

UPWARD THOUGHT

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Explaining the prophecies and the scriptures to all who desire to hear them. (Mosiah 27:35-36)

And blessed is he, whosoever
shall not be offended in me.

By Rob • June 08, 2020

I have had a few people bristle at how I say
what I say. Most run away as fast as they

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can. Some few say, "hey, I can look past your tone, but you'd really get more people to listen if you said things with more tact."

Labels

true messengers

When the disciples of John the Baptist were sent to Jesus to try to figure out who he was, Jesus cited his works and then said: "blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." (Matthew 11:6) How interesting that even John the Baptist--the king of offense--should himself be offended by one with greater light.

John the Baptist was a righteous man sent with the special mission of preparing the way for Christ in his mortal ministry. Jesus himself said of John: "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." (Matthew 11:11) If even John was

capable of being offended by Jesus, what on earth makes you think that you would not be?

I wonder if anyone who is offended by the things I say has ever read the scriptures. The things I say are quite mild compared to what Jesus and many of his servants said there. Joseph Smith said "I have not the least idea, if Christ should come to the earth and preach such rough things as He preached to the Jews, but that this generation would reject Him for being so rough." He is right. I am not sure I've ever met anyone who could withstand what Jesus would say to him were he to be conducting his mortal ministry today--and that's if he kept it to what he said in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago. In many ways, we are far more wicked than they were. He'd undoubtedly say harder things today.

Why was Jesus so rough with people? He wasn't, really. What others interpreted as roughness was simply the reaction of the light with the darkness. Do you know why the glory of God burns like an orb of fire when he comes here? It is because the interaction between great light and anything below it causes a fiery reaction.

There was once a loving father of a sweet teenage girl. One day, while walking down the street minding his own business, he turned to see his daughter in an alley with a man who was trying to rape her. Knowing the gravity of the situation, the father did not hesitate to pull his concealed pistol on the man. He didn't threaten the man. He shot him. He didn't just shoot him once. He unloaded the magazine on him.

For those who persist in willful disobedience to God--meaning that you ever do anything that is different from what you believe is right, the deviation between you and the mind of God is comprised of many situations where what you think isn't a big deal is actually an enormously big deal. Each of those sins--or situations where you know better than you act--has attached to it consequences of extreme import. God gives commandments to give you a path to obtain outcomes that exceed the limits of what you can currently understand. This means that the consequences attached to obedience and disobedience to those commandments are outside of your understanding. Gratefully, God gives us everything we need to know what is right in every situation as far as we need to take

one step closer to him, where he can reveal
another layer of reality to us.

Those who see things closer to how they really
are will react with a different degree of urgency
than you do. It is out of concern for you. You
shouldn't interpret the actions of others from
the perspective of your own heart, because it is
highly unlikely their heart is in the same place. It
is either worse than yours, in which case they
will surprise you when they turn again and rend
you, or it is better than yours, in which case you
will turn and rend them instead of receiving the
love of God that they have come down to offer
you through giving their life for you in ways that
you can't presently understand.

What you interpret as someone's offensive

manner could be because they are a jerk, but it also could be because they have much more light than you, and *you* are offensive to the light. Lehi understood how this worked. He tried to help Laman and Lemuel understand that Nephi's seeming roughness wasn't about him, it was about them:

And ye have murmured because he hath been plain unto you. Ye say that he hath used sharpness; ye say that he hath been angry with you; but behold, his sharpness was the sharpness of the power of the word of God, which was in him; and that which ye call anger was the truth, according to that which is in God, which he could not restrain, manifesting boldly concerning your iniquities. (2 Nephi 1:26)

When a servant of God lights you up, realize that there is a great deal of mercy restraining them. Were an angel or the Lord himself to come to you, it might be even worse. That fleshy messenger may be holding back a wall of fire that would make it *even harder* for you to accept.

Why is it any surprise whatsoever that you are offended? What do you expect? Of John the Baptist, Jesus said: "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what ye out for to see? A prophet? yea..." (Matthew 11:7-9)

Maybe if Jesus were saying this to you today he would say something like: "why would you go

listen to a prophet to feel good about yourself or to interact with him like your buddy? He's going to light you up. That's what he came to this earth to do, to help you see the ways that you are dishonest with yourself and others, and the ways you are ignoring what you know is right."

What is the cause of offense when light and truth are transmitted? Rationally speaking, the message makes sense. Offense to light and truth is the emotional reaction of the natural man. There is no rational basis for the offense. When Jesus tried to help the chief priests and Pharisees by calling attention to their hypocrisy:

...the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken

this parable against them. (Luke 20:19)

Suspiciously absent from these peoples' process was rational evaluation. They didn't stop to ask whether what he was saying "against them" *was true*. They only knew that their feelings were hurt, and they wanted to kill him to stop their pain. The light will always show the previously hidden darkness in your heart. God promised so: "And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness." (Ether 12:27)

The reaction of the person who receives the messenger is not the messenger's choice. It is the person's choice. While the righteous humbly consider messages from God, "the guilty taketh the truth to be hard, for it cutteth them to the very center." (1 Nephi 16:2) It is to flee from this

cutting feeling that they react how they do, not as a result of rational consideration of the message.

