

Taking Offense

Scripture Reading — John 6:53-69

*Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this offend you?”
—John 6:61 —*

The Greek word for “offend” here (scandalizo) literally means “to trip, or cause one to sin.” It’s also the root of the English word scandal. If someone has insulted you, you will rightly be offended, or scandalized.

But there is also a phony kind of taking offense.

The gospel accounts of Jesus’ life tell us that the leaders of the Jews often looked for an excuse to attack Jesus. When he talked about himself as the bread from heaven, that his flesh and blood would feed a person for eternal life, they had all the ammunition they wanted to accuse him of cannibalism—or at least insanity. They took offense, became scandalized over this, and went off in a huff.

If only they had considered Jesus’ words fairly and not put an obviously wrong spin on them! They would have seen that he was using an analogy: belief in the Messiah is a kind of eating by which we can live forever, just as earthly food sustains our physical life.

Give Jesus a fair hearing. Give others a fair hearing. Don’t go looking for an excuse to become offended. Love “is not easily angered,” says 1 Corinthians 13:5. Heaven knows there’s enough ill will in the world without sniffing around for more.

Prayer

Father, thank you for not looking for an excuse to con-demn us. Thank you that instead Jesus bridged the gulf that our sin had made between us and you. Thank you for reconciling with us through Christ’s blood. Amen.

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Printed on October 24, 2021

