

# Blessed is the One Who is not Offended By Jesus

December 3, 2023

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ Online Ministry. This week's message is titled, "Blessed is the One Who is Not Offended by Jesus." Thank you to Rhonda, Ed, and Dawn for being part of the video. The scripture reading is Matthew 10, 11-20. Happy Birthday to Brian and Chris.

## Welcome, Announcements, Prayer

Good morning. If you have any suggestions that you would like to be added to the 2024 budget, speak to Adam or Amy or one of the elders between, well, sometime soon.

Tina at the back is in charge of the Community Care Christmas Hampers. There's a sign-up sheet in the foyer. If you need more details, talk to Tina and she'll tell you what needs to go in it. We need a lot of support for people in our community right now. There's a lot of people who are struggling financially, so we need to do everything we can to help them.

Care is back doing chemo treatment again in Taiwan, so keep her in your thoughts and your prayers.

Dianne is here, but her parents are not. Jo's still out of the hospital, and she's home and doing fairly well. Sleeping a lot, but doing okay. It says here to speak to Rhonda if you can help with providing meals. Hold off on that until next week, right? Because we're okay for this week at this point with the people who've already signed up. And they also had a, Dianne had a cousin who came and brought some food yesterday. So in that way they're okay.

Pam. Pam was supposed to go to the Shaver last week on Monday, this last Monday, and ended up having a blood clot on her lungs, so she wasn't able to go. So, she is still in the Niagara Falls Hospital. Pam is not a person to complain, but she says, "I get really tired of looking at the ceiling." And she has so, so, so much appreciated, those of you who've come to visit her in the last week, and I know that there's many of you here that did. And that really was a really beneficial and good thing. So, if you can keep that up, she would so appreciate it. And some of you are thinking, I don't even know Pam. And that doesn't make any difference at all. She's thrilled to see you, and she has a way of turning the conversation back to you so you're not always feeling like, oh dear, what am I going to talk to this woman about? Because she'll draw you in. And so, if you can visit her, she would so much appreciate that, and she has so much appreciated the visits she's got so far. And I will keep you posted if they ever, when they do move her to the Shaver, but at this point, no, I think it's going to be a while actually before she moves, is my guess, but anyway. Okay, let us pray.

God, we honour you, we love you, and we are here to worship you. And we pray that we can be people who serve you. We long to be people who do your will. And we pray that you will fill us with your spirit, and please forgive us for the times that we fail. And we pray that you will be with all of us because we all suffer spiritually. We're not who we should be, spiritually, and please help us to be who we need to be spiritually. And we pray for the people who are struggling physically. And we pray that they will

continue to love you, to rely on you, to rely on your will in their lives. And we pray that you will give them peace in their circumstances. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Communion

It's evident to me that down through the centuries, there has been lots of different ways of looking at scripture and interpreting it. When it started away and way before Jesus ever showed up, the Jewish nation had been a special nation. God was making himself known to the world through the Jewish nation. And there were laws that were supposed to be followed, but they had to be interpreted. And down through the years, into New Testament time, these became great big, huge burdens for people to try to follow. The scribes and Pharisees and teachers in Jesus' day were responsible for guiding the Jewish nation, but however, they had made heavy burdens on those people. This morning in our class, Don led us from a section in Luke, and it talked about Jesus confronting these people, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees and hypocrites." And then he explains something that they're doing that's contrary to the law, or they misinterpreted the law. You see, Jesus marks a definite point in human history. We talk about 250 years BC before Christ. So, time is marked, calendars are marked by Christ, Christ's birth and Christ's death. But there's also a demarcation in terms of what's important as well. Jesus was asking these scribes and Pharisees in New Testament times to change the way that you think, the way that you are thinking about this is wrong. And this is a theme in the scriptures.

Apostle Paul and others come along, and they say things like this, "I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed." How? "You are the renewal of your minds so that you might discern what the will of God is, what is good and what is acceptable and what is perfect. For by the grace given to me, I say to every one of you, do not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of the faith that God has assigned you."

In other places in the New Testament, we get similar kind of message. In Philippians, when he's closing off this book and he's sort of signing off, and so often when you look at things where you see the beginning and the end are really important, the stuff in the middle is also important, but you're signing off. It's sort of like if you were going to die and you knew you were going to die, your last words are important. It's the same here. He says, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is anything of excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard from me, and the God of peace will be with you." In Colossians, it says, "So, if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the mighty hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not things on earth."

So, we're here this morning in communion to remember Jesus. We remember His sacrifice, His death, burial, and resurrection. But we're also here to think about our response to that. So how is it going? By being transformed by the renewal of our minds or are we setting our minds on things above? I hope so.

