

Standing Firm and Unafraid in the Love of God

Matthew 24:1-14

- I. **Before Jesus left, He described what would come to pass when He left, and what the disciples could expect as signs preceding His coming back and “the end of the age” (Matthew 24:3). Many people in our general culture and church culture are becoming scandalized (*offended*) (Matthew 24:10).**
 - A. The verb in Matthew 24:10 translated “turn away” (from the faith) is “*skandalizo*.” Thayer’s Greek Lexicon defines this word, as follows:
 1. “To put a stumbling block in the way—to offend”
 2. “To cause a person to distrust someone he/she ought to trust and obey”
 3. Taking “the bait stick” (*skandalon*) of unfulfilled expectations leads a person to be offended (*scandalized*) (Proverbs 13:12).
 - B. We live in an unprecedented atmosphere of unfulfilled expectations (soul sickness). In Matthew 24 Jesus describes what it will be like in the end times.
 1. Betrayal (Matthew 24:10)—divorce, child molestation, etc.
 2. False prophets and false religion (Matthew 24:11)
 3. Wickedness, lawlessness—“The love of most will grow cold” (Matthew 24:12).
- II. **How taking offense cools love—“Above all else guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it” (Proverbs 4:23).**
 - A. It cuts us off from the source of all love, God Himself.
 1. The heart can be trapped in a jail of unforgiveness and demons (Matthew 6:12-15; 18:21-35).
 2. The heart can also be trapped in a jail of judgment (Matthew 7:1-2).
 - B. Taking offense can cut us off from the blessing of God (Psalm 66:17-20).
 - C. Taking offense can cut us off from the joy of our salvation. When everything becomes focused on this life, gratitude goes out the door (Psalm 51:10-12).
- III. **How to find the tenderness of love again.**
 - A. Forgive God; forgive others; and step out from under the box (Proverbs 13:12).
 1. Forgiveness means to stop waiting for others to make things right.
 2. Forgiveness means to stop judging others for what they have done to you.
 - B. Let God heal you of brokenness. Sometimes deliverance from demonic oppression may be necessary (Isaiah 61:1-3; James 5:13-20).
 1. Reveal—agree with God about your stuff.
 2. Renounce—bad attitudes
 3. Rebuke—verbally break demonic power off your life in Jesus’ Name.
 - C. Receive “First Love” all over again; stand firm to the end (Matthew 24:12-13).
 1. Receive God’s supernatural love to refire your heart (Ephesians 3:14-21).
 2. Since it takes God to love God, hang out where God lives.
 - a. Share the joy of heaven (Luke 15:1-7).
 - b. Take part in the great drama of the ages (Matt. 24:14; II Peter 3:8-9).

*Mike Hudgins
May 21, 2023*

