

Introduction (Luke 17:1-10)

How many of you have ever seen how people act when they have been offended? They take everything the wrong way. They twist things around and take things out of context. Most of the time, I have seen that they break off relationships with those around. It happens in marriages. It happens in families. It happens in churches. It happens in businesses.

Unfortunately, I have been dealing with an employee who got offended at both of my Vice Presidents. I tried to ask questions to get to the root of the problem. He recommended a change in one of the slides in one of our lectures, and they did not approve of the changes. He said they clobbered him. Knowing both of my vice presidents very well, I do not believe they clobbered him. But, he became offended. His attitude has been going downhill ever since. He began taking things that they said out of context, which is what offended people tend to do. I have spent a lot of time thinking and praying about the situation. The employee has a lot to offer our company, and our industry. But, we have the difficult task of winning him back. Solomon said that “he who is wise wins souls.” I have asked God for wisdom so that we can win him back. I have humbled myself and apologized about the way they handled the situation. I have apologized for things that I have said that were taken out of context. I have tried to respond gently and keep the doors of communication open. Solomon says that a gentle answer turns away wrath. With God’s help, we made some progress this week. My Vice President in Albuquerque came up with a plan on a new review process and the offended employee was open to the new process.

(Pro 11:30) “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who is wise wins souls.”

(Pro 15:1) “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

Our passage today begins with Jesus saying that it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come. Unfortunately, offenses are going to happen. The world does not know how to deal with them. These offenses turn to bitterness, and lives and marriages are destroyed. Unresolved offenses are the number one reason people leave church. People who have been offended very often do not return to church. There are lots of offended believers who need to be won back, and to be brought back to church. But church, I have good news for you today. God has a plan to help us with these matters.

(Luke 17:1) “He said to His disciples, "It is inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but woe to him through whom they come!"

We are in Luke 17, but this discourse did not start here. Back in Luke 16, Jesus taught on being faithful stewards. It says that “the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and scoffing at Him.” Jesus rebukes them, saying, “you are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.”

(Luke 16:14-15) “Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him. {15} And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.”

Jesus continued His discourse to the Pharisees by giving the story of the rich man and Lazarus, which Donald covered last week. The rich man was not concerned about Lazarus. He sat at the rich man's gate and was longing for a crumb from his table. He was in dire straits. When the rich man and Lazarus had both died, the rich man was in torment and Lazarus was doing well. There was a chasm between them, and Lazarus was not permitted by Abraham to comfort the rich man. Furthermore, the rich man wanted to go back and warn his brothers, but Abraham would not allow him to go back and warn his brothers. Abraham tells him that they have Moses and the prophets, and that they would not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead. Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem, and He is about to be crucified and rise from the dead. Were they going to be persuaded by His death and resurrection?

(Luke 16:29-31) "But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' {30} "But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!' {31} "But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

The Pharisees were not concerned about the poor people, so this parable about Lazarus is a rebuke to them. It is also a wake-up call to them about their eternal destination. He was trying to get their attention. Jesus says that it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but woe to him through whom they come. The Pharisees were a stumbling block to people. Their religious hypocrisy was a stumbling block. Jesus is warning them that it will not be good for them. He has told them about the plight of the rich man when he died. Now, Jesus is giving them another warning. He says it would be better to have a millstone tied around their neck and thrown into the sea than cause someone to stumble. This is the backdrop to what Jesus shares in our passage today.

Now, Jesus turns His attention to His disciples. I believe that the Pharisees are still in His mind and the minds of His disciples. In verse one, Jesus said to His **disciples**... Then, in verse five, the **apostles** responded to what Jesus has said. Were there both disciples and apostles present? Or were the apostles referred to as disciples and then as apostles? Who is Jesus' audience?

(Luke 17:1, 5) "He said to His disciples... {5} The apostles said to the Lord..."