You know there is this concept of neuroplasticity. Neuroplasticity is the science that tells us that you can change the way you think. And I think we need to consider how our minds are wired and how we can change the way we think. We have so much media rushing into our cerebral cortex and sometimes,

a lot of the times, we're not filtering what it is. But I can tell you that it will subtly change the way you think. Jesus is saying, "Woe to you! Woe! Take notice about how you think." And His apostles, who wrote the Scriptures, saying exactly the same thing. So, we're here to remember Jesus and His sacrifice. But I think also we're to remember how we have responded to this in our lives. Have we really been dedicated to transformation by the changing of how we think? Let's pray.

Our Father in Heaven, we're thankful for this moment in time where we can gather as Christians and to think about this amazing sacrifice that you provided for us. How it changes our future, that we have this hope of living with you in your presence for eternity. But also, we're reminded about being here on earth and the kind of people that we want to be. And there's a song that we just sang, "Have you seen Jesus our Lord?" Yes, here He is in plain view. Take a look. Open your eyes. He'll show it to you. Yes, He will show it to us as to how He wants us to live. And we pray, Father, that we might have minds that are being wired by you and by your Spirit. And with such wiring then we can be better effective and more effective at being your hands and feet, showing people the way to your Son Jesus. We pray this and with boldness and with perseverance and diligence that we might follow your words and be your people. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Scripture Reading

### Matthew 10:11-20

This morning the scripture reading is taken from Matthew 10 verses 11 to 20. If you'd like to follow along in one of the hymn books in the pew in front of you, it's on page 964. Or it's up on the screen.

Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave. As you enter the home, give it your greeting. If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it. If it's not, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet. Usually I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. Be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. On my account, you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time, you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the spirit of your Father speaking through you. Amen.

## Sermon

Good morning, everybody. Thank you very, very much for being with us today. Kind of a personal question, I suppose. You may not want to answer it out loud, but here is the question. Have you ever been embarrassed by being a Christian? Blessed is the one who is not offended by Jesus.

So today I'm not going to be doing too much talking. I just want to read what Jesus has to say, and maybe we can find ourselves in this. In Matthew 9, it says, "Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom." Now what's interesting about the teachings of Jesus was he never stood behind a pulpit. I don't think he ever used a microphone. He was what was called a peripatetic preacher. It wasn't, "Come and hear me preach." It was Jesus going out into the community and sharing the gospel. He lived the gospel. He demonstrated the gospel. He shared the gospel. And many of the parables that Jesus used, it would grab people's

attention. Today we go to movies. We go to theaters. Jesus was the movie. Jesus was the theater. People wanted to know more about him. And if I can tell you the truth, I still want to know more about him. Don't you? So, let me just share a brief message today, really asking ourselves, each one of us, have you ever been embarrassed by being a Christian?

Here's what Jesus did. Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, their churches, preaching the good news of the kingdom of God. Have you ever thought that the church is a kingdom? God is king. Jesus is king. The Holy Spirit is king. And they welcome us to come to them, him, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. We are part, and it gives me the goosebumps to even say it, we are part of God's kingdom. Jesus will never ask, "Oh, who are you?" He knows us. He knew us before we were born. He's with us every minute of the day. It's called the kingdom of God. I'm going to work, but I belong to the kingdom of God. I'm going on vacation, but I belong to the kingdom of God. We're part of it, all of us together. It's amazing.

So, Jesus comes along and how can he share this? Well, he preaches and he teaches, but more than anything else, he demonstrates. Listen, Jesus was healing every disease and sickness. And when Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them. It wasn't like Jesus was going into the crowds and say, "Watch me. I'm going to do this for you." No, no, no, no, no. That wasn't what Jesus was about. He went into the crowds, and he gave compassion because he saw the crowds being harassed. That's not what the kingdom is about. It's not harassing anyone. It's sharing this message. Many of them have been teased, maybe some of you have been teased by being a Christian. It's okay. We belong to Jesus. The crowds were helpless like sheep without a shepherd because the religion that they were taught at that time was so heavy-burdened that no one could carry it. It says the crowds were helpless like sheep without a shepherd. Then Jesus said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of harvest to send out workers into his harvest field, going out into the world and sharing the gospel as they best knew how to share it." And to this day we keep learning and so we keep sharing. So blessed is the person who's not offended by Jesus. We're not talking about some historical document, although it is a historical document, but being a Christian and sharing it with others by growing in faith, some knowledge of the scripture and allowing our growth to be aware of Jesus living in us. But maybe more than anything else, one of the best ways of teaching is to be quiet and listen to people. Not just go with one belief or one thought, listen to people. Jesus went out into the crowds, went out into the world. The Lord God Jesus out into the world and he listened, and he talked, and he shared. He realized that people were being harassed by religion and Jesus comes along and he wants to share this joy.