While the righteous recognize at least some of the price paid, and rejoice to be fed by light from above, the wicked typically hear nothing at all, but when they do hear something, it tends to be thunder, not a small simple voice:

11 ...the angel of the Lord appeared unto them; and he descended as it were in a cloud; and he spake as it were with a voice of thunder, which caused the earth to shake upon which they stood;

12 And so great was their astonishment, that they fell to the earth, and understood not the words which he spake unto them. (Mosiah 27)

Ye are swift to do iniquity but slow to remember the Lord your God. Ye have seen an angel, and he spake unto you; yea, ye have heard his voice from time to time; and he hath spoken unto you in a still small voice, but ye were past feeling, that ye could not feel his words; wherefore, he has spoken unto you like unto the voice of thunder, which did cause the earth to shake as if it were to divide asunder. (1 Nephi 17:45)

3 And it came to pass that while they were thus conversing one with another, they heard a voice as if it came out of heaven; and they cast their eyes round about, for they understood not the voice which they heard; and it was not a harsh voice, neither was it a loud voice; nevertheless, and notwithstanding it being a small voice it did

pierce them that did hear to the center,
insomuch that there was no part of their frame
that it did not cause to quake; yea, it did pierce
them to the very soul, and did cause their hearts
to burn.

4 And it came to pass that again they heard the
voice, and they understood it not.

5 And again the third time they did hear the
voice, and did open their ears to hear it; and
their eyes were towards the sound thereof; and
they did look steadfastly towards heaven, from
whence the sound came.

6 And behold, the third time they did
understand the voice which they heard; and it
said unto them:

7 Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well
pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear
ye him.

8 And it came to pass, as they understood they cast their eyes up again towards heaven; and behold, they saw a Man descending out of heaven; and he was clothed in a white robe; and he came down and stood in the midst of them; and the eyes of the whole multitude were turned upon him, and they durst not open their mouths, even one to another, and wist not what it meant, for they thought it was an angel that had appeared unto them.

9 And it came to pass that he stretched forth his hand and spake unto the people, saying:

10 Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world. (3 Nephi 11)

When you hear thunder, don't get angry at the

messenger. Get angry at yourself. It is your wicked heart, not their words, that are causing your reaction.

All of this, of course, presupposes that the message is in fact from God. And how will you know? Rational evaluation of the message. Using your emotional reaction to gauge the truthiness of a message is about the dumbest thing you could ever do. It is laid out very clearly in the scriptures that man's natural feelings act in opposition to the rational spirit of God. God works through rational persuasion. We use our feelings to justify acting contrary to what we know is right.

In other words, if you are offended by something, it is likely that what is being said has

at least some truthiness to it. Were you to rationally conclude it was false, you could set it aside without being angry about it. It would have no power over you.

If you want to see how people who were more righteous than you reacted to messengers with still greater light, go reread the accounts of Daniel, Zacharias, Moses, Jacob, Paul, Alma, and others when they received angels or the Lord. It is absolutely ridiculous to assume that if someone comes offering you greater light, you will be entertained and coddled. He is going to light you up.

How are you going to react if and when this happens? How did people react to Jesus? Some hated him and wanted to kill him because they

couldn't get over their emotional response to his assault on their preconceived notions (though they explained it away by some irrational judgment of his works or the rumors around him). Some saw him as a teacher only. Some couldn't deny that he had taught and done things that deviated from anything they had experienced from normal people, and had to admit he was at least a prophet. For others, this was insufficient, as his teachings and works exceeded any prophet they had read about. For these only, he was the Son of God. If you write off a servant of God as a wicked man, you will not benefit from their ministry. If you accept him as a teacher, you will get something out of him, but far less than what he has come to give. If you accept him as one who delivers quotes from God, you will receive the benefit of those

quotes. But some men come to earth as more than this. As Jesus said of John, who was "more than a prophet," and as was obviously true of Jesus himself.

We live in the last days, when all things ever revealed will be revealed anew, and when things will be revealed that have never been revealed. How do you imagine this will happen, except in the same way it has ever happened: through God sending humans to this earth to be born and live who come from great glory. People who have laid down their eternal lives, shedding their tabernacles of glory to come here as normal people to try to help you see things you'd never otherwise imagine. How do you think you will react to that?

The more light a messenger has, the more
offensive he will be to you. If you seek out those
who say what you want to hear, you won't
receive anything except what you already have.
Not all people who offend you are from God, but
you can guarantee that those with more light
than you will offend you to the degree they have
more light than you do.

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