

THEME: Doctrine – Jesus The Stumbling Block or Stumbling Over Jesus

Christ is indeed the stumbling block of the modern church. Jesus said *Luke 7:23* "**Blessed is he who does not take offense at Me.**" But how could this be? How could we ever take offence at Jesus? God the Holy Spirit warns us in *1 Peter 2:6-8* **For this is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNERSTONE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."** *This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNERSTONE," and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.* Again we must reflect, why do we as Christians need to be careful not to stumble over Jesus? It is Christ that causes offence, it is Christ that divides families and it is Christ over whom we will stumble if we are not careful.

Consider this scenario, a faith based organization wants to unite Christian churches to raise money for the poor. They choose as their verse *Matthew 5:16*, "**Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.**" Glorifying God by doing good works by feeding the poor. What could be better? There is no division here. Christians rarely divide over God the Father. Christians rarely stumble over God the Father. Then one of the brothers speaks up. He wants to include a strong Christian statement of faith – eternal security through faith in Christ, salvation in Christ alone, the sole mediatorial role of Christ, Christ as judge of the living and the dead, the imminent return of Christ, the necessity to receive Christ and Christ alone to avert an eternity in Hell, salvation through faith in Christ and not by works - just a solid doctrinal statement from the Bible. Will there be unity? I can guarantee you that the so called Christian unity will quickly dissolve. As long as you keep silent about Christ there will be unity. Be careful that you do not stumble over Jesus.

What about this situation? A group wants to have a city wide, Spirit filled praise service. Every type of Christian rock band, gospel group and church choir in the city will be invited. A large stadium is rented and all will be able to participate and lead in worship. It will be a day and night of Spirit filled and Spirit led prayer. Will there be unity? Yes there will as long as Jesus is left out. People rarely divide over so called Spirit filled praise services. Then one of the brothers speaks up. He wants to include a strong Christian statement of faith – eternal security through faith in Christ, salvation in Christ alone, the sole mediatorial role of Christ in prayer, Christ as judge of the living and the dead, the imminent return of Christ, the necessity to receive Christ and Christ alone to avert an eternity in Hell, salvation through faith in Christ and not by works - just a solid doctrinal statement from the Bible. The crowd grows quiet. Who is this guy who is spoiling everything by bringing the doctrinal truths of Jesus into the equation. Now how can there be unity? I can guarantee you that the so called Christian unity will quickly dissolve. As long as you keep silent about Christ there will be unity. Be careful that you do not stumble over Jesus.

We live in an age when unity of fellowship is held in such high regard by many Christian organizations, churches and movements that slowly the Biblical truths concerning Jesus become quite frankly an embarrassment. We believe them, we know they are true but we withhold them out of fear that they will be divisive. Jesus Himself taught in *Luke 12:51-53* "**Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.**" It is time to take stock. What is more important to you, to associate openly with Jesus, the real Jesus, the one taught in the Bible or to "get along"? Will you sacrifice what you know to be true about Jesus to enlarge your fellowship, church, Bible study or campus ministry? If the answer is yes then you have indeed stumbled over Jesus. It is time to ask Jesus for forgiveness for being embarrassed about JESUS and return to the author and perfecter of our faith.

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: I Peter 2:4 – 9

How does this passage relate to the theme?

In what ways am I tempted to remain silent and compromise about what I believe about Jesus to avoid conflict, division or criticism?

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Ephesians 2:20 – 22; I Corinthians 10:1 - 4

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Acts 4:1 – 12 (:11)

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Luke 20:1 – 18 (:17 & 18)

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Matthew 15:1 – 14 (:12)

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: John 6:41 – 70 (:41, 44, 47, 51, 58, 61, 66)

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Matthew 21:42 – 46 (:42 – 44)

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: I Corinthians 1:18 – 31 (:23)

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Romans 9:30 – 33; Luke 7:23

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JEREMIAH 15:16

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Jesus The Only Way (everybody else is wrong): John 14:6; Acts 4:12
 How do people stumble over this verse? (How would this verse create division in a campus or city wide praise service?)

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How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Jesus The Sole Source Of Forgiveness (we do not confess to priests):
 Hebrews 4:16; I John 1:9; Ephesians 1:7;
 How do people stumble over this verse? (How would this verse create division in a campus or city wide praise service?)

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Jesus A One Time Sacrifice: Hebrews 7:6 & 7; 9:24 – 26; Hebrews 10:10, 18
 How do people stumble over this verse? (How would this verse create division in a campus or city wide praise service?)

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Jesus The Sole Mediator (we do not pray to Mary or saints): I Timothy 2:5 & 6; Leviticus 26:1; Deuteronomy 4:16, 23

How do people stumble over this verse? (How would this verse create division in a campus or city wide praise service?)

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Jesus Completes Us (we need seek no second baptism of the spirit or special spiritual blessing outside of our salvation): Ephesians 1:3 & 13; II Peter 1:3

How do people stumble over this verse? (How would this verse create division in a campus or city wide praise service?)

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Jesus Grants Eternal Life (we cannot loose our salvation): Romans 5:21; 6:23; I Timothy 1:16;

How do people stumble over this verse? (How would this verse create division in a campus or city wide praise service?)

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Jesus The Only Escape From Hell: John 5:24; John 3:18 & 19; Revelation 20:11 – 15

How do people stumble over this verse? (How would this verse create division in a campus or city wide praise service?)

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Jesus Is Sufficient (not by works, nor by baptism): Romans 3:22 – 24; 10:9; Ephesians 2:8 & 9; Titus 3:5 – 7

How do people stumble over this verse? (How would this verse create division in a campus or city wide praise service?)

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Jesus The Judge Of All Who Do Not Receive Him: II Timothy 4:1; Romans 2:16; Revelation 14:10 & 11; Revelation 20:11 – 15

How do people stumble over this verse? (How would this verse create division in a campus or city wide praise service?)

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Jesus Chooses Who He Will Save (is calling His elect into the church): John 15:16; John 6:44, 65; Matthew 24:31; Mark 13:20

How do people stumble over this verse? (How would this verse create division in a campus or city wide praise service?)

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Jesus Desires Those Who Come Believe In Him To Follow Him In Baptism: John 3:13 – 15; Matthew 28:19 & 20;

How do people stumble over this verse? (How would this verse create division in a campus or city wide praise service?)

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Jesus Was Involved In Creation and Holds The Entire Universe Together: Colossians 1:16 & 17; John 1:3; Romans 11:36

How do people stumble over this verse? (How would this verse create division in a campus or city wide praise service?)

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