So, we're not reading some kind of historical document, rather we put into practice the joy of being a Christian. The knowledge of scripture and the very fact that still overwhelms me. And I'm not sure that I get it, but Jesus promises it, that he lives in us. And we could forget that he does. I think sometimes things happen to us to shake us up, to say, in your name, Donny, I've never left you. I knew you before you were born. I'm with you now. I'm always going to be with you. I'm always with you. I will never leave you. Never, never. I will never forsake you every moment of the day. I am with my beloved children, us. Jesus living in us still gives me goosebumps, especially when he says, I am with you always. I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. And in many ways, I guess, in our lives, there's a partnership that we have with Jesus.

So, in the first century, being a Christian was perilous. If we said out loud, Jesus is king, that was dangerous. But Jesus set the example by honoring God and the Spirit, by allowing us to talk to him by prayer, meditation, reading scripture, to know the Lord better. The gospel of Jesus has and continues to change people's lives forever and forever. They heard this gospel of Jesus. They started beginning this relationship. His disciples were more than just teachers. They're not embarrassed by it.

So, there was a man by the name of Saul, not King Saul from the Old Testament, but Saul was a common name. And he was doing his best to persecute Christians. He thought Christianity was the most horrible thing ever. So, he was doing his best to persecute Christians. But God got to him. Jesus got to him. And the Spirit got to him. And this one who used to persecute Christians turned the world upside-down by him becoming a Christian. And he writes the majority of the New Testament. From Saul, a non-believer, to Paul, who is responsible for the majority of the New Testament. And he says this, "I'm obligated. I'm obligated." I guess that's something like a marriage. I'm obligated. But more this way. I'm obligated. My wonderful wife, or for some of you, your wonderful husband, our family, there's an obligation there. And there's an obligation to Jesus as he's obligated to us. It's this powerful working worship. It's not that we just come to church. It's the fact that we are with him, he, with us, with the promise of, "I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. I'm always with you." So, at your lowest moment, you can even picture Jesus sitting right beside you. Because he does. He does it because he's the Lord of all things. He does it because he knows us. It's this relationship. So, there was this guy by the name of Saul who becomes Paul who, as I say, writes scripture after scripture after scripture. He's obligated, I think, with a smile on his face. And then Paul says these words that will last throughout all eternity. I'm not ashamed of the gospel because it's the power of God for the salvation, listen, of everyone who believes.

That salvation is our salvation. We're obligated to it and we're so glad we are obligated to it. God promises so many blessings by faith. He says this, "No one will be declared righteous in his own sight by observing the law," meaning the Old Testament law, the laws that no one could keep. "They offered sacrifices of bulls and goats with no results other than getting blood all over themselves." And then Paul says, "But now, but now, a righteousness from God has been made known." This righteousness from God comes through our faith in Christ Jesus. Righteousness is this relationship we have with God. He's pouring out his love into our lives. And we respond to that. There's this righteous living. Means it's right. It's right that God wants to be part of us. And it's right that we want to be part of him, the righteousness of God. The question, I guess, for all of us is, do we really believe it? Is it really that important? So, he says, "There's no difference. For all of us have sinned. And we still fall short of the glory of God. We are justified freely, even though we just don't hit the mark at all. We are justified freely, freely. You don't have to do anything for it except to believe it. Freely by God's grace, redemption, salvation that comes by Christ Jesus." Then it says this, "God presented to the world Jesus as a sacrifice of atonement." Meaning our forgiveness through our faith in the blood of Jesus. And this gift is a universal gift for all time. And not that this sermon is anything profound, but I wish most of the people in the world who are fighting today would hear it. Would hear it. See, God has promised to care for each one of us. In the Old Testament, God encourages us to have faith even in him, even before they knew Jesus Christ. A gift that is given to us for all time.

