

**Offended?**  
**(You Don't Vote for King)**  
Matthew 14:34-15:22  
Pastor Peter Hiatt  
May 23, 2004

Recently I saw a bumper sticker that read, "Elect Jesus King of Your Life." It reminded me of this:

[Movie Clip: Monty Python and the Holy Grail]

WOMAN: How d'you do?

ARTHUR: How do you do, good lady? I am Arthur, King of the Britons. Who's castle is that?

WOMAN: King of the who?

ARTHUR: The Britons.

WOMAN: Who are the Britons?

ARTHUR: Well, we all are. We are all Britons, and I am your king.

WOMAN: I didn't know we had a king. I thought we were an autonomous collective.

MAN: You're fooling yourself. We're living in a dictatorship: a self-perpetuating autocracy in which the working classes—

WOMAN: Oh, there you go bringing class into it again.

MAN: That's what it's all about. If only people would hear of—

ARTHUR: Please! Please, good people. I am in haste. Who lives in that castle?

WOMAN: No one lives there.

ARTHUR: Then who is your lord?

WOMAN: We don't have a lord.

ARTHUR: What?

MAN: I told you. We're an anarcho-syndicalist commune. We take it in turns to act as a sort of executive officer for the week . . .

ARTHUR: Yes.

MAN: . . . but all the decisions of that officer have to be ratified at a special bi-weekly meeting . . .

ARTHUR: Yes, I see.

MAN: . . . by a simple majority in the case of purely internal affairs . . .

ARTHUR: Be quiet!

MAN: . . . but by a two-thirds majority in the case of more major—

ARTHUR: Be quiet! I order you to be quiet!

WOMAN: Order, eh? Who does he think he is? Heh.

ARTHUR: I am your king!

WOMAN: Well, I didn't vote for you.

ARTHUR: You don't vote for kings.

WOMAN: Well, how did you become King, then?

ARTHUR: The Lady of the Lake . . . [angels sing] . . . her arm clad in the purest shimmering samite, held aloft Excalibur from the bosom of the water signifying by Divine Providence that I, Arthur, was to carry Excalibur. [singing stops] That is why I am your king!

MAN: Listen. Strange women lying in ponds distributing swords is no basis for a system of government. Supreme executive power derives from a mandate from the masses, not from some farcical aquatic ceremony.

ARTHUR: Be quiet!

MAN: Well, but you can't expect to wield supreme executive power just 'cause some watery tart threw a sword at you!

ARTHUR: Shut up!

MAN: I mean, if I went 'round saying I was an emperor just because some moistened bint had lobbed a scimitar at me, they'd put me away!

ARTHUR: Shut up, will you? Shut up!

MAN: Ah, now we see the violence inherent in the system.

ARTHUR: Shut up!

MAN: Oh! Come and see the violence inherent in the system! Help! Help! I'm being repressed!

ARTHUR: Bloody peasant!

MAN: Oh, what a give-away. Did you hear that? Did you hear that, eh? That's what I'm on about. Did you see him repressing me? You saw it, didn't you?

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You don't vote for king.

In America, we believe that "supreme executive power derives from a mandate from the masses"; therefore, we believe deeply in our right to vote for king. Anything otherwise we find highly offensive. We believe that:

1. We make the law. We decide what is good and what is evil.
2. We decide how to enforce it, how to govern.

Well, Jesus is King, and you don't vote for king.

In our text for today, some folks run into that reality, and they are highly offended. It kind of reminds me of this whole gay marriage thing. My e-mail was jammed

full of messages this past week regarding the legalization of marriage in Massachusetts last Tuesday. Many people were pushing for an amendment of the U. S. Constitution in order to define marriage as “the union between one man and one woman.”

Well, Supreme Executive Power has already defined marriage. Genesis 2:24: “A man is joined to his wife, and the two become one flesh.” “And what God has joined together let no man tear asunder” (Matthew 19:6).

In Ephesians 5, Paul tells us, “ This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.”

In Romans 1, Paul preaches on the fall of humanity. In verse twenty-six he writes:

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another . . . .