Followers of Christ are called disciples. We saw a few weeks ago that the word disciple means learner. A disciple learns from his teacher and becomes like His teacher. It is one of the primary ways that God addresses His people in the New Testament. Therefore, the apostles were also disciples. It could be that this conversation is with the twelve apostles. However, it could be that Jesus had a much bigger group of disciples here, but it was the disciples who are close enough to Jesus to make a response. That is my view on who Jesus is speaking to in this passage.

In our passage today, Jesus speaks about sin and stumbling blocks. First, Jesus gives some commands about sins and offenses. Second, He gives us two things that we need to have if we are going to obey these commands. Let's read our passage together.

Christian Duty Towards Sin

1. Commands About Sin
2. Requirements In Keeping Those Commands

(Luke 17:1-4) “He said to His disciples, "It is inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but woe to him through whom they come! {2} It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he would cause one of these little ones to stumble. {3} Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. {4} And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him.”

(Luke 17:5-6) “The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" {6} “And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and be planted in the sea'; and it would obey you.”

(Luke 17:7-10) “Which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come immediately and sit down to eat'? {8} But will he not say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat, and properly clothe yourself and serve me while I eat and drink; and afterward you may eat and drink'? {9} He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he? {10} So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.'”

1. The commands about sin

A. Give no offense.

Jesus tells us that we are not to cause offense, and He also tells us what to do when others are causing offense. First, Jesus said, “it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but woe to him through whom they come!” I like the way that the Amplified Bible reads. It says, “Temptations (snares, traps set to entice to sin) are sure to come, but woe to him by or through whom they come!”

(Luke 17:1 NASB) “He said to His disciples, "It is inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but woe to him through whom they come!”

(Luke 17:1 AMP) “AND Jesus said to His disciples, Temptations (snares, traps set to entice to sin) are sure to come, but woe to him by or through whom they come!”

The word stumbling block is skandalon (Strong’s G4625), which means a stick for bait (of a trap), generally a snare. A large rock or trap would be used and a stick was used to set the trap. When an animal came by and touched the stick, the trap would be sprung. The animal would be caught or killed by the trap. Jesus is saying that there will be snares and traps set to entice people to sin. These traps will cause people to stumble. These traps that cause others to stumble are the sins of people.

Notice in verse two that He says it would be better for a person to have a millstone hung around his neck and thrown into the sea than to cause a little one to stumble. It is people that cause little ones to stumble. It is a bad thing to cause others to stumble. Jesus is telling us that we need to do everything we can not to give offense to other people.

(Luke 17:2) “It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he would cause one of these little ones to stumble.”

In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul says that “all things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.” He said **we are not to seek our own good, but that of our neighbor**. He talks about not letting meat become a stumbling block to others, particularly meat that has been sacrificed to idols. Finally, he concludes by saying, “Whether, then, you eat or drink, or **whatever you do, do all to the glory of God**. Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God...” Paul is teaching us to be careful about offending others. We need to do things that will edify others and bring glory to God. That is the same message that Jesus preached. We must be careful about being a snare to our brother. We must be careful about causing others to stumble.

(1 Cor 10:23-33) “All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify. {24} Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor. {25} Eat anything that is sold in the meat market without asking questions for conscience' sake; {26} FOR THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND ALL IT CONTAINS. {27} If one of the unbelievers invites you and you want to go, eat anything that is set before you without asking questions for conscience' sake. {28} But if anyone says to you, "This is meat sacrificed to idols," do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for conscience' sake; {29} I mean not your own conscience, but the other man's; for why is my freedom judged by another's conscience? {30} If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks? {31} Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. {32} Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God; {33} just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved.”

Jesus tells us that these stumbling blocks are inevitable or are sure to come. He says that **there are serious consequences for those who cause offenses**. Therefore, in verse three, Jesus says, “Be on your guard!” The King James Version says, “take heed to yourselves.” Jesus is telling this to His disciples and apostles. He is not telling this to the Pharisees. He is telling them to His followers, the soon-to-be leaders of the church. These are the most mature, knowledgeable, and faithful people. Jesus tells them to take heed, pay attention, be careful, and to be on their guard that they do not cause others to stumble. You and I must be careful about the way that we live so that we do not cause others to stumble. We are not to give offense to others. That is pretty sobering.