And in Proverbs, this wonderful scripture that many of you can quote quite easily, Proverbs 3, 5, and 6, it says this, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and don't lean on your own understanding. But in all of your ways, acknowledge him," listen, "and God will make your paths straight." Keep giving yourself

to God. Keep on learning. Keep on growing. Keep on thinking. You have more than just your physical body and your mind and your husband and your wife or your children or your friends. You have God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit living in you, telling us, I will never leave you, not once. I will never leave you. I'll never forsake you. I am always with you. So, when you're at your lowest point, when you're hurting physically, emotionally, spiritually, remember the words. Remember the words, I am always with you. It amazes me when we sleep and sometimes, we dream. Does God see our dreams? God is with us every minute of the day. So, he says, 1 Peter 5, "Cast all your anxiety on God because he cares for you, and the God of all grace who called you to his," listen, "eternal glory in Christ. You may have had to suffer a little while, maybe a long while, and will restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast. If the storm of your life is constant, it will come to an end eventually." Maybe that's a wonderful definition of faith, strong and firm and steadfast, even though there's agony around because of his promise. James 4-8, "Come close to God and he will (help me) come close to you." See, the fact is, he's never left us. He's never left us. But he's saying, "Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, I need to think about this. God's always with me. I should be thinking about him as well."

There's so many people that have had great faith over the years. Robert Welch once said, "Christianity is not something I do in my life." Oh, that's too bad. Christianity is not something I do in my life. But I forgot to say the last few words. Christianity is not something I do in my life. Christianity *is* my life. It *is* my life. How can it not be? If you recognize God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, the saints all living in us, how can it not be? Christianity is my life. So, he says, "So be merciful to everyone just as our Father is merciful to each one of us." So may I just ask you this question and you think about it? If you're holding a grudge, let it go. Set it free. If your anxiety is getting out of hand, give it to the Lord. Tell him, even though he knows, tell him by prayer. And there's a peace. There's a peace of God that seems to appear out of nowhere, even if you don't have the answer. But the peace of God is here.

We've all gone through difficult situations. And if we could just remember as horrible as it is, wondering is there any answer, God said, "I'm right here. I'm right here." It seems to appear out of nowhere that sometimes even in the most difficult times, there is this peace that floods us. Matthew, who is in the first book of the New Testament, not the first book written but put there, very much a historian, the words that can bring us peace when he records what Jesus said. And Matthew was sure to say it, Remembering the words of Jesus, "surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age." And speaking of that, John writes what he saw and what we can see through the eyes of John. So, if you will, just picture this. You can close your eyes if you wish. Just picture this. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth had passed away. But I saw the holy city coming down out of heaven from God. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men and women, and God will live with them, us. He will be with us. He will be our God. And," oh, this is so precious. "He will wipe every tear from our eyes. There will be no more death, never again. No more mourning or crying or pain, never again, for all those things have passed away." And he doesn't leave us there. And he says this, "At one time, we were foolish and disobedient, enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. But when the kindness of our Lord and Jesus Christ appeared, He saved us, not by righteous things we had done, but by His mercy. He saved us by the washing and rebirth by God's Holy Spirit."

And then these concluding comments. A good reminder, I think, it has been for me. All week I've been thinking about this. Nothing profound, but profound because of what it is. And the Holy Spirit is at work helping us. How? He helps us by reminding us that He loves us. And so put on love. Put on the clothes

of love. Share it with someone else. We know the Holy Spirit is with us because if we stop and think about it, He's always giving us joy. So put on the joy. Don't push it away. Put on in your mourning peace. Oh, my goodness, some days it's hard to find it. But God promises He'll give it. Peace. Patience. That's a tough one. Put it on. Be patient. God knows what you need. Put on kindness. Every day. People you don't even know. Say good morning. Be the first one to say good morning. Going to the grocery store, someone out of the car. Good day. Most people will respond. They'll say hi. Have a good day. Seems insignificant. It might be the best comment that they'll get all day. Put on faithfulness. Be gentle. Put on self-control. Someone roars at us. Don't reflect back. Just say, I know, I'm sure that person isn't like that every day. God be with them. The only thing that counts in this, my conclusion, is faith. Expressing itself through and with love. So may all of us have an abundance of faith this week. And may our love be demonstrated in a godly way. Amen.

## Closing Prayer

Let's pray. God, it has been good to be here this morning. Thank you for the gatherings of your children everywhere. Thank you for everyone who has made it a choice to be here with us this morning. We ask that your healing hand would be on those who are not able to join us, whether sick in body or in spirit. Lord, we pray that you will strengthen us to magnify you into this world this week.

We pray that you will give us the words to say, show us the actions to perform that will not lift us up, but will lift you up. Will connect people to you. Will plant seeds with those that we come in contact with. Lord, we thank you for your body of believers all over the world in so many different circumstances. But with one God, one spirit, with one Savior, Jesus, we thank you for him. And it's through him we come to you now. And in his name that we pray. Amen. Have a good week, everybody. Thank you.

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