Many are deeply offended at that text. But you don't vote for king. You obey the King. You don't vote for king, yet the King does have His reasons. He *is* the reason.

So I suspect that King Jesus is so very concerned about homosexuality, because it's a deep lie about heterosexuality. And heterosexuality is the deep reference to Himself and His love, written into our very bodies. That is, I believe He's deeply concerned because homo-sexuality is so deeply intolerant of diversity.

Homosexuality is a craving for more of the same—trying to fill the emptiness with more of yourself: more

male for the male, more female for the female, more of the same, more of the self. And we're all trapped in ourselves.

But Jesus binds Himself to us in an eternal covenant that cannot be broken, so He was crucified on our behalf and for our unfaithfulness. Yet on that cross, He romances our hearts to Himself.

He romances our hearts,  
for He will not rape us,

But longs for our freely given, passionate surrender  
to His ecstatic advances,

That we might be literally filled with Him forever,  
and even now be impregnated by His Word which  
is seed, bearing the fruit of His life.

We are His bride,  
all feminine to His penetrating masculine, and He is  
very different from us—*holy*.

Homosexuality is deeply intolerant of diversity and therefore deeply intolerant of communion, for communion is the union of the diverse (not the same). In communion, we are joined with Christ in the sacrament of the covenant. In sex, I'm joined with my bride in the sacrament of our covenant. That communion bears fruit, which is life.

Homosexuality is deeply intolerant of *diversity*,  
and so deeply offended by *sexuality*,  
which is the deep parable of *spirituality*:  
Christ's love for His bride.

Lesbians are deeply offended by the masculine, for many have been raped and abused by the corruption of the masculine.

Gays are deeply offended by the masculine—the absence of the masculine, so they have a legitimate longing for the masculine that’s sought after in an illegitimate way that leaves them less masculine and more empty.

Gays and lesbians both are to be the bride of Christ. But they’re believing a lie about Christ.

Incidentally, heterosexuals do the exact same thing when we abuse the covenant of marriage through divorce, adultery, lust, pornography, anger, malice, hatred, lack of forgiveness . . . We lie about Christ and His bride, and we harden our hearts to His presence. We have a lying covenant.

Homosexual marriage is a lying covenant by definition, an unholy union, an unholy alliance.

People will say, “You don’t understand. Homosexuality is not a choice.” I think they mean that the *temptation* is not a choice, because it’s shaped by environment and genetics. Well, all temptation *is* environment and genetics. We’re all born into a fallen world with this sin nature. Some are predisposed to homosexual behavior, some are predisposed to adultery; some murder, some alcoholism, some disobedience to parents.

But temptation—that predisposition—isn’t sin. Jesus was “tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin.” And He has power to even change our temptations. Yet we should be concerned with fleeing and limiting temptations.

In the Old Testament, Israel had extensive laws and severe penalties to defend themselves against the

uncleanness of pagan society: Romans, Greeks, Canaanites. Those societies involved ritual homosexuality, idolatry, witchcraft, and even child sacrifice. It would be easier if my children were never exposed to that.

Homosexuality is a wound on society, and it's a wound on homosexuals. A few years ago, I did the funeral for my childhood best friend. He died of AIDS. I wish he had called before he died, but he was gay and I'm, like, this "evangelical pastor." How sad.

In college I had a great Christian friend. Several years ago, he walked into his wife's hospital room where she was recovering from knee surgery and the birth of their third child. He told her he was leaving her for his gay lover. *It hurt.*

Homosexuality is a wound on society, a wound on homosexuals, and a wound on Jesus, for He bears all our wounds. Homosexual marriage is an unholy alliance.

Well, many homosexuals are deeply offended at that statement. Maybe we ought to be deeply offended back. What should we do about the pagans? In Matthew 14, Jesus walks on the water in a storm with Peter. It's a picture of being crucified. Next verse:

*When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret. And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched it were made perfectly well.*

Thoroughly healed: body, mind, soul, and spirit, I guess. And this is amazing, for the Gennesarets were pagans, or a mixture of pagans. Pagans were Romans, Greeks, and Canaanites; we're talking *homosexuality* and *witchcraft*. In the next chapter, Jesus heals this severely demon possessed daughter of a Canaanite woman . . . a *Canaanite*! An Orthodox Jew would read, "Pagan lesbian witch."

