

Sunday February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007

**‘Nothing in Me...’ – Part Four**

1). Joh 14:28 ¶ *"You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I. 29 "And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. 30 "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. 31 "But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.*

a). We have noted over the past weeks many of the scriptural reasons why the ruler of this world had nothing in time, space or relationship with Christ. We have seen that there is no relationship between light and darkness; we have seen that Christ’s Kingdom is not of this world; and as the promised seed of the Woman He is apart from sin.

b). In addition let us start this week by looking at a practical application to see what it means for Satan to have no point of contact in our Lord.

2). Mt 27:11 ¶ *Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say." 12 And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. 13 Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" 14 But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly.*

a). We see our scripture beginning with Jesus verifying that He is indeed a King. He knows to what position He has been appointed - Heb 1:2.....*His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;*

b). Therefore within this present world system He had no need to defend Himself or justify Himself.

c). He had no need to prove His innocence or demonstrate that He was being unfairly treated as He trusted completely the One to whom righteousness and justice belongs. His focus wasn’t on proving Himself in the eyes of men in the present, but allowing God the Father to exalt Him in the eyes of men at a time yet future. He was completely secure in who He is.

d). And in consequence, according to our scripture, ‘He answered him not a word’.

e). And please note who it is who is accusing Him – the chief priests and elders – the people of God. Those who had been eternally redeemed by the blood of the Passover lambs.

f). And this eventually leads us to the cross, where we find -  
Lu 23:34 *Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."*

i/ Not only did the Lord not defend Himself, but He also forgave those who were spitefully using Him – an action that has enormous significance.

g). And again, to take us back to where we started - Heb 12:2 *looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who **for the joy that was set before Him** endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

h). So, according to our scripture, where does our focus need to be?

i). Not just with regards to His physical location – but also in respect of His example – what He endured for the sake of the joy that was set before Him.

3). To embrace this is of course completely contrary to the way the world thinks. The world would want to defend itself – even if it were guilty – and would look for revenge rather than forgiveness. But there is a key scripture that may help unlock all this for us -

Lu 22:42 *saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."*

4). And here is a tremendous lesson for us – Jesus knows exactly what He has to face in going to the cross and asks His father if ‘this cup’ might be taken from Him. God of course would be perfectly able to do this.

a). However, he concludes that if it is the Father’s will for Him to endure this, then He will do it – because of what is set before Him which is the fulfillment of the Father’s will – Christ in His Kingdom having brought many sons to glory - 1Pe 1:20 *He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you*

i/ And we will remember that we have been called to be a coheir with Christ – Ro 8:17 ¶ *and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

Heb 2:6 *But one testified in a certain place, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him? 7 You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands. 8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.*

ii/ The same joy that was set before Christ is set before us.

iii/ It is the Father's will that we should have dominion over the earth with His Son in the age to come. And if the realization of His will requires our death, which it does, then we need to submit ourselves to the will of the Father, just as Christ did.

b). Now let's look at this a moment - the out working of God's plans and purposes in respect of Christ's earthly ministry is brought about through the Lord's interaction with the people of God in accordance with that which had been prophesied from the beginning - Lu 24:25 *Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"*

c). It was given into the hands of the nation of Israel to kill the Passover Lamb – and we may thank God that they did.

d). And we may, by way of a secondary application, also note that the death of Christ's flesh on the cross, only came through the involvement of His brothers and sisters – His own people.

5). Now this is not to say that we need to set out to crucify one another. Far from it. But it is through our interactions with one another that we will find opportunity to die to our flesh.

a). God's plans and purposes for the body of Christ will of necessity be worked out within the body itself.

b). The Woman is built from the rib taken from Adam's side, and it is with that rib alone that God works – nothing extraneous is added. And the Woman built from the rib has to pass through the flesh of the body before she can be completed.

c). We can never hope to relate scripturally to those outside this body of believers until we can relate scripturally to one another.

6). This is summed up for us in - 1Pe 2:19 *For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.*

*20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;*

7). And this really is at the heart of where we were last week – we will I hope remember the *skandalon* - the bait stick of offense, priming the trap of revenge and bitterness.

a). The prime motivator for our taking offense is pride. We think, and I stress think, that another person's actions or words is a deliberate attempt to diminish who we see ourselves to be.

b). In consequence we are hurt and we may become angry or bitter or both.

c). We may even have had the mindset that if we take offense the person we hold responsible needs to come to us to set it right. Again this is pride. Because we perceive ourselves to be in the right we expect our brother or sister to come and humble themselves before us allowing us in that moment to be exalted and triumphant – this is not what Jesus did.

i/ Pr 3:34 *Surely He scorns the scornful, But gives grace to the humble.*

ii/ 1 Pe 5:5... *for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."*

d). Perhaps we have never seen before that offense is something that we are obligated not to take. When an offense is hung out there the responsibility to respond correctly to it is ours.