(Luke 17:3a) “Be on your guard!”

B. Rebuke those who sin (and give offense)

Next, Jesus tells us **if our brother sins, we are to rebuke him. If our brother repents, we are to forgive him**. If he sins against us seven times a day, and returns to us seven times, saying, “I repent,” we are to keep forgiving him. Not only are we to be careful that we do not sin and cause others to stumble, we are to help keep our brothers from giving offense. There is a prevailing thought in the church that we are not to judge one another. There is an attitude that turns a blind eye to our brothers and sisters when they sin. But, listen to what Jesus tells us. “If your brother sins, rebuke him.” You and I are commanded to rebuke one another when we see each other sin. We have a responsibility to rebuke one another.

(Luke 17:3-4) “Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. {4} And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him.”

There is a balance. How many of you have been to the primate section of the zoo and watched them pick lice off of each other. They sit there picking at each other. Sometimes, we can pick at one another in the same way. We pick on every little thing a person does. That can be offensive in itself. We must give grace to one another.

But, the other side of the balance is when our brother clearly sins, we have a responsibility to go to our brother and rebuke him. Luke does not record the details of how to go to our brother. We have to go to Matthew to find those details. Jesus tells us that **if our brother sins, we are to go and show him his fault in private**. We are not to tell others about his sin. We are not to confer with others about his sin. We are not to ask others to pray with us about his sin. We are to keep the matter private. We are to go our brother in private and show him his fault. Jesus goes on to say that if he listens to us, we have won our brother.

(Matt 18:15-17) “If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. {16} But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that **BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED**. {17} If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”

If our brother does not listen to us, we are to take it to another level. The matter is not private any longer. **We are to take others with us**. I believe that the one or two we take with us should be those in relationship and/or those in leadership. Notice that the facts are to be confirmed. Jesus quotes from the Levitical law where every fact was to be confirmed by two or three witnesses. Once something was confirmed by two or three witnesses, punishment was given out. In this case, there are only consequences if our brother does not listen to us. **If our brother refuses to listen to the group, they are to tell it to the church. If our brother does not listen to the church, we should try to win him to Christ**. Jesus said we are to treat him like a Gentile or tax collector.

I hope and pray that we will have tax collectors and Gentiles come to our church. I pray that we will have sinners come to our church and come to know Christ. We should be inviting sinners to church. We should be praying for God to soften their hearts and draw them to church. So, when Jesus tells us to treat a brother who sins like a tax collector or sinner, that does not mean that we shun them. I believe that there are some churches and individuals who have not really understood what Jesus has instructed us to do in this passage. It means that we treat them like a lost person, and try to win them to Christ. There are obviously some things that we would not have a lost person do in our church. A lost person would not be preaching here on Sunday. A lost person would not be leading a small group. But, a lost person would certainly be invited to come to a small group.

Notice what the goal is throughout this process. If our brother listens to us, we have won our brother. Our goal is to win people. **Our goal is to restore people**. Our goal is not to tear down, judge, condemn, or destroy, but is to win our brother back to the Lord. Winning our brother means that they have come back into a right relationship with the Lord. That is our goal. Notice how Paul broaches the subject in Galatians 6. He says that we who are spiritual are to restore the person. We must be in right standing with the Lord when we go to our brother. **We must go in a spirit of gentleness**. A spirit of gentleness does not beat up, condemn, or tear down our brother. A spirit of gentleness comes softly and humbly. Notice that we are to look to ourselves, so that we are not also tempted. **We must go carefully**. We are capable of the same sins, so we must be careful.

(Gal 6:1-2) “Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. {2} Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.”