Well, the Gennesarets were not clean, but when they touched Jesus, Jesus didn't get dirty. The Gennesarets became clean . . . all of them. Next verse:

*Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."*

How insanely petty is that? After *all* are healed: "Those guys didn't wash their hands!"

*[Jesus] answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'"*

In old Israel, homosexual activity was punishable by death . . . and so was sassing your mom.

*"But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have*

*received from me is a gift to God"-- then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. Hypocrites!"*

The religious leaders had some kind of fundraiser going on, where they'd, like, go on late night TV and say, "Look, don't worry about your other financial responsibilities, things like debt and caring for your parents. Just give your money to our ministry, and you have no more responsibility." They must have called it seed faith or something like that. The scribes and Pharisees loved their cause, their institutions, their power, their kingdom, more than people.

Well, the kingdom of God *is* people. "Hypocrites!" cries Jesus.

*"Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:*

*'These people draw near to Me with their mouth,  
And honor Me with their lips,  
But their heart is far from Me.  
And in vain they worship Me,  
Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'*"

The Pharisees were mad at Jesus because He didn't follow their regulations for ritual cleaning. They'd taken God's commandments in Leviticus 22 for the ritual cleansing of the priesthood, expanded them, and applied them to everybody. But even in Leviticus, God says, "Do

this because *I* sanctify you. *I* cleanse you.” Pharisees cleanse themselves with themselves, so they’re dirtier than anyone.

*When He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, “Hear and understand: Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.” Then His disciples came and said to Him, “Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?”*

I love that. “Oh, Jesus, *they* were *offended*—personally offended!” People will sometimes say that at church, as if that’s the ultimate trump card. “I don’t know Scripture, but I was offended”—“scandalized” is the Greek.

What does it mean for you to be personally offended? Doesn’t it mean you’ve kind of set yourself up as the judge, and someone’s offense has violated your righteousness, soiled your cleanliness? It’s different than saying something’s wrong; it’s saying someone has wronged *me* and needs to give account to *me*, because *I’m* the judge. Let’s read a little further in Romans 1.

. . . men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a base mind and to improper conduct. They were filled with all manner of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit,

malignity, they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practice them. Therefore you have no excuse, O man, whoever you are, when you judge another; for in passing judgment upon him you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things.

Hypocrisy. Yikes!

You know, once you've been to the cross and seen that your sin nailed the only begotten, righteous Son of God to the tree where He freely bore hell for you . . . once you've really seen that, well, it's kind of hard to get personally offended. And you yourself are pretty hard to offend, because you're dead—dead to yourself and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Americans are great at being personally offended. Everybody sues everybody, resorting to law to defend their righteousness.

Well, the Pharisees are offended at Jesus.

- They're offended He touches unclean things and doesn't wash.
- They're offended He hangs out with Gennesaret pagans and Canaanite women.
- They're offended He's not the kick-ass Messiah we preached about a few weeks ago.

- They're offended He doesn't utilize the political system they believe they control.
- They're offended because Jesus isn't offended.
- They're deeply offended at His grace.

Matthew 11:6: Jesus says, "Blessed is he who isn't offended at me."

John 6: "You must eat my flesh and drink my blood." And Jesus says, "Does this offend you?"

Matthew 26: Jesus institutes communion. They go to the Mount of Olives, and Jesus says, "You will all be offended because of me this night." Peter says, "I'll never be offended." Then the guards come, and Peter attacks them. Jesus says, "Put away your sword." And Peter is offended. He denies Jesus three times.

They're offended by His grace, that He won't resort to power. He won't resort to human politics. One time they even tried to make Him king, and He ran away.

Well, the cross is the "offense" (the "scandalon") of this world. It convicts us of sin; it convicts us through grace, which is the biggest scandal of all.

