



THE PASTOR'S PEN



January 3, 2021

BEING WHO I AM AND DOING WHO I AM WILL OFFEND SOME

In Matthew 24:9, 10, Jesus said regarding the latter times,⁹ *“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.”*¹⁰ *And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.*

Jesus shared that in the latter times – like where we are today in 2021 – people will not desire to hear the truth. Lies will be considered truth and truth will be considered lies. Individuals are lifting up and highlighting “Alternative Facts” as a replacement to facts and truth. Individuals in positions of leadership and authority bend, distort and twist the truth to the degree that the truth is not noticeable, and many are blindly following those individuals, believing if they said it, it must be true.

Those who speak the truth – the real truth, are hated, despised and presented as the enemy. Strategic efforts are made to shut them up and shut them down, no matter the costs.

As all of this is occurring, Jesus declares that *many will be offended*. In the 1st Century, those offended from the inside were the family members of those who had converted to Christianity. “How dare you give up your Jewish teaching for this new thing called Christianity?” Families were offended and ostracized those who had become Christians while considering them no longer a part of the family.

Those offended from the outside was the Roman government and its sympathizers. The Emperor Nero persecuted Christians for enjoyment and sport. We have heard the stories of the Christians who were brought to the colosseum and lions were released on them while Nero and others cheered. It is also recorded that Nero set Christians on fire at night to illuminate his gardens.

The internal and external offense resulted in the persecution of the Christians living in the 1st Century.

We understand, likewise, that when we be who we are and do who we are, we will offend those on the inside and outside of the church. We also understand that when those on the inside and outside of the church are offended, we can expect to be persecuted.

For the month of January, we will explore through Jesus’ ministry what it means to offend those who are in opposition to the fulfillment of God’s Kingdom here on earth. No, it is not our desire to be offensive, however, when we be who we are and do who we are, we will offend some.

In a very real way, the world needs offending, which is why the world needs you...

WORK FOR THE WEEK

JANUARY MEMORY VERSE

⁸ Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here *am* I! Send me."
Isaiah 6:8

JANUARY MEDITATION QUOTE

"One spoke to me one day and said, 'Now Dr. King, don't you think you're going to have to agree more with the Administration's policy. I understand that your position on Vietnam has hurt the budget of your organization. And many people who respected you in civil rights have lost that respect and don't you think that you're going to have to agree more with the Administration's policy to regain this.' And I had to answer by looking that person into the eye, and say 'I'm sorry sir but you don't know me. I'm not a consensus leader.' I do not determine what is right and wrong by looking at the budget of my organization or by taking a Gallup poll of the majority opinion. Ultimately a genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus."
Dr. Martin Luther king, jr.

TODAY'S STUDY QUESTIONS AND MEDITATION:

Am I afraid to offend others even if it means offending Jesus? _____

If I do not speak up and out for those who cannot speak for themselves, who will? _____

FOR THE YOUTH

What is the difference between being offensive and offending? _____

Is there someone for whom I should be speaking up and out? _____
