

Summary

This sermon opens a four-week series called "Don't Take the Bait," focused on living free from the trap of offense. Pastor Jason explains that Satan uses offense as one of his most hidden and effective tools to either destroy or cage people, preventing them from fulfilling God's calling on their lives. Drawing from Luke 17:1 and the Greek word for offense (which literally means "the bait that triggers a trap to close"), the message makes clear that while being offended is unavoidable, choosing to live offended is a decision we make. The core teaching centers on Proverbs 19:11, which says that a person's wisdom yields patience and that it is to one's glory to overlook an offense. Pastor Jason unpacks this verse to show that overlooking an offense means stepping over or passing around it, not engaging with the bait. He also draws from Proverbs 10:12, emphasizing that love covers all wrongs. The practical challenge is to identify one specific offense you are holding onto and then make the decision, with the Holy Spirit's help, to step over it and cover it with love by assuming the best about the other person.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together today. As we open Your Word and discuss what it means to live free from offense, we ask that You soften our hearts and open our minds. Holy Spirit, reveal to each of us the areas where we have taken the bait and allowed bitterness to take root. Help us to set aside our own defenses and truly hear what You want us to receive today. We trust that Your plans for our lives are bigger than any offense we have experienced, and we invite You to lead this conversation. In Jesus' name, amen.

Ice Breaker

What is one thing that used to really bother or annoy you when you were younger that you now find easy to laugh off or ignore?

Key Verses

- Luke 17:1
- Proverbs 19:11

- Proverbs 10:12

Questions

- Pastor Jason described offense as a trap with bait, using the Greek word that means 'the bait that triggers a trap to close.' How does thinking of offense as a trap rather than just a feeling change the way you respond to it?
- The sermon states that 'avoiding offense is impossible, but living offended is a choice.' Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not, and what makes it difficult to put into practice?
- Proverbs 19:11 says it is to one's glory to overlook an offense. Pastor Jason connected this to the idea of being magnificent, using Jackie Robinson as an example. Who is someone in your life or in history that you consider magnificent because of how they handled offense?
- The Hebrew word for 'overlook' in Proverbs 19:11 means to step over or pass around. What does it look like practically in your daily life to step over an offense rather than engage with it?
- Pastor Jason said that every offense opens a gap in a relationship, and that Satan sets his trap in that gap. Can you think of a relationship in your life where a gap has formed because of an unresolved offense? What would it take to begin closing that gap?
- Proverbs 10:12 says that love covers over all wrongs. The sermon challenged us to assume the best about people's intentions rather than accusing them. How easy or difficult is it for you to assume the best, and what helps you do that?
- Pastor Jason mentioned that bitterness is almost always the result of holding onto an offense. Have you ever recognized bitterness in yourself, and what did it cost you in terms of relationships, peace, or purpose?
- The sermon ended with a two-part challenge: name a specific offense you are holding onto, and then decide to step over it. What makes that second step so hard, and how can this group support one another in taking it?

Life Application

This week, take a few quiet moments to honestly identify one specific offense you are currently holding onto. Write it down if it helps. Then, with the Holy Spirit's help, make a deliberate choice to step over it by doing one concrete act of love toward that person or situation. This might

mean sending an encouraging message, praying for the person who hurt you, or simply choosing not to bring the offense up again. Come back next week ready to share what that experience was like.

Key Takeaways

- Offense is not just a feeling but a trap, and Satan uses it to either destroy your life or cage you and hold you back from God's calling.
- Holding onto offense automatically plants bitterness in your heart, and no bitter person has ever changed the world for the better.
- Proverbs 19:11 teaches that wisdom produces patience and that it is to one's glory to overlook an offense, meaning the strongest and most magnificent people are those who choose to step over the trap rather than engage with it.
- Love is the tool that covers the trap of offense. Choosing to assume the best about others and leading with love closes the gap that offense creates in relationships.
- God's plans for your future are too big for you to remain trapped by an offense from your past. Releasing offense is not weakness but the path to freedom and purpose.

Ending Prayer

Lord, thank You for the time we have spent together today wrestling with this important truth. We confess that we have all taken the bait at one time or another, and we ask for Your forgiveness and Your grace. Give us the wisdom described in Proverbs 19:11, the kind that makes us slow to anger and quick to love. Help us to step over the offenses that come our way this week, and remind us that the plans You have for our lives are far too great to be held back by bitterness. We choose today to cover the gaps in our relationships with love, trusting that You will work miracles as we release what we have been holding onto. Go with each person here as they face the specific offense they identified today. Give them courage, give them grace, and give them Your strength. We pray all of this in the name of Jesus. Amen.