

2024



# The Church at Severn Run Connect Ministry

## Unoffendable Series & Fall Schedule

# Hey Connect Leaders!

Thank you for being amazing leaders and partners in ministry! Thank you for answering the call to lead and serve on our connect team. God desires connection with us and through us; we are created for this! Because of Jesus, we all have the invitation to connection and community. This past year has brought so much life and growth to Severn Run and we've seen so many new groups, new leaders, and new stories blossom. We look forward to the next season of life and ministry together!

**A Sunday Sermon Series** : Pastor Drew and our staff feel compelled to go to God's Word and preach a Sunday series called "Unoffendable". In all of the noise and strife that attacks our homes, communities, and nation - we are called to confidently stand in our faith and to be a light that points the world to Jesus. Instead of getting pulled into the whirlwind of politics, personal grievances, and petty disagreements - we are called to make Jesus famous and demonstrate His reign and rule in our life. It is an important and timely sermon series that Pastor Drew will be sharing as we head into another school year, with another election, and another host of distractions.

**This Sermon Series Will Also Become A Connect Group Series** : We believe that this conversation is important and everyone should have the opportunity to dive deeper into the content and discuss it with a group of people. So, we are asking all of our connect groups to start the fall semester by doing the four-week long "Unoffendable" curriculum that we are going to prepare and produce. The connect group curriculum will guide groups through the Sunday sermon content, provide additional materials and content, and offer a flexible list of discussion questions for groups to use. We are working on packaging this all neatly for you and then we plan on taking some time at our next Connect Ministry Meeting in August to walk through it together. ***This four week adventure will run from 9/22/2024 - 10/19/2024.***

If you are already in a study, we ask that you would consider pausing to do this together with us. We will complete "Unoffendable" by 10/19/2024; groups are encouraged to resume a previous study or start a new study following this one.

Groups like Celebrate Recovery, Grief Share, Tuesday Trivia, and all of the connect experiences built around an activity or program are not at all expected to do this. The next page will outline more events, dates, times, and notes.

# Connect Schedule

	<b>Summer Connect Semester Meeting / Preparing &amp; Recruiting For The Fall Semester</b>
<b>8/18</b>	<b>Connect Leader Lunch Meeting &amp; Training 12:30-1:30p</b>

We have both new and perennial groups that are meeting over the summer. This is also the time when we are starting to prepare and recruit for our BIG Connect Ministry Launch in September. On Sunday, August 18th, we will have a Connect Leader Lunch Meeting & Training for all leaders/co-leaders. Please do your best to attend! We will have info and resources available.

<b>9/01-29</b>	<b>Connect Enrollment Opens For Fall Semester</b>
<b>9/22</b>	<b>“Unoffendable” Sermon Series Begins / Connect Groups Launch This Week With “Unoffendable” Connect Series</b>
<b>10/13</b>	<b>“Unoffendable” Sermon Series Ends / Connect Groups Finish The “Unoffendable” Connect Series This Week</b>

The entire month of September is a major emphasis on Connect Ministry and helping people sign up for groups. The four week long series will start on Sunday, 9/22 - our goal would be for groups to begin meeting that week of the 22nd. So groups who meet on Tuesdays would start week one of “Unoffendable” on 9/24, groups who meet on Thursday would start on 9/26. The sermon series ends on 10/13, so groups who meet on Tuesday would end “Unoffendable” on 10/15 and Thursday groups would end on 10/17. We would encourage groups to then resume a previous study or start a new one heading into Christmas. There will be 6-8 weeks remaining this semester.

<b>12/1-15</b>	<b>Our Recommendation For Ending This Fall Semester</b>
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We would encourage groups to meet into December and break sometime before Christmas. We will have our next connect semester launch during the back half of January 2025.



2024

# unoffendable

a Severn Run Connect Series  
Inspired by the book “Unoffendable” by Brant Hansen

# Reminders

**Our Mission :** To reach as many people as possible by creatively revealing the love of the Father, through the life of the Son, in the power of the Spirit.

**Our Vision :** to build community and connection in Christ by inviting our neighbors into meaningful relationships where they can belong and grow.

- Remember your training :
  - set expectations - help people feel comfortable by letting them know what to expect. establish culture.
  - the 70-30 rule - create space for others to talk, leaders can assume 30% of the conversation.
  - keep the discussion positive - if things turn negative or destructive, bring it back to the positive and healthy. invite group members to follow up with you or staff if they need to discuss something further.
  - celebrate - find ways to celebrate with your group, this series invites us to focus on the cross and remember the goodness of God. be a light to your group and show them Jesus.

As a connect Group Leader, you are never alone in creating community or facilitating your group. The staff and leadership of Severn Run are with you and here to assist and support you!