The Pharisees find it utterly offensive and judge themselves out of the kingdom.

So who offends you? Probably the people you haven't forgiven. And "the measure you give is the measure you get." So if you don't forgive, you won't be forgiven. Don't judge yourself out of the kingdom.

*But [Jesus] said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be*

*uprooted. Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.” Then Peter answered and said to Him, “Explain this parable to us.” So Jesus said, “Are you also still without understanding? Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.”*

Well, Jesus tells Peter, “We’re not aiming for the stomach but the heart.” And I guess that means you can’t change people’s hearts by cramming stuff down their throats. To get to the heart, you have to access the blood. How do you access the blood and change a heart?

I need to regress for a moment: Many of you were nervous because you thought I was preaching for the Federal Marriage Amendment. *Then* many of you were nervous because you thought I was preaching *against* the Federal Marriage Amendment. And I’m not. I’m not called to preach about men’s laws but something else. However, I do want to tell you why this whole debate concerns me:

1. Many people act like the state defines marriage, and it doesn’t. Just because the state of Colorado tells you

you're divorced, it doesn't mean you are. And I don't look to a bunch of senators with trophy wives and concubines to tell me what marriage is.

2. How come the Federal Marriage Amendment doesn't say anything about divorce? For years I've been marrying people in church in the sight of God, and if they get sick of each other, they can go down to the courthouse, and people will give them a piece of paper saying that covenant is no longer binding. Who the rip do those people think they are? Where are all the Christian protestors when courts grant divorces? If I was a gay man, this all might seem a tad hypocritical.
3. Then we talk like we're "reclaiming America," as if we once had it. When was that? When we all owned slaves? Thomas Jefferson was a deist who took his Bible and cut out all references to Christ's divinity and resurrection, turning Him into a good, moral teacher, which was exactly what the Pharisees wanted. He drafted the Declaration of Independence, but he owned slaves and had children by at least one of them. At least Bill Clinton read his whole Bible, said he was sorry, and confessed to being a Southern Baptist (which is quite a few notches above deist in my book).
4. I'm concerned we've confused our culture with the kingdom, "teaching as doctrines the commandments of men," like the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution. So we've allied ourselves with the kingdom of America in an unholy alliance so that she would fight our battles for us.

Israel was constantly being warned against relying on foreign powers to fight her battles for her. *We are* the Israel of God, and Jesus is our King and helper, but maybe we've gone to bed with foreign powers, relying on unholy covenants to fight spiritual battles with earthly weapons.

I don't want to battle one sin with even worse sins: hypocrisy and idolatry, "honoring God with my lips while my heart is far from Him." Furthermore, by cramming things down people's throats, you can't get to their hearts and may even wound their hearts.

On the other hand:

1. Evil destroys the people who practice it, and sadly, most people seem to get their morality from civil government.
2. I believe public acceptance of homosexual practice is really dangerous for kids, even as dangerous as divorce and absentee fathers.
3. People say, "You can't legislate morality." Well, all legislation *is* morality. So if there was no morality legislated, there would be no laws, and we would all be dead or living in fields with bones in our hair. Yet if all morality *was* legislated (if you legislated and prosecuted all ten commandments and the Sermon on the Mount), we'd all have been executed years ago.
4. Paul wrote that "governments are ordained by God for the common good." And in ours, we have this incredible privilege called a *vote*. I sincerely hope

you use it, for governments do good. Studying the Civil War, walking through Auschwitz, thinking about World War II, you realize governments do a great good. Yet they can only save a life for a few years. Then we die. A government can fill your stomach, but it can't redeem your heart. It can destroy prison camps and outlaw slavery, but it can't liberate a soul or set a captive free.

The kingdom of God does not come through legislation. (That's the tragic story of old Israel.) It's not through law but something far more powerful. So I'm not called to preach law; I'm called to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

So I need to tell you, I don't know what the best legislation is. But I am going to tell you how to vote: Vote with a cross on your back. In fact, do everything with a cross on your back.