Paul says **we must bear one another's burdens or sins**. We are to stand with our brother through the process of restoration. We are to be with them. We are to pray with them. We are to support them and help them carry this load. Jesus says if our brother sins and returns seven times, we are to keep forgiving them. Again, this may be a process. We may have to bear this load for a while before our brother finds freedom. We may have to forgive, forgive, and forgive some more.

The thing that I want us to see here is the goal or objective. It is the same goal that Jesus spoke about. Paul says that we are to restore such a one. The goal is restoration. If we restore our brother back to Christ, we have won our brother back.

So, Jesus tells us not to offend and cause others to stumble. He also tells us to go to those who are causing others to stumble because of their sins, and we are to rebuke them. We are to do it privately, and our goal is to win them. Our goal is to restore them. These are the commands that Jesus gives us about sins and stumbling blocks.

2. The requirements

After teaching on what to do about sins, the apostles responded by asking Jesus to increase their faith. They saw that to properly deal with sin, they were going to need an increase in faith. It was going to take great faith to live in such a way that we do not offend our brothers. It was going to take great faith and courage to confront others about their sin. It was going to take great faith to forgive others, especially when we have to keep forgiving someone for repeated violations. **It requires faith to maintain healthy relationships with one another**.

(Luke 17:5) “The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!”

Normally, we think about needing more faith to see prayers answered. We need more faith to see healings and miracles. After all, when the apostles asked Jesus why they could not cast out the demon from the boy, Jesus told them it was “because of the littleness of your faith.” We see faith is required for healing and deliverance.

(Matt 17:18-21) “And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once. {19} Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not drive it out?" {20} And He said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you. {21} But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

Faith is required for salvation. We call it saving faith. Paul tells us in Ephesians “for by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves...” We don't earn our salvation by works. We place our faith and trust in God and we are saved. It is a gift of God, not something that we earn.

(Eph 2:8-9) “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; {9} not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

We also see that **we are perfected or matured by our faith**. In Galatians, Paul says, “you foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you..did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?” A few verses later, Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4, and says “the righteous man shall live by faith.” It is very clear that we are saved by faith, perfected by faith, and live by faith. The apostles saw that God’s requirements on how to deal with sin was going to require much faith. Therefore, they asked Jesus to increase their faith.

(Gal 3:1-11) “You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? {2} This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? {3} Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?...{11b} ‘THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.’”

Jesus responds to the apostles’ requests by saying, “if you had faith like a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, ‘be uprooted and be planted in the sea’; and it would obey you.” The current size of their faith was not the important thing. Their faith only needed to be like a mustard seed, which is very tiny. If they had faith, it would grow with proper care and time. When the disciples could not cast out the demon from the boy, Jesus told them that it was because of the littleness of their faith, and that this kind comes out only by prayer and fasting.

(Matt 17:19-21) “Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not drive it out?" {20} And He said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you. {21} "But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

We also find in Jude 20 that we are to build ourselves up on our most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit. Prayer, and in particular, prayer in the Spirit, builds up our faith.

(Jude 1:20) “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,”

Hearing testimonies every week builds up our faith. I loved hearing Kay’s testimony a couple of weeks ago. I loved hearing Kathleen’s testimony last week. It builds up my faith to hear these testimonies. There are things that we can do to build up our faith.

(Luke 17:6) “And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and be planted in the sea'; and it would obey you.”

But, Jesus does not tell them how to increase their faith. They simply needed to have faith, and they needed to understand the nature of faith. Notice Jesus’ answer to them. If they commanded the mulberry tree to be uprooted and be planted in the sea, it would obey them. **There is a connection between faith and authority**.

A few months ago we covered the centurion who had a servant who was sick. The centurion told Jesus not to trouble Himself any further, but to simply say the word, and his servant would be healed. He said, "For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it." The centurion understood the principle of authority and obedience. He knew that if Jesus commanded his servant to be healed, he would be healed. He understood the connection between authority and faith.

