

DELIVERANCE FROM OUR INFIRMITY PART 3

Peter Hay, Presbytery Word for week commencing Sunday 24 May 2026

Transcription of recording, slightly edited

I am going to continue today in this subject of infirmity. I want to look at a particular implication of it that has to do with stumbling and dealing with offence. We concluded our study last week by appreciating the wonderful point that those who belong to the household of Abraham are blessed and cannot be cursed by another. That was a lovely point. The Lord promised to Abraham, 'I will bless those who bless you and I will curse him who curses you and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

Then we considered the example of the Lord preserving the children of Israel from the actions of Balaam whose services were sought by Balak, the king of the Moabites, to curse the nation. Moses himself reflected on this at the end of his life in Deuteronomy 23 verse 5. He said, 'The Lord your God would not listen to Balaam, but the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loves you.' I find that a very comforting and encouraging passage because there will be those who are endeavouring our harm, but we do not need to be afraid of that. We remember that the blessing that belongs to us is the blessing of sonship. Nobody can assail or take away from us that blessing. Even when persecution is coming or the action of cursing is toward us, the Lord is turning that cursing into a blessing for us for the sake of our maturity and fruitfulness as a son of God. That is a great point of rejoicing.

The thing that we have to understand is (that being true, and it is true) we can bring *ourselves* under cursing by the way that we engage with the word. One of the ways that we become vulnerable to cursing is through stumbling and through our inability or unwillingness to let go of our offences. This is in fact what the doctrine of Balaam is. We make ourselves vulnerable to cursing when we are sympathetic to and engaged in the conversations of those who were stumbling at the word of present truth.

This principle is the doctrine of Balaam. In previous years, we have written on this as we have looked at the letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation. We have identified the

doctrine of Balaam as the expression of a presbyter who is seeking mutual empowerment and financial gain through the ministry of the gospel. I took that from one of our books. However, in the light of the word which is revealing to us the nature of our infirmity, our understanding of this destructive doctrine needs to be further broadened. It is not just a presbyter who is wanting financial gain through the ministry. That is part of it. But when Jesus addressed the issue of the doctrine of Balaam when He was writing to the church in Pergamos, He said the issue had to do with placing a *stumbling block*. That is what the doctrine of Balaam was. Jesus identified this doctrine in His letter to the church in Pergamos and it is important to note how He was coming to this church. He identified Himself as 'He who has the sharp two-edged sword'. We know that the sharp two-edged sword is the word that has been spoken from the mouth of Christ and it is a polarising word. This is how Christ is addressing this particular issue. He rebuked the presbytery of Pergamos saying in Revelation chapter 2 verse 14, 'I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel [we could say, '...before a covenant people'], to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality.'

I do not think that when Jesus was writing this, He was saying that you have a few people in your presbytery who, when they get up in the morning, are thinking, 'Right, how can I stumble these people? What are some tricky things that I can do to get a whole congregation to eat things sacrificed to idols?' I know that is not what He is saying. So what is the doctrine of Balaam that gets ministered in the church that creates stumbling? How does it work? To understand it, we must first understand the principle of stumbling. The doctrine of Balaam is placing a stumbling block in front of people. We have to get clear about what stumbling is and what its connection to our infirmity is.

The apostle Peter explained that Christ Himself becomes to us a stumbling stone and a rock of

offence when we are being disobedient to the word of present truth. Christ Himself is becoming the stumbling Stone when we are disobedient to the word of present truth. This is the issue of the infirmity. We do this when we become disobedient to the word of present truth - when we exchange this word for the lie that belongs to our idolatrous or religious projections. They are the fruit of another law at work within us. We are exchanging the truth for a lie that belongs to our view of good and evil even as we take hold of the Law. As we do that, it is a self-preserving action that is contrary to the fellowship from which the word is proceeding. That fellowship is a fellowship of offering where life is being laid down to reveal another. Christ Himself becomes to us a stumbling stone and a rock of offence when we are disobedient to the word of present truth - exchanging this truth for the lie that belongs to our idolatrous and religious projections. These projections, which are sourced from an image that we have of ourselves (which is the idol) are coverings to mask the shame of our nakedness as we live by this other law.