Galatians 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

# Unoffendable

**“Choose to be unoffendable.  
Let the grace of the cross be the work of your  
life!” - Pastor Drew**

There are four weeks in this series, and each week has three sections of content for you and your group:

## **Section 1** // Sunday Sermon Notes

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- Created by Pastor Drew for you to have and share

## **Section 2** // Recap

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- Content Summary, Application, & Reflective Prayer

## **Section 3** // Discussion Questions

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- Helpful questions to guide and inspire conversation

# Week One

## // Sermon Notes

How does the cross of Jesus change your life?

I grew up the child of an alcoholic father and a codependent mother. Our family looked normal - like most families do. (Truth is, everybody's normal until you get to know them! We're all broken; it's why we need God.) Outside, I was "the good kid" in school. Inside, I was hurting in ways I didn't have words for. After my parents divorced in 8th grade, I began to run into some amazingly attractive, positive, and influential followers of Jesus. I never met anybody like them before, and because of their influence, I gave my life to Christ. I wanted to spread His hope. Be with the lonely. Bring outsiders in. Help other people find and follow this amazing God-man, Jesus Christ. And not long after that, I got drafted by God into vocational ministry.

That was forty-four years ago.... I expected most of my struggle against hell to be from the lost world outside the church. Surprisingly, for forty-four years, most of my struggle against hell has been with religious people inside the church! I shouldn't have been surprised; it's always been that way.

**When the Cross makes you cross, there's a problem....  
Real Christians live Jesus' grace!**

Look on every page of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and you'll find Jesus' biggest opponents were religious people claiming to serve God!  
Pharisees = offended religious people who offer judgments that condemn instead of a grace that invites.

- Matthew 12:1-8. The Pharisees were offended by the freedom to eat, that hungry disciples picked grain on the sabbath.
- Matthew 12:9-14. The pharisees were offended by the power of love, that Jesus healed a man with a shriveled hand on the Sabbath. Jesus changes a man's life—"But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus."
- Luke 5:17-25. Jesus heals a paralyzed man lowered through a roof, and the Pharisees are offended by the grace of the Good News—"Friend, your sins are Forgiven."
- Luke 5:27-31. The Pharisees are offended by Jesus offering the grace of friendship to tax collectors.

## Week One

### // Sermon Notes

- Luke 5:33–39. The Pharisees were offended that Jesus’ disciples were enjoying life in His presence and didn’t fast like they did. Missing God face to face, Jesus invites them forward: “New wine must be poured into new wineskins.” But their hearts were hard and they refused to move.

Religious people who’re convinced they’re right can be some of the meanest people who ever lived.

- The more convinced a religious person is that they’re right in God’s eyes, the more entitled they feel to take offense, and the more justified they feel to judge. It’s the spirit of the Pharisees, ISIS, and the Taliban.
- Killing in God’s name, whether it’s a life or a reputation, is an age-old game religion has always played.

### The Grace of the Cross is Jesus Choosing to Be Unoffendable!

Jesus chose to be unoffendable! Let that sink in. The grace He showed an undeserving world is the heart of His difference! It’s what makes His story, His “Good News” so spectacularly remarkable in a graceless, “get-even” world. Jesus stands out because His life had an entirely different character and quality. He didn’t play by earth’s critical, tear-people-down, death-dealing rules. He spoke Truth with courage and loved with patience. But religious people, sure they were right, arrested and tortured Him, mocked and crucified Him. How did Jesus respond? He was unoffendable...

Luke 23:32–37

“Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. 33 When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. 34 Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’ And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. 35 The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, ‘He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.’ 36 The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar 37 and said, ‘If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.’

The whole point of God’s work in sending Jesus was saving US, not himself! Talk about lessons in missing the point! And the point is, if they could miss the heart of Jesus in their time, we can just as easily miss Him in ours!

The more judgmental, arrogant, or disagreeable your “Christianity” makes you, the more you belittle, criticize, look down upon or devalue anyone for whom Jesus died, the farther you are from Christ. The more free we feel to pass sentence upon, the more severely we’re passing sentence upon ourselves. (Matt. 7:2)

## Week One

### // Sermon Notes

Beaten with fists and slapped in the face (John 19:3), beaten with a staff and tortured with thorns (Matt. 27:29), beaten with a cat of nine tails to near death (John 19:1-3), we neither beat nor broke the heart of Jesus.

Forced to carry a cross on a bloody back, Jesus was roughly thrown down into the dirt before nails were driven with hatred and cruelty through both hands and both feet.

**No one has more of a right to be offended than Jesus!**

And as if the physical torment wasn't enough, hell went after Jesus' identity, His purpose and being to destroy His soul. And how did Jesus respond?

**"Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."**

And all of this was before Jesus died to pay the price for every sin ever committed. Jesus experienced all the darkness, hell and hatred of every human offense ever committed. Yet how offended was He?