(Luke 7:6-8) "Now Jesus started on His way with them; and when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not worthy for You to come under my roof; {7} for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. {8} For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."

Notice Jesus' response to the centurion. "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith." The centurion understood what Jesus is telling His disciples. If they understood the authority that they had, they could speak to the mulberry tree and it would be cast into the sea. If they understood the authority God has given them to deal with sin, they would simply need to act in that authority. That is the faith that they needed to have.

(Luke 7:9) "Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following Him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith."

A second requirement is to be tenacious. There are three different ways that we are to be tenacious. **First, we must be tenacious in our pursuit to win our brother back.** We are to go to our brother and confront him. (Luke 17:3) If he does not listen, we must be tenacious and bring one or two others with us and approach him again. If he does not listen this time, we are to be even more tenacious. We are to take the matter before the church. If he does not listen, we are to remain tenacious in trying to win him like an unbeliever.

Second, we are to be tenacious in our forgiveness. If our brother repents, we are told to forgive him. Jesus went on to say that if our brother sins against us seven times and keeps repenting, we are to keep forgiving him. (Luke 17:4) As many times as our brother offends us, we are to be tenacious in our forgiveness towards him.

Third, we are to be tenacious in our support for our brother. We saw in Galatians 6:2 that we are to bear one another's burdens. We are to help our brother carry this burden of sin. We are to lift part of the load from him. We are to walk with our brother through the process of restoration. It may not be convenient to bear that burden with him. It may not be comfortable to bear that burden with him. It may be quite the opposite, very inconvenient and uncomfortable. But, we are to be tenacious in our support of our brother.

Jesus goes on to give them a parable about a man who had a slave. The slave worked all day and when he came in from the field, the master did not tell him to sit down and eat. Instead, the master expected him to prepare his food, and then he could go eat. He does not thank the slave because he did the things he was commanded. He expected the slave to do what was commanded.

(Luke 17:7-9) “Which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come immediately and sit down to eat'? {8} But will he not say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat, and properly clothe yourself and serve me while I eat and drink; and afterward you may eat and drink'? {9} He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he?”

I believe we can take away three important points from this illustration. First, we are Christ’s slaves and servants. Jesus has told us what we need to do when our brother sins. We are to rebuke him, and we are also to forgive him. God expects us to do this. We need to prioritize this. We do not go and take care of our own needs first. We are to do the things that God calls us to do before we take care of our own needs. Our priority is to do what the Lord has commanded us to do. **First, we need to obey and do what God commands us to do.**

Second, when we go to our brother, **we are to go in faith, under the authority of the Lord.** We can rest in that authority. When we speak into a situation, we should expect results. When we speak to the mulberry tree, it will move. When we tell our brother to stop sinning, we should see results. Faith and obedience go hand in hand.

Third, we can learn from the response of the slave. In verse ten, Jesus says, “So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.'" We are not to be arrogant or proud when we go to our brother or when we forgive our brother. After we have done what we are commanded to do, we are not to be arrogant or proud. Notice how Jesus says the slave should respond after he has done all the things that he was commanded to do. “We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.” **Third, we must go humbly to our brother,** and when we have gone to him, we need to remain humble about what we have done.

(Luke 17:10) “So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.'”

Conclusion

Church, these are difficult things that the Lord is asking all of us to do. He wants us to give no offense to anyone. He also wants us to rebuke those that do give offense. That is why the apostles asked Jesus for more faith.

The Lord is coming back for a bride that is spotless and without wrinkle. He wants us to keep from sin and causing others to stumble. He wants us to rebuke others when they sin, holding them accountable. There is an accountability to one another that the Lord wants us to have. One of the best places for accountability is in small groups, where you have more intimate relationships with one another.

God is wanting us to be humble and obedient. Humility and obedience is going to bring about a more beautiful bride. Humility and obedience is going to bring about a more sanctified bride. Humility and obedience is going to bring about more unity. When the church has more unity, it will also have more power.