In relation to stumbling and offence, there are two elements. One is *disobedience to the word* when we are exchanging the truth for the lie that belongs to our interpretation of it. That is why we are being disobedient. The second element that belongs to stumbling and offence is the *projections of shame*. That is the expression that we have that we are asking everyone else to receive and acknowledge and validate. The reason we get offended is because people are not validating our projection. We know this from the writings of Peter and Paul.

The first one we will read is 1 Peter chapter 2 and verses 7 to 8. He said, 'Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious [that means elect]; but to those who are disobedient, "The Stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone." and "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offence." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they were also appointed.' I make the point that stumbling here (which Peter is highlighting) is not talking about someone who just trips into naughtiness, because the people who stumbled the most in relation to Christ, when He came among them, were the Pharisees who against the Law, were perfect. Paul said in relation to the ordinances and conditions

of the Law, that he was blameless. Stumbling has far less to do with the naughtiness that you do, and far more to do with the right to be the measure and the judge of ourselves and of others. The evidence of stumbling is actually more to do with our offences. It is how we become offended. We become offended by the word that has been spoken. We become offended when someone does not receive us the way that we think we should be received. We can become offended by all sorts of things. But the bottom line is the offence is because we are making a judgement. We have a view of the way things should happen. Peter is saying that we are actually stumbling at Christ here.

Paul quoted this same Scripture, and he added the element of shame to it. This is Romans chapter 9 verse 33. He said, 'As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offence, and whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."' If we are being disobedient, it means we are not believing. That means we are living in shame. But if we are believing, it means we are receiving a gospel of which we are not ashamed. If we are stumbling and we are holding on to our offences, we are actually being disobedient to the very word that we are trying to hold on to. That is because we are projecting a good that we want everyone to receive. When we are living this way, Christ has become to us a stumbling stone and a rock of offence. As we learnt last week the evidence that that is happening is a whole lot of emotions of sin.

We will take this principle of stumbling and a rock of offence and connect it to Balaam. The doctrine of Balaam is teaching that that is the way you should live. That is a strange thing. So what does it look like? We know that Balaam taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel. But how did he do this? How did he do this? He taught Balak to do that because Balaam himself was stumbling. The doctrine of Balaam is actually being taught by someone who is stumbling in this way. Balaam taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel because he himself stumbled in relation to his giftedness and its expression. Balaam did have a gift. He did know what God was saying and he did have the capacity to prophesy and bless and curse. He had a gift, but he was stumbling in relation to this gift.

When Balak first sent dignitaries to Balaam asking him to curse Israel, God expressly said to Balaam, 'You shall not go with them. You shall not curse the people for they are blessed.' The dignitaries came. Balaam did not know the nation; he is just listening to what God said. He hears them and he says to them, 'God has said to me, "You shall not go with them. You shall not curse the people for they are blessed." See you later.' These dignitaries go back to Balak and Balak then sent some more noble, important princes to implore Balaam to curse the people. He promised Balaam great riches and particularly that he would do what Balaam told him to do. There is a trade now. There is a gathering of people to Balaam who is going to not only get wealth, but he is getting a ministry profile - a whole nation that are going to do what he says. Balaam responded (and this is classic); he said, 'I will not go beyond the word of the Lord.' However, God had not said that to him. God had said, 'You shall not go.'

The word that Balaam is now saying to these nobles was so close, but it was not quite what God had said. God had said, 'You shall not go.' But all of a sudden, because Balaam is being flattered by the nobles and there is a cleaving to him, his expression of the word that he has heard is beginning to change. What he should have said was, 'God told me that you are a bunch of unsavoury people and what are you doing at my door? I told you to leave.' But what he said was, 'Come on into my house; stay here; and I will inquire of the Lord and see if He is going to say something else.' All of a sudden, there is a word of present truth that has been proclaimed in the fellowship of the presbytery. There is a clash now between what that person (that gifted person) is hearing, and they are not liking it. It is not aligning with who they want to be and who and they are expecting others want them to be as well. He invited them to stay with him while he waited to see if there was another word.