I spoke to a good friend for a long time on Thursday, who knows a lot on these issues. He said, "Well, Peter, I get frustrated because Christians are so apathetic and do nothing!" I agreed. If you think I'm saying do nothing, you haven't understood. I'm saying *do everything*: pick up a cross.

Do nothing because you're offended, and do everything because you're crucified.

Do nothing from the flesh, and do everything by the Spirit.

Do nothing from anxiety and worry, and do everything in faith.

We're no longer old Israel hiding behind walls having to worry about being contaminated by evil. Our King has conquered. We're the church of Jesus the Christ, and the gates of hell cannot withstand us. It's the kingdom of hell that needs to worry about being contaminated by us.

Do nothing from unforgiveness, wrath, or hatred of men. Do everything in love. And what is love? "This is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and gave His only begotten Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

He is our King, and this is how He conquered, and this is how He calls us to conquer: He said, "You want to be my disciple? Pick up a cross."

Crosses are for getting crucified by those who hate you, because you love them.

Crosses are speaking the truth in love.

Crosses are walking on water into storms.

Crosses are being present and bearing another's hell.

Crosses are bearing wounds.

It's always easier to just be offended than to be crucified. But Jesus is our King. And you don't vote for king.

1. You don't decide what is good and what is evil.
2. You don't decide how His kingdom is governed.

We sing at Christmas, "And the government will be on His shoulders." What's on His shoulders? A cross.

So you don't vote for king, but you do vote for how the U.S. is governed. Just don't confuse the U.S. government with the kingdom of God. So vote, but vote with a cross on your back; do everything with a cross on your back. The road is: how it is walked.

This week I called Mike Tucker from our church, who came out of the gay lifestyle and is now married to Natalie. He runs HIV Care Link and shared his story here last year.

I also called Sandy Gardner-Wood from our church, who was a pagan lesbian witch ("white witch," but witch). She had been a victim of Satanic ritual abuse as a girl. She shared her story here last year as well.

I asked them, "What do you think of this whole public debate over gay marriage?" They both basically agreed: It's really tough, because homosexual marriage is just wrong. Yet the debate is so painful, because homosexuals just see it as one more, personal, hateful, hypocritical attack on themselves from the followers of Jesus. *That's sad* because they are the prize we're called to fight for. They are the captives we're called to set free.

Sandy said, "I was a militant lesbian feminist, and now I just wish one of those Christian protestors would

have taken the time to get to know me and ask me to lunch before they condemned me.”

Well, let’s be honest, Sandy. That could have been painful. And it’s always easier to be offended than crucified.

Fortunately, a woman who is now in our church loved Sandy as she was until Sandy *begged* her to tell her about Jesus (maybe like the Gennesarets begged Jesus to let them touch Him). Sandy said, “Peter, that’s what we need.” Then she told me a story.

A few years ago, she got a call and found out that an old friend was dying of cancer. Her name was Moon. Sandy had been married to her own lesbian partner in a double wedding with Moon and her partner.

Moon lived in a witch’s commune in New Mexico—kind of a “anarcho-syndicalist commune.” Moon was a pagan and known all over the country and world as a highly respected witch.

Sandy said her friends encouraged her to go and tell Moon Jesus loved her. Sandy was terrified. The land was in a valley on the side of a mountain. Sandy shared that when she stepped onto the land, it was covered with demons that would part under her feet (like she was walking on the sea into a great storm). Sandy said the evil was greater than any she’d ever sensed.

Some people see demons; some don’t. But we all battle them. We really are in a tremendous battle, not *with* people but *for* people.

The witches didn't want to let Sandy see Moon, and they wouldn't leave Sandy alone with her. They sensed Sandy had changed.

At first Moon was unconscious, but after a time Moon opened her eyes and said, "Dearhawk!" (That was Sandy's old name.) "Dearhawk, I had a vision of Christ."

Can you believe that Jesus would show up in Gennesaret (Paganville) before the disciples even arrived?

Moon told Sandy a witch had been leading a meditation, and Jesus showed up. Moon said, "He told me He would forgive me of my sins."

