

1. The Gospel is Exclusively Offensive
  - a. Same opposition you see that were opposed to Jesus
    - i. V5 – the same group that prosecuted Jesus in Luke 22:66 is mentioned here again
      1. This means that the apostles were now facing the exact same tribunal that executed Jesus
      2. What do you think their assumptions were? What do you think the outcome would be now?
    - ii. The list includes those of various parties and sects
      1. Hardliners (Priests) and Liberals (Sadducees)
        - a. The religious hardliners believed that the Messiah would bring about spiritual renewal in the hearts of the people
        - b. The religious liberals didn't believe in the resurrection and saw the kingdom of the Messiah being a socio-political, earthly, powerful kingdom
        - c. There were religious moralists and secularized relativists, very different worldviews and differing opposition to the Christian message, but both were hostile towards it
          - i. Nothing unites enemies like the gospel
      2. Military (Captain of the Temple)
        - a. This was a priest with military or policing power in the Temple complex
        - b. In other words, the others grabbed the police and brought him over...to do what, exactly?
          - i. This shows that their intention, even in coming over, was to exert power
- b. They were greatly disturbed by the *message*
  - i. “Greatly disturbed” means to be agitated, aggrieved, tormented, caused to roil
    1. Their disagreement wasn't a mere intellectual agreement, nor were they coming to have an open and honest reasoned discussion regarding the healing of the man or the truth claims which the apostles made
    2. Their disagreement was a visceral disagreement, an emotional anger towards the message the apostles were speaking
      - a. Note, that they weren't angry about the healing
      - b. They were angry about the agent being credited for the healing
    3. Consider this:
      - a. If someone were to say to you that Canada is south of the United States, you would tell them that their geography needs a bit of updating, their GPS needs to be reprogrammed, or they need a new atlas.
        - i. But, would you be “greatly disturbed?” Outraged? Have them thrown into jail?
      - b. Underneath all of our intellectual misgivings about Christian claims (“How old is the earth?” or “Where is God when I suffer?” or “How do I know the Bible is the very Word of God?”, etc.) we all have a deep-seated, emotional, visceral offense to the heart of the message: “YOU are guilty of crucifying Jesus; God raised Him up from the dead and gave Him authority over EVERYTHING; only by coming to Him and Him alone in humble submission can you be fixed.”
    4. The priests and the Sadducees had different intellectual problems with Christianity, but they both had this visceral offense taken at its central claim of the exclusive authority and power of the risen Jesus of Nazareth
      - a. Faith is more than intellectual and unbelief is much, much more than mere intellectual misgivings

- b. Two implications:
    - i. If you have intellectual objections to Christianity (don't believe in miracles, etc.), and you don't believe that Jesus is whom He says He is based upon your perceived "lack of satisfying intellectual proof", then that's not enough
      - 1. You haven't really been intellectually honest about Christianity because you're not offended, yet
    - ii. If you object to Christianity on the basis of the common claim that there are multiple truths and no absolutes, then that's not enough
      - 1. For one, that is an absolute
      - 2. If you saw a pack of wolves jump on and kill an injured bison in Yellowstone, you may be grieved, but you wouldn't call it a moral outrage
        - a. "That's just nature"
      - 3. Yet, if you saw a group of men jump on and kill an injured woman, you would never say, "That's just nature."
        - a. You would be appalled, offended, outraged *because of a moral absolute distinguishing humanity from animal*
  - c. Faith, then, is more than mere factual assent, and the rejection the Christian message is more than mere factual dissent – there is the whole person involved
- ii. What deeply offended their culture was the claim of Jesus' exclusive authority and necessity
  - 1. "By what *authority*?"
    - a. It is always the exclusive claim to authority which offends us so deeply
      - i. This question is intended to bring about a charge of blasphemy, the same accusation they used to execute Jesus
      - ii. They are seeking to justify their offense with an objectively defensible accusation
    - b. It has been this way since the Garden, where Adam and Eve's sin was rooted in self-authority and self-autonomy and self-determination
      - i. Any claim which makes us absolutely powerless and Jesus alone absolutely powerful offends us deeply
      - ii. A Northwest Millennial blogger describes her generation this way:
        - 1. "...how we express our faith, whether through the same channels offered us by our parents and (in many cases) grandparents or whether we seek our own truth, is widely recognized among millennials as a matter of personal preference... And I do believe that God is in everyone, though by what name he resides there seems to me to be up to the person in question." (Lillian R. Mongeau, quoted from [http://www.oregonlive.com/opinion/index.ssf/2009/03/diverse\\_generation\\_choosing\\_fa.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/opinion/index.ssf/2009/03/diverse_generation_choosing_fa.html))
        - 2. Do you see where she places authority to define Reality? - "up to the person in question"
    - c. The Pharisees didn't really accept other authorities, though the Sadducees would have, but they were looking for a charge of offense against the authority who could execute judgment
    - d. Note also that Peter doesn't avoid this claim simply because it may lead to his crucifixion – he states it clearly and boldly *because he is full of the Holy Spirit*
      - i. The filling of the Holy Spirit always lead to bold proclamation of the authority and lordship of Jesus and the necessity of repentance/faith