Although Balaam knew what God had said, he hoped for another word because he *coveted* something. Coveting is part of the mechanism of this infirmity. He coveted the riches and honour that Balak and the princes were offering and it was feeding him. What they were offering to him was feeding his idol which set him at odds with God and His word. This is an amazing point and

a terrifying point because initially God said to Balaam, 'You shall not go with them. Do not curse them. Do not do anything. They are a blessed people.' Balaam has engaged these people. He has had them in his home and he said, 'I am going to see if God might have changed His mind now that the dignitaries have come.'

God does speak to him that night. This is the second time. It is a different second time for him. God said to him in Numbers chapter 22 verse 20: 'If the men come to call you, rise and go with them; but only the word which I speak to you - that you shall do.' What we see is that God was still speaking to Balaam and he was still able to exercise his spiritual gift. This is now a spring from which two expressions are happening. One is giftedness and one is a cursing - a bitterness. God is still speaking to Balaam, and he is exercising his prophetic gift. However, God is now doing it for his destruction. We know this because the Scriptures say in verse 22, 'God's anger was aroused because he went.'

Think about it for a moment. The Lord had first said to Balaam, 'Do not go with them.' Balaam then receives these people into his house because they are promising him wealth, submission to him. He then is asking for another word because it is feeding his idol. God then answers him and says, 'Go.' Because he goes, God's anger burns against Balaam. What has happened here? God has begun to answer Balaam through his own idol. God is beginning to speak to Balaam through his own idol and as soon as God is speaking through someone (through their idolatry), He is doing it for their destruction.

We know that God did it for his destruction, because as Balaam was going on his way (He is on his donkey and he is going to meet Balak to curse the people), the Scriptures teach us that the angel of the Lord stood against Balaam as an adversary. The angel of the Lord stood against Balaam as an adversary. The Scripture says specifically that the angel was standing in the way - in the pathway that he was walking. He was standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand. How is Jesus coming to the church of Pergamos? He is coming to them as the one who has a two-edged sword. Balaam is now at odds with the fellowship of the word in the

presbytery. Can you see this is Balaam stumbling?

The doctrine of Balaam belongs to those with a gift or giftedness who themselves stumble at Christ's word which is a two-edged sword proceeding from His mouth through the ministry of an *aggelos*. That is angel - the angel of the church that is in the right hand of Christ. That is where the sword is. These men may stumble because of their desire for gain or to maintain a ministry profile (that was Balaam). But stumbling is not just a misstep. The evidence of stumbling is offence.

A person can stumble because of their desire for gain, or to maintain a ministry profile, or because of some discontent with the word direction in the presbytery, or because of a relational offence. This is all to do with stumbling. Now if a person is in this situation in the presbytery, the word that they speak might be true. If they go and minister and they are still stumbling, and their offences are unresolved, what they speak might be true, but it is not the word proceeding from the fellowship of the presbytery on account of confession and testimony. It might be true, but it is not coming from the fellowship of the presbytery. It is starting to deviate. It is a word that belongs to their own sense of ministry or purpose.

If that is happening, this is a person who is proclaiming a word, being ashamed of the gospel of God. It is not like they are hearing the gospel of God and going, 'I do not want anything to do with that.' It is that they are living by a projection and the word that they believe is not consistent with the word that is causing them to stumble. They are ashamed of the gospel of God because they are holding on to their own projection, which is a ministry of shame. When Paul was saying, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of God', he is saying, 'It is a gospel that does not minister shame; it is a gospel that ministers truth.' But if we are deviating from the truth, then whatever we are proclaiming is ashamed of that truth. We become a minister of shame. It is a ministry of condemnation.