50 Our Christian Duty Towards Sin (Luke 17:1-10) December 14, 2014

As we come to a close, I want to share with you something on my heart. Statistically, nearly two thirds of people that leave a church leave because of unresolved offenses. This is a sad indictment to the church. Church, we should be an example to the world of how to resolve offenses. I believe that God's heart for the church is that we learn how to deal with offenses. I know that this is my heart.

We "to stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." We need a commitment to be tenacious in our dealing with offenses and to stand in one spirit and one mind. That is why Paul says that we need to strive. The Greek word for strive is what we get our English word agony from. It means that we work at it so hard that it is painful. God wants us to strive for unity and for the faith of the gospel.

(Phil 1:27) "Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."

We want to prevent as many offenses as possible, but Jesus said it is inevitable for offenses to come. Therefore, it is imperative that we learn how to deal with them. We need to learn how to reconcile and restore people. We need to learn how to win people. I want us to end this morning by praying about this.

Let's pray.

Introduction (Luke 17:1-10, Pro 11:30, 15:1, Luke 16:14-15, 16:29-31)

1. The commands about sin

A. Give no offense. (Luke 17:1-2)

- We are not to seek our own good, but that of our _____.
(1 Cor 10:24)
- Whatever you do, do all to the glory of _____. (1 Cor 10:31)
- There are serious _____ for those who cause offenses.

B. Rebuke those who sin (and give offense)

- If our brother sins, we are to _____ him. (Luke 17:3)
- If our brother repents, we are to _____ him. (Luke 17:4)
- If our brother sins, we are to go and show him his fault in _____.(Matt 18:15-17)
- If our brother does not listen to us, we are to take _____ with us.
- If our brother refuses to listen to the group, they are to tell it to the _____.
- If our brother refuses to listen to the church, we should try to _____ him to Christ.
- Our goal is to _____ people. (Gal 6:1-2)
- We must go in a spirit of _____. (Gal 6:1-2)
- We must go _____. (Gal 6:1-2)
- We must _____ one another's burdens or sins. (Gal 6:1-2)

2. Requirements (Luke 17:5-9, Matt 17:18-21)

- It requires _____ to maintain healthy relationships with one another. (Luke 17:5)
- Faith is required for _____. (Eph 2:8-9)
- We are _____ or _____ by our faith. (Gal 3:1-11)
- There is a connection between faith and _____. (Luke 7:6-9)
- We must be tenacious in our _____ to win our brother back. (Luke 17:3)
- We are to be tenacious in our _____. (Luke 17:4)
- We are to be tenacious in our support. (Gal 6:2)
- We need to _____ and do what God _____ us to do.
- We are to go in _____, under the _____ of the Lord.
- We must go _____ to our brother. (Luke 17:10)

Introduction (Luke 17:1-10, Pro 11:30, 15:1, Luke 16:14-15, 16:29-31)

1. The commands about sin

A. Give no offense. (Luke 17:1-2)

- We are not to seek our own good, but that of our _____.
(1 Cor 10:24)
- Whatever you do, do all to the glory of _____. (1 Cor 10:31)
- There are serious _____ for those who cause offenses.

B. Rebuke those who sin (and give offense)

- If our brother sins, we are to _____ him. (Luke 17:3)
- If our brother repents, we are to _____ him. (Luke 17:4)
- If our brother sins, we are to go and show him his fault in _____.(Matt 18:15-17)
- If our brother does not listen to us, we are to take _____ with us.
- If our brother refuses to listen to the group, they are to tell it to the _____.
- If our brother refuses to listen to the church, we should try to _____ him to Christ.
- Our goal is to _____ people. (Gal 6:1-2)
- We must go in a spirit of _____. (Gal 6:1-2)
- We must go _____. (Gal 6:1-2)
- We must _____ one another's burdens or sins. (Gal 6:1-2)

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