2. “They are preaching the resurrection from the dead in Jesus”
  - a. The resurrection is an element of authority: both its basis and its proof
  - b. Thus, to proclaim not only that Jesus was raised from the dead, thus proving His authority, but that Jesus would also raise the dead was implying two things:
    - i. He is truly Lord over all
    - ii. The Jewish leadership was horribly wrong to kill Him
3. Both these reasons has offense for each of the parties involved: the priesthood was deeply offended by the exclusive authority of Jesus and the Sadducees were deeply offended at the concept of resurrection
  - a. There’s enough offense to go around for everybody!

## 2. The Gospel is Exclusively Restorative

- a. Miracles are not merely naked expressions of power
  - i. They are not magic tricks
  - ii. Jesus is not a Marvel character showing you his superpowers
- b. Miracles are *signs* which point to something much, much greater
  - i. Miracles fix what is broken in the world *as a unique pointer* to the One who will one day eradicate all that is broken and create the “new” heavens and the “new” earth, which are not able to be shaken
    1. The calming of the storm (Peace, be still), the healing of the leper, the feeding of the hungry
    2. These are pointers, but note that not everyone was healed by Jesus (Bethesda Pool)
  - ii. The lame man standing here was not merely *physically* healed, but also restored to the community of God’s people and to joyful praise of the LORD
  - iii. Miracles show us the sheer *breadth* of salvation
    1. In fact, Peter uses the word “salvation” in describing the man’s condition
      - a. “a good deed done to a crippled man – as to how this man has been *made well (has been saved).*”
      - b. This begs the question, “Rescued from what to what?”
    2. This salvation was more than just being able to walk
      - a. He could now earn money for himself, to be a productive, creative partner in the community
      - b. The prospect of marriage and family was not greatly increased, as well
      - c. He could now enter into the inner portion of the Temple
      - d. Thus, we see an economic, social, religious, and certainly psychological salvation here
- c. The power that healed the disabled man is not merely intellectual or logical reasoning of Jesus’ authority, but was also the power that includes those who are marginalized in totality
  - i. He entered the courts praising God and leaping for joy – emotional/joy restored!
  - ii. Nobody leaps for joy when they are intellectually convinced – they leap for joy when their hearts are lit on fire at the totality of the implications of that conviction
- d. Whoever has the authority to do this must be reckoned with
  - i. Again, Peter moves to make guilt and need clear
    1. “You crucified”
    2. “The stone which the builders rejected”
- e. Yet, whomever has the authority to do this is generous and kind
  - i. Again, Peter moves to clear the guilt and need
    1. “God raised up”
    2. “has become the cornerstone”
    3. “by which this man has been made well”
  - ii. It is those who are dead who need to be resurrected

- iii. It is those who are broken, and know their brokenness, that need to be healed
- iv. It is those who are outside that need healing that brings them inside
- f. There is a clear and exclusive claim to such authority
  - i. “There is salvation (rescue) in nobody else”
    - 1. Just the use of the word “saved” is often enough to put people off – “Are you saying that I need to be *saved*?”
      - a. That sounds so divisive, sectarian, *arrogant*
    - 2. The reason that humanity, both religious and irreligious, hate this exclusive call is because of their view of sin
      - a. Rescue is only necessary as it relates to the danger/death with which one understands himself to be enslaved
      - b. People don’t think Jesus is necessary because they don’t believe that they are dead in sin
        - i. Religious people believe that they can ‘our-righteous’ their sin by their willpower, their actions, their behavior
        - ii. Irreligious people deny that sin which devastates even exists
        - iii. Both deny that sin is in our nature, corrupted our very souls, rationale, thoughts, desires, and inclinations
          - 1. Therefore, both believe that we, humanity, can ‘work it out’ given enough time
          - 2. Politicians say it all the time, “we are progressing, getting better, moving forward, achieving justice, etc.”
      - c. Since there is not a deadness of sin, then why would we need the only one to defeat death?
    - 3. One cannot come to God on his own terms!
  - ii. At the same time, Christianity is one of the most inclusive movements in the whole world
    - 1. There are boundaries, of course, particularly related to the authority of Jesus over *every area* of life
    - 2. Yet, *anyone* who closes to Christ Jesus by humble faith will find complete and utter inclusion into the family of God with “every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies” (Ephesians 1:3) granted to him by God’s grace
      - a. Jew or Gentile (Gentiles don’t have to become Jewish)
      - b. Rich or Poor (no power of wealth or financial stability necessary)
      - c. Slave or Free (no economic or political status necessary)
      - d. Male or Female (no advantage in being particular gender)
      - e. Brute or Civilized (no amount of education necessary)
    - 3. This man who was healed was a pariah, a curse to his family, a burden to his friends, an outcast to his community
      - a. This is something of a picture of the mission of the Church
      - b. We are to be a place where outsiders are restored to wholeness through humble, submissive, dependence on Christ Jesus, who is God over all