That is the way Paul described the ministry of the word that is imposing a law on others. They are ashamed of the gospel of God on account of their shameful pursuit of their own expression.

Unavoidably, they cannot help it, they are not doing this purposely. As I said, they are not waking up in the morning going, 'How can I stumble a few people today?' It is an unavoidable effect of an orientation to the fellowship of the word. Unavoidably, they minister another gospel that promotes the idolatrous expression of self-righteousness and advances mixture with other religious cultures. What you tend to get is the gospel being proclaimed, and it starts to draw in other old gospels. They just begin to permeate what has been spoken. They cannot help it. It is a mixture. This is firstly promoting idolatry, then it is promoting sexual immorality. That immorality is connection with Babylon. Babylon is the mother of what? The mother of harlots. The stumbling block that is placed in front of us becomes the thing that is promoting your projection and self-righteous engagement with the word, and it results in mixture with other religious cultures. In doing so, those who join their alternative conversations are caused to stumble in relation to their sanctification which is being revealed through the word of present truth.

Let us take a deep breath. We can see that principle, but we do not need to be stumbled in this manner. That is where I want to get to. We do not need to be stumbled. We do not need to hold on to our offences. We do not need to stumble in this manner. The key for all of us is to receive with meekness the word that is proceeding *in* the fellowship of the presbytery and *from* the fellowship of the presbytery. The evidence that we are receiving that word is that we receive the invitation to *join* the fellowship of the presbytery. That is the way that John opened his letter. He said, 'These things which we have heard, which we have been illuminated to [which result in us looking on Him whom we have pierced, making confession and testimony. That is what 'look upon' means] and handled [That means we are being obedient according to our sanctification] these things we proclaim to you that you might join that same fellowship.' Now a word that is coming from the doctrine of Balaam is not doing that. It is not calling us to join that fellowship which looks like hearing, illumination, repentance and faith. That is what it means to walk and live by the Spirit. We have to receive with meekness the word that is

proceeding from the fellowship of the presbytery that invites us to join the fellowship of the presbytery.

The apostle Paul gave us some instructions in relation to this very doctrine. We have Jesus identifying that that doctrine is in the churches, and now we can find that when we understand how it operates, we can see that Paul directly spoke to it. The doctrine of Balaam is the word that sets a stumbling block in front of us. This is what Paul said at the end of the book of Romans. Interestingly, that is the book where we learn about the infirmity. Romans chapter 16 verses 17 to 20 says, 'Now I urge you brethren, note that who causes divisions and offences... [That word 'offences' there literally means 'stumbling blocks'. We have to have our eyes open. When we are hearing the word being spoken out of discontent - note that. You do not need to stumble at it. Do not join the discontent.] ...those who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly... [That sounds like Balaam. He was pretty happy to receive the wealth and the attention that was coming from these nobles. That is 'your own belly' — 'things sacrificed to idols'] ...Do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech... ['Flattering speech' is when someone engages with you and affirms your projection. If you are connecting with someone and they are flattering you, they are saying, 'I am on your side. You should be able to walk according to your own religious projection.' Flattering speech. That is a stumbling block. They are doing it because they want you to flatter them.] ...smooth words and flattering speech [which is promoting projections] deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience has become known to all. [This is our protection. Our obedience is our protection]. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good and simple concerning evil. [This is to be our demeanour - wise in what is good. Where is that wisdom coming from? From above. That is what we are asking for. 'If anybody lacks wisdom, let him ask and God gives it liberally.' But you have to acknowledge that you need it. That would be the beginning of meekness - the meekness of wisdom. If anybody lacks it, this is

what we need. You can be wise in what is good and simple concerning evil. 'Simple concerning evil' means stop being the judge of everybody else's evil. You do not need to be the measure of it; you just do not need to answer it. What should be coming out of your mouth and my mouth? Confession and testimony in relation to the word of present truth. That is 'simple in relation to what is evil'] And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.'