Well, that wasn't popular with the witches, but Moon was the most respected, so they allowed Sandy to stay. She stayed for several days sleeping in a tent next to the land but not on it. She spent the days calling her friends Faith and David and asking them to pray, then descending into the valley where she would hold Moon's hand, kiss her forehead, and stroke her hair.

One day, she happened to get a moment alone. She read from a page of Isaiah that she had smuggled in under her dress, Isaiah 40:

Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
Has it not been told you from the beginning?  
Have you not understood from the  
foundations of the earth? It is he who sits  
above the circle of the earth, and its  
inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who  
stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and  
spreads them like a tent to dwell in; who  
brings princes to nought, and makes the

rulers of the earth as nothing. . . . To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. . . . Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

Then she explained John 3:16:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

She told Moon that Jesus loved her and that people in Colorado were praying for her. Moon whispered, "Tell them thank you." And the witches came back in.

On the last day, Sandy asked if she could have a little time alone with Moon. When she walked onto the land, she didn't sense any demons at all.

Sandy told me that those witches, like the old Sandy, believed God and Jesus were made up by men to repress people they didn't like. But because Sandy sat there for days loving Moon, they gave her a few minutes alone with her.

It was then that Sandy introduced Moon to Jesus and had Moon ask Jesus to enter her (think of it: "enter her"). Sandy said, "Moon, if you confess with your lips Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead, Moon, I'll see you in paradise." With the voice of a dying woman, and a wink, Moon said, "It's a date." As Sandy left, she heard the Lord speak: "She will be with me in Paradise. And this mountain will never be the same again. This mountain is mine."

You don't vote for king. You don't decide what's good and what's bad. You don't decide how His kingdom conquers. You don't vote for king. Jesus is King of all, no matter what. Yet get this: He still wants you to vote for Him, for He longs to be King of your heart.

You don't vote for king, but a bride votes for her groom. So Jesus will go to the end of the earth and hang on a cross in hell to get one, old, pagan, lesbian witch to surrender to His love. For He's not only her King but her lover. And she's not really a witch; she only thought she was a witch. She is the glorious bride of Christ.

He's calling you to surrender. This is how He conquers hell; this is how He captures your heart: with His blood.

So on the night that He was betrayed, in the midst of that great storm, He took bread and having blessed it and given thanks, He broke it saying, "This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And in the same way after supper, He took the cup and said, "This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood shed for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you, in remembrance of me. I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

When you come to the table, you are making a public profession. You are saying:

Jesus, I surrender. I invite you to enter me,  
and I surrender me to you, to have and to  
hold, to love and to cherish, to honor and to  
obey. And we shall both live forever, and  
death shall never do us part, for two have

become one flesh, and no man can tear it asunder.

In Jesus' name, believe the Gospel. Amen.

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The bride says, "Come, Lord Jesus, come." And until that final day, may He just offend the hell out of you, because that's what the cross is: the offense, the scandal of this world. May he offend it out of you, until you are offended no more and only crucified. May you go out into this world with a cross on your back.

I want to suggest three things:

1. Vote, but vote with a cross on your back.
2. Stop by the HIV Care Link booth in the back and volunteer to help. They can set you up with people dying with AIDS. God has given us this incredible opportunity to walk into the lives of people who might otherwise not listen. But now they're suffering, dying, asking, "Is there a God? Does He love me? Would He ever forgive *me*?" You get to fill in the blank. "Yes! And His name is Jesus!"
3. If you struggle with some sort of sexual sin, we're going to have a public stoning after the service, so we need all of you who have no sexual sin whatsoever to come down front here for stones . . . Nobody's coming! Look at that! We're all in this thing together. But if you're struggling in a particular way but haven't shared it with anyone, our Prayer Ministry team would love to

pray with you. The Evil One gets his power through the darkness. But Jesus the Light shed His blood to cleanse you, and it's powerful. The gates of hell cannot withstand His blood. The issue is getting you to come out of the darkness and believe the blood.