### 3. The Gospel is Exclusively Courageous

- a. Jesus is the only cornerstone
  - i. This is the stone on which the entire edifice is oriented and squared up
    - 1. The stone which the builders rejected, eventually became the stone which the entire edifice was oriented
  - ii. For the one who is trusting in his own works and wisdom to make himself something, this is highly offensive
    - 1. Because it demands that all that you have labored for, all those stones which you tried to square up, all that effort which you put forth...is worthless
    - 2. Your building has been condemned b/c you threw out the cornerstone

- iii. For the one who denies any moral absolute and believes that goodness is found just by following one's own heart, being true to oneself, or the personal preference of one's heart, this is equally offensive
  - 1. Because it implies that there is a moral standard to the structure of my life which is objectively imputed to me and to which I have not built and am under God's wrath in need of total healing & complete rebuilding *according to square*
- b. What you build your life upon is only as stable and secure as the cornerstone upon which it is built
  - i. If you build your life on "learning" or "education" (as these leaders recognized not to be the case with Peter and John in v13), then your life is only as secure as your success in that area
    - 1. If your education is shaken, your life crumbles
  - ii. When something questions your "cornerstone" and seeks to show that it is not square, not good-enough, worthless, then your entire life, your soul, crumbles into despair
  - iii. But if you build your life upon a cornerstone which cannot be shaken, even by DEATH, but that conquered death, then even when trials come and suffering comes the building still stands.
- c. It is not arrogant, bigoted, or hateful to tell people that there is only one cornerstone that can withstand all the shaking of the heavens and earth *if it is true*.
  - i. The resurrection of Jesus proves that He is the only capable cornerstone, and if this is true, it is not arrogant to claim such.
    - 1. It would be arrogant for me to claim to be such, for I am shakable, it is untrue, then, and therefore stupid
    - 2. But if it is true, it surely is not stupid nor arrogant
  - ii. We don't like the cornerstone because it hard, unbending, with sharp edges which hurt us
    - 1. We like soft stone, malleable, able to have the rough and sharp corners, which cut us, cut off and smooth so as not to offend us in any way
    - 2. Yet, what happens when the rains of life and the tears of our agony pour down upon a soft limestone? It melts...the building crumbles.
- d. In fact, it is courageous to do so.
  - i. When the leaders noted that Peter and John spoke this way, made this claim, *and were uneducated common (idiotes) men*, they recognized that they had been with Jesus
    - 1. Note that what impressed and categorized the apostle as 'having been with Jesus' was their boldness (spoke this way) and their lack of social power (uneducated, common men)
    - 2. Christians don't fit the world's expected power structures – they are outsiders, but this is what makes us like Jesus –offensive to all
  - ii. It is utterly courageous to place oneself in the position of powerlessness and to submit oneself to those who seek to destroy you while calling them to repentance
    - 1. Remember, these leaders are the same ones who crucified Christ
    - 2. The apostles are submitting to them AND boldly accusing them of sin and their need for Jesus alone as *Savior*
      - a. This is real courage!
  - iii. Where does the courage to submit come from? The cornerstone.
    - 1. The apostles so deeply understood that Jesus is the cornerstone of their life and thus their lives were unshakable, even by death, persecution, beatings, and slanders
    - 2. They so entrusted Jesus to rescue them completely that they did not fight back when threatened, though through them a crippled man was made whole (power)
  - iv. And Jesus Christ exercised the power of God in exactly the same way: He gave up strength to lift up the weak.
    - 1. This cornerstone was cast aside as a common stone

- a. He gave up the riches of heaven to give His inheritance of heaven to the poor in spirit
  - 2. He dies so that the crippled could be healed
  - 3. He is cast outside the gates of the city so that the pariah might be brought in
- e. To the extent which you grasp onto this truth will result in an attitude like the apostles:
  - i. It will give you humility – for you were so desperately sinful that Jesus had to be cast out for you
  - ii. It will give you boldness – Jesus did die for you – and if God is for you, who can be against you?

## COMMUNION