The church in Pergamos that had the problem with Balaam, what did Jesus say about them? He said, 'I am addressing you as a church among whom Satan's seat is.' Satan's seat is the synagogue of Satan. That is the ministry of condemnation. We do not need to be stumbled by the ministry of condemnation. We need to be wise in what is good and simple in what is evil. Concerning this doctrine, Jesus promised, 'To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white [that is literally 'a brilliant'] stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.' I am a bit embarrassed that we are going to do this very short statement on this. This is an amazing principle - hidden manna and a white stone is what is given to us if we overcome the issue of stumbling.

What is the hidden manna? The hidden manna is the privilege of knowing and doing the will of Him who sends us. It is that we become a people who are being sent. How do we know that? Because Jesus said, 'I have food to eat of which you do not know.' He is talking about food that is hidden. They do not know it yet. And the Lord is saying, 'If you overcome this issue of stumbling and offence, I am going to give you that food that I eat (hidden manna) so that we can do what Jesus did. He said, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.' That is a person who is now participating in the accomplishment of what Christ has finished for them.

Then the white stone that we receive - that is *us*. We are to be the brilliant, precious white stone. We are living stones. Just before where we read about the stumbling stone, Peter said that you are living stones who are being built on Christ - elect and precious. Precious, elect, brilliant, shining

light is what the white stone is. We are a living stone that has been built on Christ according to our sanctification. He is also a living stone who is elect and precious as we are built on Him. We are the elect and precious. That is what it means to be the white stone. We are able to show forth the excellencies (or brilliance) 'of Him who called us out of darkness and into His marvellous light'. The alternative to being built on Christ who is elect and precious is to stumble at Him. Obviously, that is not very brilliant.

Let us now look at dealing with offence; what offences are; how we are to get over our offences (or be delivered from them), and how we are to engage with those who we know are offended with us. Deliverance from stumbling and offence is essential to our establishment as a worthy house and to our connection as part of the travelling bride of Christ. Addressing the subject of offences, Jesus said, 'Woe to the world because of offences! For offences must come, but woe to that man by whom the offence comes!' Matthew 18 verse 7. He is saying everybody is going to negotiate offence. Offences (and this will be a new point to many of us) are the evidence of the mystery of iniquity at work in our heart. If you want to know what the mystery of iniquity is, it operates by offence - the mystery of iniquity in our marriage, in our house and in the church.

Agur, the son of Jakeh, described iniquity as being one of the four mysteries that are impossible to understand through reason, identifying it as 'the way of the serpent on a rock'. This is Proverbs chapter 30 verses 18 to 19: 'There are three things which are too wonderful for me, yes, four which I do not understand [If something is too wonderful that we just cannot understand it with our mind, that is a mystery. It is concealed; it is hidden. He is saying, 'Here are some mysteries for us to get some illumination about.' Verse 19]: the way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent on a rock [so this is a mystery that looks like a serpent on a rock]; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a virgin.' We have been looking at the mystery of marriage this year.

Let us focus in on the mystery of iniquity or the mystery of a serpent on a rock. The first point to note is that Christ is that Rock. So, we are talking about a serpent on Christ. Christ is the Rock and,

as we have already considered, we are to come to Christ (who is the living Stone) to be built on Him. However, to the disobedient (or the sons of disobedience), He is a stumbling stone and a rock of offence. Immediately we are seeing that this precious Rock that we are to be built on becomes something else to us if we are disobedient, or if we are receiving the source of our expression from a serpent. The mystery of iniquity is revealed by stumbling and offences because we are disobedient to the proceeding word of Christ the King who has finished the works that belong to our obedience.