Remember: You came to the banqueting table, you're His bride, and He's *nuts* about you. No more hiding in the darkness! In Jesus' name, God bless you. Amen.

Relevant Texts and Quotations (from bulletin)

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. . . . Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be subject, not only to avoid God’s wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing.

Romans 13:1, 3b-6

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds . . . .

2 Corinthians 10:3-4

“Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’” When He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, “Hear and understand: Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.” Then His disciples came and said to Him, “Do You know that the Pharisees were offended [“scandalizō”] when they heard this saying?”

Matthew 15:7-12

And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended [“scandalizō”] in me. . . . And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me. . . . Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

Matthew 11:6, 25:40, 45

He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he

that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend [“scandalizō”] you?

John 6:56-61

Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended [“scandalizō”] because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. Peter answered and said unto him, Though all *men* shall be offended [“scandalizō”] because of thee, *yet* will I never be offended [“scandalizō”].

Matthew 26:31-33

For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block [“scandalon”—offense] to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

1 Corinthians 1:22-24

When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, “Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? . . .” So they were offended [“scandalizō”] at Him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house.” Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Matthew 13:54, 57-58

When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret. And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched it were made perfectly well.

Matthew 14:34-36

In this chapter’s histories only one group of people entirely believes Jesus—the pagans of Gennasaret! Notice the five excited absolutes in

the story, all of which illustrate faith: they recognize Jesus, summon the *whole* area, and *all* the sick are brought to him with the entreaty that they might *only* touch the hem of his garment, and *all* those who did touch were *thoroughly* healed (*diesōthēsan*)! “[They] recognized him” (v 35). In the immediately preceding story even Jesus’ own disciples had not recognized him and thought they were seeing a ghost (14:26); here pagans “recognized him” and believed . . . . We have traveled a long way in this chapter’s reactions—from unbelieving rejection in a hometown (13:57-58) to believing reception in heathendom (14:34-36). From the beginning of the Gospel “the irony of it all” cannot escape the careful reader: rejection of the Child-Messiah by Israel’s King and his reception by pagan magi (Matt 2); the Warning’s rejection of “Lord, Lord” sayers and the Beatitudes’ blessing of earth’s crushed and compassionate (7:21-23; 5:3-12); the Six Portraits’ excoriation of religious leaders (chaps 11 and 12) and the Ten Miracles’ healings of outcasts (chaps 8 and 9). All these stories have been preparing us from the old people of God to the new (21:43; 28:18).

Dale Brunner, Matthew

Think of the impact if the first thing radical feminists thought of when the conversation turned to evangelical men was that they had the best reputation for keeping their marriage vows and serving their wives in the costly fashion of Jesus at the cross. Think of the impact of the first thing the homosexual community thought of when someone mentioned evangelicals was that they were the people who lovingly ran the AIDS shelters and tenderly cared for them down to the last gasp.

Ron Sider

from What’s So Amazing About Grace? by Philip Yancey

There are those who talk about God’s cause, and about wanting to serve that cause. This is all very fine, but how, exactly, is this to be interpreted? The common view thinks that God has a cause in the human sense of the word, that he is some kind of advocate, interested in having his cause win and therefore eager to help the person who would serve his cause, and so forth. If we follow this line of thinking God becomes a minor character who arrives at the embarrassing dilemma of needing human beings. No, no! God has no cause, is no advocate in this sense. For God everything is infinitely nothing. Any second he wills it, everything, including all opposition to his cause, becomes nothing. Wanting to serve God’s cause can never mean the same thing as

coming to his aid. No, to serve God's cause is to face examination. If someone wants to serve his cause, it is not God who loses his balance and sublimity; no, he fixes his attention upon this volunteer – observantly – and sees how he conducts himself, whether he has integrity and resolve. Because God is not interested in temporal causes, because he is infinitely the conquering Lord, precisely for that reason he examines. He is quite able to accomplish his will alone.

Soren Kierkegaard, Provocations

Then one of the elders said to me, “Weep not; lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.” And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain . . . .

Revelation 5:5-6a

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