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CHURCH

Encountering Grace through Jesus, right where we are.  
Being moved by Grace toward all God has for us.

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# Don't Drink The Poison, Part 1: The Times Beach Effect

**The 1970's and 1980's toxic contamination and poisoning of the residents of Times Beach, Missouri.**

Pivot to today: Anger or resentment is a poison that you drink hoping to hurt someone else. Both are a response to offense.

**Offense is the annoyance or resentment brought about by a perceived insult to, or disregard for, oneself or one's standards or principles. Offense has TWO stages:**

- ◆ Stage 1: Feeling offended: When someone presents you with an opportunity to be offended. This stage is not a choice; the feeling is beyond our control.
- ◆ Stage 2: Living offended: When we decide to lean into or dwell on the offense. It is the moment we choose to drink that poison and internalize the offense. It is an ongoing state. We begin to think and say things that fuel our offense.

When that glass of offense has been poured and placed before you, it is so hard not to drink it.

The choice not to live offended is a choice for a healthy soul, a peaceful mind, and a blessed life.

**Feeling offended is certain to happen.**

*Luke 17:1 (common English version)* "Jesus said to his disciples, "Things that cause people to trip and fall into sin must happen, but how terrible it is for the person through whom they happen."

*Luke 17:1 (KJV)* "When He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come!"

Notice the translation that uses the word offense, so that you would know that Jesus warned us that feelings of offense are inevitable. Also notice the translation that informs us that offense is an opportunity for us to fall in something. Living offended is a gateway into something dangerous and damaging.

**Regardless of the source of offense, moving from stage 1 to stage 2 is a choice.**

*Proverbs 19:11* "Insightful people restrain their anger; their glory is to ignore an offense."

Ignoring offense is a quality of insightful people.

**Just because you have the right, doesn't mean you should.**

*1 Corinthians 10:23* "Everything is permitted, but everything isn't beneficial."

People have the right to say what they want when they want. But that right is often spiritually and relationally counterproductive. Just the same, people have the right to feel offended and be offended when someone does something offensive.

*Galatians 5:13* "You were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only don't let this freedom be an opportunity to indulge your selfish impulses, but serve each other through love."

**A defining mark of Jesus people is freedom; but living offended is binding ourselves to the poisonous offense people present to us.**

Eventually what was consuming the other person consumes you.

When we drink the poison of offense, we chain ourselves to the gross things that are eating the people around us.

**The underlying realities of the Times Beach effect that really stick out:**

- ◆ These people were trying to address a problem.
- ◆ They thought they were helping.
- ◆ But they were handling and passing on something far more Insidious than they had ever imagined.

**How do we respond to this question: How do we get free from poison we already drank? We make the choice and we ask God to make the change in us.**

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