Our disobedience is the manifestation of another law in our members as we pursue the self-righteous (or right projections) fathered by Satan who is described as 'the serpent of old'. If you want to know what self-righteousness looks like, it looks like you needing to be right - you needing to be right. What is the most powerful way to be right? It is to take the righteous Law of God. All a sudden, it energises your *rightness*. If you need to be right, that is the evidence that you have stolen that Law and you have a religious projection, and you are drawing that religious projection from Satan who is the father of all projections. He is the father of all lies. So, this need to be 'right' on the ground of Christ is a mystery of iniquity. It is a mystery because you do not even know that you are doing it. That is why Paul said, 'I do not understand what I am doing.' That is making clear the connection of the infirmity with the mystery of iniquity. The point that I want to connect this infirmity and the mystery of iniquity to is the fact that it will look like stumbling and being offended. Stumbling and being offended.

If we are offended, it is because we reserve the right to be the judge of ourselves and of others or of a matter. We have taken hold of the Law through the law of our mind. That is where we are getting the judgement from. Our emotions and relational disharmony reveal that we are stumbling at Christ. We think we are stumbling or offended at somebody else, but we are [offended] with Christ. If you are living by those judgements (even if they are a turkey and you are offended at them), you are stumbling at Christ because you stole His Law. The evidence of the stealing is the fact that you are offended. And your offence is the evidence that you were

the judge of the matter. Do you see the principle? It is not about the rightness or wrongness. It is about who the measure is. Our emotions and relational disharmony reveal that we are stumbling at Christ.

We are not happy that the lines that we have defined for ourselves are being transgressed. This place of offence is where a death is happening. Hear me. If you are being offended, it is because your projection is getting hammered. It is dying. It is a place of death. The absence of rest and peace is not just our unhappiness at what another has done to us. The absence of rest and peace is not just because someone did something to us. The absence of rest and peace is the evidence that we are under judgement for our misappropriation and our misuse of the Law. We think we are unhappy because of what someone did to us. That is our offence. But your unhappiness and the lack of peace is the evidence that you are now dying. Why? Because your mind was set on the flesh. And Paul said, 'To be carnally minded is death.' You are becoming weak and sick and dying or falling asleep before your time because you maintain your offence - unhappy about what someone said to you. Even if they were trying to curse you, you do not believe that God is turning that curse into a blessing. The intensity of this distress is exacerbated by the Holy Spirit.

On the one hand, you are feeling under pressure by someone who has offended you and then you find that you are feeling awful and the person who is making you feel awful is the Holy Spirit Himself because He is at enmity with (or the adversary to) your law. That is why you feel so unhappy. It is actually the Spirit burning against that iniquity. He is at enmity with this carnal orientation to life. This is the beautiful point. Why is He doing it? Is he trying to make your life miserable? No. He is doing it to bring illumination and conviction. The Spirit helps us. He is your Helper. You will not find comfort in your offence. You will find comfort when you die with Christ and come to burial. That is the place of rest; the place of comfort; the place of letting go of being the right to define the line, so that you can rise again and walk in newness of life and love the person who is caused you offence. The Spirit helps us through illumination and conviction to see where we are under the

sentence of death. The feeling that we are having is the evidence that we are dying so that we can choose; we can choose. I am telling you now that your offences and your offendedness, and the emotion around it is the evidence that you are dying; but you do not have to die your death. You must not die your death. Right at that point, you can turn. That is the conviction of the Spirit. Do you believe that you are dying with Christ at the point of offence, or do you believe that the person who is offending you needs to fix the matter up? Right there, you can choose to die with Christ.

The evidence that we have chosen Christ's death is that we come to rest in the fellowship of His burial. Instead of having a stinky attitude toward another, demanding recompense from them to fix up the offence, we initiate fellowship as an action of pouring out fragrant oil on the ones who have offended us. Why did the woman pour oil on Jesus' feet and on His head? For His burial. Burial is the place where our body comes to rest. That is only possible if you choose Christ's death at the point of offence. This fragrant oil that we are pouring out on another is the fellowship of the Spirit poured out through our repentance as we make confession and testimony. We do this because we recognise that our offence is fundamentally because we are stumbling at Christ. We are not just being charitable when we do it to the one who is offending us. We are doing it because we are repenting. We are doing this because we recognise that our offence is fundamentally because we are stumbling at Christ. My question to you today and to me is: 'Are we willing to pour out on "corporate Jesus" in faith for burial? Or are we happy to relate with some but not with others because of offence?'