Every human instinct is to get even, hurt and hate back. But the cross didn't make Him cross, because Jesus made our hate the most remarkable demonstration of God's love the world has ever known. This is what happens when grace makes us unoffendable.

**Offended religious people hinder God's work. Unoffendable grace IS God's work! Choose to be unoffendable. Let the grace of the cross be the work of your life!**

Hundreds of offended religious people, convinced God was in their pocket, walked away that day another step closer to hell. But Jesus living an other-worldly grace while dying, stunned a thief by His side,

"This man has done nothing wrong," (Luke 23:41) and a centurion at His feet. "Surely this was a righteous man." (Luke 23:47).

Each of us are at the cross. We're either looking at the cross and missing its meaning, or we're dying on the cross and living its grace.

Luke 9:23-24 "Jesus said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it."

**Choose to be unoffendable.**

**Let the grace of the cross be the work of your life!**

# Week One

## // Recap

“CHOOSING TO BE UNOFFENDABLE, OR RELINQUISHING MY RIGHT TO ANGER, DOES NOT MEAN ACCEPTING INJUSTICE. IT MEANS ACTIVELY SEEKING JUSTICE, AND LOVING MERCY, WHILE WALKING HUMBLLY WITH GOD. AND THAT MEANS REMEMBERING I’M NOT HIM. WHAT A RELIEF.”

— BRANT HANSEN

“I THINK A MATURE CHRISTIAN IS SOMEONE WHO IS VERY DIFFICULT TO OFFEND.”

— DALLAS WILLARD

### Summary

### // Based On Sunday Sermon Notes

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As we begin our Unoffendable journey, let's consider the transformative power of the cross in our lives. Pastor Drew shared a deeply personal story of overcoming a challenging childhood through the love and grace of Jesus. Offense wouldn't restore offense, only the work of the cross could bring new life into his world. In homes all around the country, there is a temptation to be offended by everyone and everything. Sometimes, people bring that pattern of being offended into their faith and focus on their offense rather than the transformative power of the cross. Jesus certainly experienced the deepest and darkest insults and pains on his journey to the cross. Being offended wasn't His mission. In contrast, the religious leaders of the day were deeply offended and chose to wield their offense to judge and punish other people, including Jesus. The Pharisees, for example, were offended by Jesus' acts of compassion and healing, often plotting against Him. We must be vigilant against those who promote judgment rather than grace. Jesus had every reason to be offended, but He instead focused on something higher. Jesus came to bring freedom and healing, not condemnation and division. He calls us to follow His example of love, compassion, and forgiveness. Let us strive to reflect His character in our words and actions, extending grace to all, just as He did. Choose to be unoffendable. Let the grace of the cross be the transformation of your heart and the work of your life!

# Week One

## // Recap

### Application // Make It Personal & Make A Choice

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Unoffendable challenges us to examine our own hearts and attitudes. Jesus is the ultimate example and role model for us. We may be tempted to look at other heroes or strong personalities, but none of them compare to Jesus. Many people are attracted to the noise and energy and drama, but Jesus did things a different way. We should too!

Our first week highlights the tension between Jesus and the religious leaders of His time. The Pharisees, known for their strict adherence to the law, were often offended by Jesus' acts of mercy and compassion. They challenged His authority and sought ways to discredit Him. How can we avoid falling into the same trap as the Pharisees? We must first examine our own hearts and motives. Are we truly seeking to follow Jesus, or are we simply going through the motions of religion? We must also be careful not to judge others harshly but instead extend grace and forgiveness. We need to be like our hero Jesus!

### Prayer // Reflective Prayer & Scripture

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Lord Jesus, help me to see others through Your eyes. Give me a heart of compassion and forgiveness, just as You have shown me. Give me the strength to resist the temptation to be offended and to focus on Your love instead. Amen.

Ephesians 4:29-32

Colossians 3:12-17

Psalms 103:1-22

Luke 23:32-34

# Week One // Questions

- Describe a time you felt offended by something.
- What does it mean to be unoffendable?
- What is your first impression of this sermon series? What resonated with you from the sermon, recap, or book?
- Pastor Drew talked about the struggle between religious leaders and Jesus. Give some examples of when religious people in the Bible were offended by Jesus. How did Jesus respond? (Matthew 12:1-8, Matthew 12 9-14, Luke 5:17-25, Luke 5:27-31)
- Why do you think the religious people of the time were offended by Jesus? What was it about Jesus that made them so upset?
- Have you ever struggled with “religious people”? How did it leave you feeling?
- Sin is offensive, it goes against the commands and heart of God, and it causes pain and destruction and death. Jesus came to die on the cross for our sin, that was His mission. So, how did Jesus walk through a sinful world without acting offended all of the time and going off on everyone?
- Jesus chose to do what only He could do in response to sin. What might we be called to do in response to the grace of God and the brokenness of our world?
- How do we avoid being the prickly religious people and become more like a Gospel-centered follower of Jesus?
- In what ways do you need to be more unoffendable?