8). As an example let us look at an event recorded in - 2Sa 16:5 ¶ *Now when King David came to Bahurim, there was a man from the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei the son of Gera, coming from there. He came out, cursing continuously as he came. 6 And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David. And all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. 7 Also Shimei said thus when he cursed: "Come out! Come out! You bloodthirsty man, you rogue! 8 "The LORD has brought upon you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the LORD has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son. So now you are caught in your own evil, because you are a bloodthirsty man!" 9 Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the*

king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Please, let me go over and take off his head!" 10 But the king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David.' Who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?'" 11 And David said to Abishai and all his servants, "See how my son who came from my own body seeks my life. How much more now may this Benjamite? Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the LORD has ordered him. 12 "It may be that the LORD will look on my affliction, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing this day."

a). Had Shimei's actions and words provided David with the opportunity to take offense? Most certainly. Was David having a bad day? Most certainly.

b). Abisai's response is normally what ours would be – 'take off his head'

c). David's response however is – this may be from God.

d). And look at David's final conclusion - 12 "It may be that the LORD will look on my affliction, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing this day."

e). I wonder if it is possible that in our past, or maybe even waiting in our future, that God has opened someone's mouth to us and we have taken offense over what was really a message from God for our good.

f). And as a result we have, figuratively speaking, slain the messenger and despised the child training of the Lord.

g). Ro 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 29 ¶ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

h). Do we believe that?

9). What does the scripture say? - 1Pe 3:8 ¶ *Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit.*

(Teach this)

a). Are we not once again back to the royal law - Jas 2:8 ¶ *If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well;*

b). Php 2:3 *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*

c). Living within a world system that encourages selfish ambition, we can see that this is a challenge – but what happens in the world is not to be the way the Church of God is to operate.

i/ Christ never functioned this way and as His body in the earth, nor should we.

d). In the world everyone wants to exercise their rights – but what do we find in respect of the church - 1Co 6:7 *Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated?*  
(Teach this)

e). You see, the unconditional agape love we are to have for one another allows us the freedom to hurt one another, accidentally or on purpose, without retaliation.

f). Ro 14:13 *Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.*

10). Not only must we be working towards a level of spiritual maturity whereby we shall refuse to take offense, we must also be mature enough to recognize how not to provide an opportunity for our brother or sister to take offense.

a). 1Co 10:23 ¶ *All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. 24 Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.*  
(Teach this in relation to dress abroad)

11). There is another aspect of offense that we need to take note of.

a). Mt 15:7 *"Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 8 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'" 10 ¶ When He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear and understand: 11 "Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man." 12 Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that **the Pharisees were offended** when they heard this saying?"*

b). Joh 6:53 *Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. 54 "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal [age lasting] life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 "For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. 56 "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. 57 "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. 58 "This is the bread which came down from heaven--not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever." 59 These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum. 60 ¶ Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" 61 When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you?"*

c). Joh 6:66 *From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. 67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?"*

12). What we see here is the Word of God – the word that became flesh – saying things that those around Him took offense over.

a). Not only were the Pharisees offended, who we might expect, but also His disciples.

b). And note many of His disciples were offended and many went back and walked with Him no more – echoes of Orpah – and why? This is a hard saying, who can understand it?

c). Understand – Greek word – *akouo* = to hear

d). Let him who has an ear hear....

e). They didn't have ears to hear – they didn't want to do what the Word said.

13). We see that Jesus makes no apology, nor does He in any way compromise.

a). And it is clear from His question to the twelve in v67 that the twelve themselves were also offended. But despite the offense, witness Peter's words in response to the Lord's question - Joh 6:68 *But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal [age lasting] life. 69 "Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

b). The twelve didn't like what Jesus said any more than the others, but they recognized the necessity to be transformed by this hard saying with

a view to age lasting life or to walk away from it with a view to age lasting death.

14). And that the Word of God is offensive to many Christians should not be a surprise to us – we have seen just how offended people become over the word of the Kingdom – offended to such a degree that in their hearts and with their tongues they murder their brothers and sisters in Christ – yet this is only how God said it would be.

a). 1Pe 2:4 ¶ *Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." 7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone," 8 and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.*

b). Christ is a living stone and has been set as the Chief Cornerstone within His Church. And we also as living stones are being built on the foundation of the Chief Cornerstone.

c). If however we choose to be disobedient to the Word to which we have been appointed, the rock that should be our foundation becomes a 'stone of stumbling and a rock of offense'. Our disobedience will cause us to stumble when confronted with the Word and we will become offended by it – in fact we become offended with God – because He expects us to do that which we have decided we do not want to do – two years ago we stumbled over obeying 'the governing authorities'.

15). Jesus has some very salutary things to say to the scribes and Pharisees, those who were expected to be obedient to the Word, in relation to this and the Kingdom – this comes at the conclusion of the parable of the vineyard - Mt 21:42 *Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD'S doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes'? 43 "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. 44 "And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."*

a). I wonder if we really understood the significance of identifying our body of believers by the name 'Cornerstone'?

b). The Word of God here in this setting is a rock on which we are to fall in order to be broken.

c). But if we are disobedient to it, becoming offended by it, we will not be broken now. But in that future time, at the JSOC, that same rock will fall on us and grind us to powder.

d). It will be much less painful to choose to be broken now that we may be healed then than choose to remain whole now and be ground to powder then.

16). Those things that we have heard from the word over these last four weeks may be ‘hard sayings’ – but let us have ears to hear as these are the words that lead to life in the age to come - Joh 6:63 *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*

a). Let us choose to be broken by them. Let us choose to let God shape us and build us to the fulfillment of His purpose for us – what a glorious opportunity we have.