!” In other stop thinking about those things that way! No good fruit can come from it! It is better to enter into the kingdom maimed than to go into hell “where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.” Feeding on offenses keeps things festering. A worm **[maggot]** feeds on dead things. The law produces death and there is no exit from its torment if that becomes the focus. **Cut off your law thinking! It kills!**

***Galatians 5:4*** *Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.*

***Gal 5:5*** *For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.*

***Gal 5:6*** *For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.*

***Gal 5:7*** *Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?*

***Gal 5:8*** *This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.*

***Gal 5:9*** *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*

Promoting the law does not fix anything. Faith working by love does. We get along well when that is the focus. What hinders us is not coming from God. A little leaven **{a little bit of the false approach}** leavens **[causes it to ferment]** the whole lump.

Leaven is like the worm in Mark 9. It starts a fermenting process that infects everyone involved.

***Galatians 5:14*** *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

***15*** *But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.*

The way to avoid this is to not to be entangled with the yoke of bondage.

***Galatians 5:1*** *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*

Spiritual life is only quickened by the Holy Spirit. **Galatians 5:4** says that when we are justified by the law or when we are focused on the things of the flesh, we are fallen from grace. Grace is the only thing that will change hearts. Grace is defined as the divine inspiriation of God on the heart and its reflection in the life. In other words, it takes a revelation moment from God in order for any of us to be set free. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. The letter kills, but the Spirit brings life. **2 Corinthians 3:6** We are ministers of the Spirit.

Pauls said “I determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and Him crucified that the power might be of God and not of men.”

He did not evaluate people based on their circumstances or their ability to change. His focus was on the power that God had to change a person from the inside out. That same spirit that brought change to his life has been poured out upon all men and can bring change to anyone!

***1Corinthians 2:2*** *For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

***1Co 2:5*** *That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*

When offenses come put people in remembrance of who they are according to the exchange of the cross. Refer them to the power of God that gives them the ability to overcome all things. **Philemon 6; 2 Peter 1:3-9,12**

***Gal 6:1*** *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

*Gal 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

Sow spiritual words that bring life! Receive them as Christ would. Cut off every offending word that reaps corruption, that invites the worm, that leavens the lump! Do good unto all men, especially those who are of the household of faith!

***Gal 6:8*** *For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

***Gal 6:9*** *And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

***Gal 6:10*** *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

***Heb 12:14*** *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:*

***Heb 12:15*** *Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;*