**Please use the questions that best fit your group, feel free to create your own questions. It may be helpful to read the summary to your group as a refresher first.**

# Week Two

## // Sermon Notes

Anger is for Fools... Well, there's a statement. But hold off getting angry about it for just a minute... How surprising would our lives be if we Christians were the most loving and least offendable people on the planet? What if we were best known for the mercy of our love? How fresh and alive would the message of Jesus be then?

James 2:12-13

"Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, 13 because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. MERCY TRIUMPHS OVER JUDGMENT."

It really does! Except most of the time here, it doesn't.

Brant Hansen says, "When you're living in the reality of the forgiveness you've been extended, you don't get angry with others easily." On the cross, Jesus modeled unoffended grace, speaking some of the most remarkable words ever heard on earth:

Luke 23:34

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they're doing."

I'm hearing Jesus' words a little differently today; not limiting them to that day's angry mob. What if Jesus wasn't just talking about our nailing Him to the cross, but everything else as well? How we live, how we make decisions, how we respond to people and things that hurt us; what if, deeper than we know, we don't know what we're doing and we need forgiveness to light the way?

All of us live wounded in a broken world. We're all dealing with some trauma, consciously or unconsciously. And at some level, all of us are angry about it!

Our anger may be turned destructively outward in aggression (or passive-aggression), or it may be turned destructively inward in depression and discouragement. But the truth is, anger's everywhere in earth's air, and sinful anger's probably infected your faith as well.

The truth is, we don't know what we're doing, especially when it comes to anger.

Now before you go too far in justifying or defending your anger, consider this:

Anger exists because of sin!

Let that sink in. At its best, anger is a rejection of injustice. Without sin, there would be no injustice to reject, and therefore no anger. And, let's be honest, anger is rarely something that's ever part of our "best." In fact, it usually defines our worst.

- Ecclesiastes 7:9 "Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools."
- Proverbs 14:17 "A quick-tempered person does foolish things, and the one who devises evil schemes is hated."
- Proverbs 19:11 "A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense."
- Proverbs 29:11 "Fools give full vent to their rage, but the wise bring calm in the end."
- Proverbs 15:18 "A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but the one who is patient calms a quarrel."
- Proverbs 22:24-25 "Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn their ways and get yourself ensnared."
- Matthew 5:22 "I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell."

You get the point. Do your own study! Read proverbs. Everywhere you go you'll find that when it comes to dealing with anger, we don't know what we're doing and we desperately need forgiving grace.

Psalm 37:8-9

"Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil. 9 For those who are evil will be destroyed, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land."

Each of us comes to a fork in the road in life. Who's going to call the shots? God, or me? Jesus prayed that we would admit we don't know what we're doing, that we don't really know how to live our lives. He prayed we would accept the grace of His forgiveness and give up working life from the anger angle.

All the hurt of the world is going to make us angry. Let it go. Not because it doesn't matter, but because it gets in the way of the one thing that matters most—the grace and mercy of God.

**Don't be arrogant. Let go of your anger;  
It never does God's graceful work...**

**James 1:19-20**

**"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 because human anger does not produce the righteousness of God."**

Let that sink in. Human anger does not do God's work! It furthers hell and hinders heaven.

"Father, forgive them, they don't know what they're doing." Religious people are the worst because they're the best at justifying their anger in God's name. Considering the grace we've received, nothing justifies holding onto anger instead of Jesus....

We're going to experience anger, but that doesn't mean we love it more than Jesus. Ephesians 4:26-27 "In your anger do not sin.' Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold."

When anger comes, we dive into the grace that leads to our salvation, not the anger that leads away from it. Colossians 3:8 "But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

Imagine a world without critical Christians... If hurting people heard the Good News about Jesus in place of our frustration and anger, how many more people would serve our Savior?