If you are joining Christ's death, connected to His burial, there is going to be a different smell about you - a different smell in the way that you relate with others. It is not the stink of death anymore. It is the fragrance - the beautiful smell of fragrant oil. What will that look like? It will look like you and I judging in a different way. We still have to judge, but in a different manner. It is the evidence of the love of God poured into our heart. What happens is that the Spirit compels us to judge in a different way and we judge now that 'If One died for all, then all died. And He died for all that those who live should no longer live for themselves' - their own projection, their own

right. You do judge, but you are judging by the Spirit now - not by the law of your mind. You are judging that you need to lay your life down for this person rather than demand their placation. This is a person who forgives or does not hold onto a hurt. They are forgiven much because they love much. Those who do not anoint others this way 'love little'. They are progressively taken out of the community of the body with their offences.

I will take two minutes because I really want to get to 'what if you know someone is offended with you?' You are just getting on doing your sanctified living, but someone is offended with you. What do we do then? Jesus gave the answer. This is Matthew 5 verses 23 to 24. It says, 'If you bring your gift... [We have just been talking about Balaam and giftedness] ...therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you [The King James Version says, 'ought against you'], leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.'

A brother who has ought against us is offended by something that we may have said or done. This may be perceived or real. I am saying that it does not matter. It does not matter if it is perceived or real. However, if the Spirit brings the offence to our attention (or you know that your brother is offended because of what you have said or done), we must seek reconciliation in the spirit of fellowship.

Jesus was not advocating a gainsaying conversation that is informed by the law of our mind. If I know that Lisa has something against me (that she is offended by something), I am not going to sit down with her and say, 'Right, let us nut this out. You tell me what you are offended at, I will tell you why I did this.' That is gainsaying. That is the machinations of the law of your mind. It produces death. That is not what the Scriptures are saying. Jesus was not advocating a gainsaying conversation informed by the law of our mind to try to get to the bottom of the matter. This approach to relational recovery in the presbytery, in the church or in our households is an expression of the other law and only produces the emotions of sin.

What we have to do is we have to seek reconciliation in the way that Jesus did. Jesus

demonstrated this principle. We note that Jesus sought reconciliation in the spirit of fellowship with Judas and with Peter. Judas was offended by the words of Christ, and he was offended when Jesus was anointed for His burial by Mary and by the wife of Simon the leper. Judas was offended. Had Jesus done anything wrong? Not at all. Did Jesus wipe him and say, 'Good luck, Tiger'? No, He did not do that either. Neither did He say, 'Come on Judas, let us sit down. I will do the theology for you again, so you get clear. Can you see from the Scriptures that this is the way it is going to work?' He did not do that either. What did Jesus do that was the action of someone seeking reconciliation with an offended brother? We know that Jesus washed Judas' feet. He washed Judas' feet and implored him to join Him in the fellowship of prayer in Gethsemane. He invited him to join Him.

If we know that a brother is offended, let us not sit down and try to work out what the offence was. Can we sit down and extend the fellowship of the *agape* meal to each other because the grace for life is in the word that is coming to us. That is grace for us to remain connected to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings so that both of us can be delivered of this infirmity. Jesus did not have it - but we do. If we fail to initiate reconciliation when we know that our brother is offended, we sin. Even if what we did was totally perfect. Jesus did it; we must do it too. Likewise, if the aggrieved brother remains offended, particularly if their expectations of reconciliation have not been met, they sin. The problem for either person is our refusal to be reconciled to our brother.

The Holy Spirit is coming among us with an anointing of love so that we can choose through conviction to embrace the death, burial and resurrection that belongs to our fellowship with Christ. The evidence of that will be the overflow of love and grace to one another. That is what the Lord is wanting us to do. He wants us to be delivered of the motive that leads to this stumbling and offence.