**Be like Jesus.  
Choose To Be Unoffendable.**

# Week Two

## // Recap

“ANGER IS EXTRAORDINARILY EASY. IT’S OUR DEFAULT SETTING. LOVE IS VERY DIFFICULT. LOVE IS A MIRACLE.”  
— BRANT HANSEN

“THE DEFINITION OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS GOING FROM HAVING THIN SKIN AND A HARD HEART TO HAVING THICK SKIN AND A TENDER HEART.”  
— JOHN STOTT

“THE BIBLE GIVES US AMPLE COMMANDS TO ACT, AND NEVER, EVER, SAYS TO DO IT OUT OF ANGER. INSTEAD, WE’RE TO BE MOTIVATED BY SOMETHING VERY DIFFERENT: LOVE, AND OBEDIENCE BORN OF LOVE.”  
— BRANT HANSEN

### Summary

### // Based On Sunday Sermon Notes

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As Christians, we’re challenged to confront a powerful emotion: anger. The world often tells us it’s acceptable, even justified, to be angry. Yet, Scripture paints a different picture. Pastor Drew references many passages of scripture verses that boldly underline the truth that anger is dangerous and destructive. Anger exists because of sin, and it often leads us back to sin. We must acknowledge the anger that is in us and around us. Let it go. Not because it doesn’t matter, but because it gets in the way of the one thing that matters most—the grace and mercy of God. Jesus, in the midst of unimaginable pain, exemplified this unoffendable grace. On the cross, He prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” These words invite us to consider our own shortcomings and the need for forgiveness in every situation. We live in a broken world filled with hurt and pain, which can easily ignite anger within us. But anger is destructive, both to ourselves and others. Instead, we are called to respond with love, compassion, and forgiveness. Again, this doesn’t mean condoning wrong actions but choosing to respond with grace and mercy.

# Week Two

## // Recap

### Application // Make It Personal & Make A Choice

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Anger and outrage have become the native language of politics and most of social media. It seems like news isn't news unless it is editorialized into anger fuel. It is possible that we are becoming desensitized to anger, maybe even leaning into it at times. How should the church exemplify Christ to the world? How do we participate in important discourse with sincerity and conviction without losing our integrity? Each of us should take time to measure our anger levels. In what areas of your life do you struggle with anger? How can you replace anger with a spirit of forgiveness and compassion? Remember, we are all sinful and broken, and we all need grace. Let us strive to be a people known for grace and forgiveness, reflecting the character of our Savior.

### Prayer // Reflective Prayer & Scripture

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Lord Jesus, help me to identify the areas in my life where anger has taken root. Give me the strength to release it and replace it with Your love and forgiveness. Teach me to see others through Your eyes of compassion. In Your name, I pray. Amen.

James 1:19-20  
Ephesians 4:26-27  
Proverbs 14:17  
Proverbs 22:24-25  
Psalms 37:1-9

# Week Two // Questions

- When was the last time you got angry about something? What was it about? Are there regular sources of anger in your life?
- How do you personally respond to or deal with your own anger?
- How do you respond to or deal with other people's anger?
- There are many proverbs dealing with the subject of anger. What do they say? (Proverbs 14:17, 19:11, 29:11, 15:18, 22:24-25) How should we deal with anger based on this wisdom?
- Foolishness is often a biblical judgment of anger. How is being angry foolish?
- Jesus says "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they're doing." (Luke 23:34) What if these words weren't directed at just the angry mob at the time, but to all of us even now? How could reflecting on Jesus' words change your perspective when you are angry?
- Anger and outrage have become the native language of politics and most of social media. Why do you think that is?
- In times of trouble and pain, how can the church exemplify Christ to the world?
- How can we participate in important conversations and politics with sincerity and conviction without losing our integrity or testimony?
- Are there things that you can do differently to move away from anger and reflect the love of Jesus?
- What resonated with you from the sermon, recap, or book?

**Please use the questions that best fit your group, feel free to create your own questions. It may be helpful to read the summary to your group as a refresher first.**

# Week Three

## // Sermon Notes

Jesus was unoffendable! He lived a world-stopping grace and showed undeserved mercy to us all. That's the whole message of the cross!

Luke 23:34

"Father forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing."

Where we are quick to judge, divide, demean, and tear down others who disagree with us from some righteous platform, Jesus was quick to forgive.

"But what about condemning sin, defending God, and taking a stand?"

a) Condemning sin isn't your job. Offering Jesus is.

John 3:17

"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

b) No elephant "needs" an ant to defend them. Did God "defend" Jesus on the cross? Do you really think the God of the universe is so vulnerable He needs you to "defend" Him? Represent Him, yes. Defend Him, no.

c) Far more people would understand the heart of Jesus if Christians would take a compassionate knee instead of an angry stand. Jesus said to love your enemies, not attack them. (Matthew 5:43-44)

Jesus taught that faith in Him means following Him, living our lives to spread the Gospel!

John 20:21

"Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'"

Do the words of Jesus matter? Jesus said peace would surround and mark our lives, not self-righteous anger and snarky condemnation. We are to love JUST LIKE HIM! (Cf. John 13:34-35) The mark of a disciple isn't being highly opinionated, it's living an other-worldly agape love that attracts people to Jesus.

Matthew 4:19

“Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will send you out to fish for people.’”

You fish for people by attracting them to the Truth! Jesus’ people choose “Unoffendable!” They show mercy because they’ve received it. It beautifully defines their lives.

Remember, with Jesus, it’s always “a heart thing.” Jesus cuts through all our concerns with appearances and the lies we tell ourselves and others. He teaches that everything we do and the words we speak come from the heart! (Matthew 12:36; Matthew 15:17-19)

We are God’s people by God’s grace! (Ephesians 2:8-9) How ironic is it that we consistently choose to represent God’s love and grace to the world through our anger and judgments of the world? (John 3:16)

Be terrified... How we choose to judge others is how God will choose to judge us!

Think about it! We get to choose how God will judge us! The irony is that in this sense, the judgment of God is simply God’s choice to let us judge ourselves.

James 2:12-13

“Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!”

“Mercy triumphs over judgment.” Except in Christian practice, where it doesn’t. Except in politics, on X, Instagram, and Facebook. Most of us feel highly justified in being prickly pears as we defend God and our opinions, which coincidentally, are usually the same.

The “law that gives freedom” is the grace of the Gospel—the Good News that Jesus saves!

We’re called to be wise and look ahead, to interpret time in light of eternity.

The story of Jesus is the story of a mercy that doesn’t live naturally in this world. It’s supernatural, and only comes from a life-changing personal relationship with Jesus. We are all as merciful, kind, thoughtful and encouraging as we believe God’s been to us.

## Week Three

### // Sermon Notes

Put another way, living the fruit of the Spirit only comes from having the Spirit! If the fruit's not there, it's because the Spirit's not there. (Galatians 5:22-23) Fish swim. Birds fly; it's who they are. If we've been "mercied," we'll be mercy!

Mercy triumphs over judgment! Except, again, it doesn't in Christendom. None of us has any leg to stand on when it comes to looking down on anyone, separating from anyone, or belittling anyone. Jesus died for them as He did for you. To devalue what Jesus valued more than His life is to dishonor Jesus.

Jesus chose not to judge us, but to be sin for us. (2 Corinthians 5:21) How then can we hold on to the offense of other people's sin?

John 8:15

"You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one."

Matt. 7:1-2

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

We choose simple labels to put on other people so we can pretend to understand them, control them, and be better than them. We understand no one until we open our heart to their story, and then maybe we get the chance to open their hearts to His story.

You and I can live stinking up the earth by spreading our judgments and opinions, our anger and woundedness. Or, we can be the aroma of Christ, confounding the world with the scandal of grace.

2 Corinthians 2:14

"But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of Him everywhere."

Choose "Unoffendable."

Be Loved! Be Love.

# Week Three

## // Recap

“YES, THE WORLD IS BROKEN. BUT DON’T BE OFFENDED BY IT. INSTEAD, THANK GOD THAT HE’S INTERVENED IN IT, AND HE’S GOING TO RESTORE IT TO EVERYTHING IT WAS MEANT TO BE. HIS KINGDOM IS BREAKING THROUGH, BIT BY BIT. RECOGNIZE IT, AND WONDER AT IT.”

— BRANT HANSEN

“BE CAREFUL NOT TO MEASURE YOUR HOLINESS BY OTHER PEOPLE’S SINS.”

— MARTIN LUTHER

“GOD KNOWS OTHERS’ PRIVATE MOTIVES. WE DON’T. GOD KNOWS OUR PRIVATE MOTIVES. WE DON’T. WE THINK WE CAN JUDGE OTHERS’ MOTIVES. WE’RE WRONG.”

— BRANT HANSEN

### Summary

### // Based On Sunday Sermon Notes

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There is often a great disconnect between the message of grace in the Gospel and the reality of judgmental behavior among Christians. Pastor Drew emphasizes the importance of a personal relationship with Jesus for developing the fruit of the Spirit, including mercy, kindness, and encouragement. Christians are called to choose between spreading judgment and negativity or embodying the “scandal of grace”.

We know and believe that God is our judge but we are often quick and pleased to judge other people. We must avoid the practice of assuming another person’s intentions. Christians ought to understand that only God is the true and righteous judge. Scripture is clear that we will be judged in the manner of our judgment towards others. This should be a sobering reminder that our grace was freely given to us, not deserved. We are called to give an answer for the hope that we have, not called to insult and degrade people who don’t agree with us. We must find a zeal for the truth that doesn’t bear arms against the image of God in other people. Being on mission doesn’t mean being highly opinionated, it means sharing the Gospel as we love well, live Jesus, and believe big.

# Week Three

## // Recap

### Application // Make It Personal & Make A Choice

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The fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—is a direct result of the Holy Spirit's presence in our lives. When we lack these qualities, it's a clear indication that we need a deeper connection with God. Cruelty, judgment, and aggressiveness are not fruit of the spirit. When we look inward, what fruits of the spirit are demonstrated in our daily life? What fruits of the spirit are lacking? How can we grow in this area? How can we avoid judging ourselves and other people?

Have we stopped to consider God's love and grace for us? Before we boil up in rage or assume the worst of another person, we need to remember that God openly pursued us and loved us while we were still lost in our sin. What has God done for you? What does God feel about you? Where has God brought you from? How has God blessed you? Did you deserve any of it? Jesus has brought us victory, so now we live to see that victory play out in the world around us. How is Jesus using you to lead others to Him?

### Prayer // Reflective Prayer & Scripture

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Lord Jesus, I confess my failures to live out Your command to love my neighbor as myself. Forgive me for my judgmental heart. Help me to see others through Your eyes of compassion and grace. Fill me with Your Spirit so that the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control may overflow in my life. In Your name, I pray. Amen.

Matthew 7:1-5  
James 2:12-13  
John 8:1-8  
Mark 12:30-31

# Week Three // Questions

- Are you friends with people who have different views than you do? If so, how do you handle it? If not, why not?
- Do you have family members who have different views than you do? How do you handle it? What are the holidays like?
- What does your social media look like? Does it represent Jesus? What types of comments get you to respond with your opinion?
- Are there assumptions people make about you that are unfair and untrue of who you really are? How does it feel to be judged that way?
- Read James 2:12-13. Jesus' people show mercy because they have received it. How have you shown mercy to others?
- Read John 20:21. How are you doing at reaching out to others and sharing the gospel?
- When you are faced with people living in sin, do you point out the sin first or Jesus first? What does that look like? Give an example.
- Read Romans 12:1-2. In view of God's mercy, how should we act differently than the world when it comes to labelling and judging others?
- Why is your personal testimony important and how does it show God's mercy?
- Sometimes we judge ourselves wrongly, attempting to put our value and security in our own hands. How can we continually trust God with our value and identity?
- What resonated with you from the sermon, recap, or book?

**Please use the questions that best fit your group, feel free to create your own questions. It may be helpful to read the summary to your group as a refresher first.**

# Week Four

## // Sermon Notes

All of us have a choice to make. Am I going to live by the rules and operating system of this world, or am I going to live a life of a different kind? All of us are going to live naturally spreading hate and anger, or supernaturally spreading grace and mercy.

We can choose to be unoffendable trophies of grace;  
The difference in us helps others see the difference in Jesus!

John 1:16-17

“For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”

Ephesians 2:8-10

8 “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are the work of God, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Think about it; if grace began our salvation story, how can it not be the story our salvation tells? We are the work of grace created in Christ Jesus to do works of grace!

**Grace ends angry!**

The beauty of our salvation is that it ends a death-ridden way to live! But the beauty of grace is not merely what it ends, it's what it begins. The glory of grace is that it's a beautiful invitation to something new! We were saved by grace to LIVE by grace!

To be saved is to choose to give up the old wounded, fight-back, get-even, hit-harder, destructive, burn-the-house-down get revenge way of living.

We are the grace-work of God! But how crazy is it to think we can begin our journey with God as trophies of Gods' unfathomable, undeserved, unbelievable grace, and not continue to live by grace through faith every step of the way?

Receiving grace results in living gracefully from a changed heart--deeply rooted in love, abundantly bearing the fruit of the Spirit.... (Galatians 5:22-23). We are alive in Christ to the extent we live His grace.

**The parable of the unmerciful servant: Matthew 18:21-25**

:21 How much mercy do I need to show the undeserving people around me in the world?

:22 Infinitely beyond what you've imagined!

:23-25 No one's sinned against you more than you've sinned against God. Our sin against God is unimaginably great and deserves the severest of punishment.

- The man owed 10,000 talents of gold. 1 talent was equal to twenty years of a day-laborers' wages. In modern terms, times 10,000 equals \$7,608,384,000!

Matthew 18:26-30

"At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' 27 The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. 28 "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. 29 His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.' 30 But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt."

- So the guy forgiven of a 7 billion dollar debt refuses to forgive the guy whose debt is \$12,000! The point of the story is God's righteous and rightful expectation of our giving grace to "undeserving" people after receiving grace as an undeserving person!

Every time we spread hell instead of heaven in judgment, condemnation, or self-righteousness, every time we are critical, condescending, tear-down or demean, we are inviting the wrath of God upon ourselves.

Grace is the work of heaven; judgment is the work of hell. Whose work on earth are we doing in the thoughts, actions and words of our lives?

:31-35 God's "judgment" upon those of us who are lost is simply God letting us have what we wanted. We valued holding on to our right to judge others by our standards more than we valued the grace of God Almighty.

Matthew 7:2

“For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

James 2:13

“For judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.”

Choose to be an “Unoffendable” trophy of grace;  
Live giving grace so others can see the Savior that saved you.

Living harsh like the world spreads hell in us and others. Living from a changed heart not only changes us in beautiful ways, it rains a stunning grace on those around us as well. Let the difference BE Jesus!

**The difference in us helps others see the difference in Jesus!**

Pass on grace and buy into the world’s way of doing life, and you lose everything. Love wins! 1 John 2:16-17 “16 For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.”

Grace and mercy, kindness and forgiveness are things divinely alive and not of this world. Jesus stands out among all of humanity for the grace of His life. So should we! Live grace.

Choose To Be Unoffendable!

# Week Four

## // Recap

“CHOOSING TO BE UNOFFENDABLE NOT ONLY HELPS ME SLEEP AT NIGHT RATHER THAN WORRYING ABOUT MY LATEST ONLINE “STAND FOR TRUTH”; IT HELPS ME REMEMBER THAT JESUS DIDN’T EVEN ASK ME TO TAKE A STAND FOR TRUTH ON EVERYTHING. HE TOLD HIS FOLLOWERS TO GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES. MAKE OTHER FOLLOWERS.”

— BRANT HANSEN

“CHOOSING TO BE UNOFFENDABLE OUT OF LOVE FOR OTHERS IS MINISTRY.”

— BRANT HANSEN

“FORFEITING OUR RIGHT TO ANGER MAKES US DENY OURSELVES, AND MAKES US OTHERS-CENTERED. WHEN WE START LIVING THIS WAY, IT CHANGES EVERYTHING.”

— BRANT HANSEN

### Summary

### // Based On Sunday Sermon Notes

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This series emphasizes the importance of being unoffendable like Jesus and showing undeserved mercy to others. It highlights the life and ministry of Jesus and the importance of living a life of love and peace. Being unoffendable is a choice, and our choices are a reflection of what we know, believe, and trust about ourselves and other people. There is a Good News story available to us and to others, do our choices point people to that Good News or away from it? We must live like we believe in our own value and the value of other people.

Ultimately, our choices are a reflection of what we know, believe, and trust about God. Our offense, anger, and judgment point to the condition of our hearts in relation to the love of the Father, the life of the Son, and the power of the Holy Spirit. Being unoffendable is a necessary part of our spiritual growth and ministry to the world. Living grace shows Jesus. The difference in us can show people the difference in Jesus!

You have a choice. What you choose matters.

# Week Four

## // Recap

### Application // Make It Personal & Make A Choice

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The bottom line is that our choices and attitudes matter. Being offended or unoffendable both make an impact on the world. You are making an impact on the world. You have influence. You have a voice. You have a choice. The unmerciful servant lost sight of God's grace and chose to do what was common and normal. He had the chance to be part of something heavenly and wonderful but his heart and motives were in the wrong place.

We need to examine our own hearts and motives. Do we want to make an impact for the Kingdom of God or against it? In our homes, are we creating a pathway that points people to Jesus or pushes them away? How would our marriages, relationships, work environments, schools, and neighborhoods look if we were less offended and more gracious and merciful? Grace and mercy, kindness and forgiveness are things divinely alive and not of this world. Jesus stands out among all of humanity for the grace of His life. So should we! Live grace. Choose Unoffendable!

### Prayer // Reflective Prayer & Scripture

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Dear Lord, help me to be more like Jesus. Help me to be quick to forgive, to love my enemies, and to speak the truth in love. Let my choices and attitudes be life-giving and full of Jesus. Thank you for your example of grace and mercy. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Matthew 18:21-35

Ephesians 2:8-10

2 Corinthians 5:18-22

John 3:16-17

Matthew 28:19-20

# Week Four // Questions

- Read Ephesians 2:8-10. How does it feel to receive grace because of who God is rather than because of what we do?
- Thinking of Ephesians 2:10, what are some of the good work opportunities that God has given you? How would being offended or judgmental possibly get in the way of those ministry opportunities?
- Who are some of the people in your life that are the most impacted by your choices?
- Who in your life needs mercy and grace?
- Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-22. What could the ministry of reconciliation look like in your life?
- Reflecting back on this sermon series, what has stood out to you about it? Are there any particular points you find yourself thinking about?
- Has this series changed your attitude toward yourself or others at all?
- Do you have more questions about this sermon series? What are they? (Feel free to raise questions to church staff if more clarification is needed for the group.)
- What does it mean to be unoffendable? Has your answer changed from the first week when we asked that question?
- Read Matthew 18:21-35. What are your impressions from this story?
- How could the unmerciful servant acted differently? How would that choice make an impact on his life and the people around him?
- What would it look like for you to choose to be unoffendable?

**Please use the questions that best fit your group, feel free to create your own questions. It may be helpful to read the summary to your group as a refresher first.**