

June 3, 2018

- James 3:1-8 -

“Gossip Can Destroy the Church”

Introduction:

Gossip is a multi-million dollar industry as is evident by the tabloids circulation that grosses 3.8 million dollars. They lament the public is more than willing to buy their product. Today gossip has taken a professional form it is called Fake news. The definition of Fake news is exactly the same as gossip. Here it is define by Wikipedia. “A type of yellow journalism or propaganda that consists of deliberate misinformation or hoaxes spread via traditional print and broadcast news media or online social media. This false information is mainly distributed by social media, but is periodically circulated through mainstream media.

-Just this past week the New York Times Magazine editor-in-chief Jake Silverstein incorrectly shared pictures of children sleeping in enclosed cages. It turned out the photographs were published by The Arizona Republic in 2014 after authorities detained over 1,000 children who crossed the U.S.-Mexico border illegally and placed them in a detention facility.

Fake news is written and published with the intent to mislead in order to damage an agency, entity, person, and or gain financially or politically.” The definition of gossip according to Webster's Dictionary is simple, "Rumor or talk of a personal or sensational nature, someone who habitually spreads sensational or intimate facts." - **822,000 results on google that gossip destroys.**

To understand why gossip is so dangerous we must understand what gossip is. The King James Version uses the word “whispering” or “whisperers” to translate the word that we usually think of as “gossip.” There is another Greek term that usually comes to us in Scripture as the word “slander,” and it carried the idea of hurting someone openly. Sometimes, we hear it as a “backbiter, talebearer.” The idea is that we are tearing down someone’s character out in the open. Gossip isn’t something we are proud of but something people are caught up in.

Sometimes people through gossip can create serious problems that can cause hurt and do injuries to others. There are too many stories that validate this truth... “A senior in high school said that she was the subject of an online rumor that she had slept with the football team. She said, “I think it was started by the ex-girlfriend of a boy on the team. It didn’t matter where it came from. People wanted to believe it. There was no way to refute it. I wanted to kill myself.” That’s the pain and the devastation that can come from gossip.

Solomon warned us about gossip in the Old Testament Proverbs: It’s like a fire. **Proverbs 26:20- Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. Proverbs 11:13 -A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.** We have solid confirmation in the New Testament on this issue from the instruction of James. It was James who coin the "expression - **The tongue is an unruly evil full of deadly poison.** By far the most common sin among Christians involves the use of our tongues. Someone once wrote, “The tongue is more deadly than the screaming shells of a cannon. It wins without killing. It tears down homes, break hearts and wrecks lives. Using lies, gossip, slander and deceit it topples governments, wrecks marriages, ruins careers, destroys reputations, causes nightmares, spawns suspicion, and generates grief”. There are many victims of a loose tongue.

Loose tongues, contentious tongues have hindered the work of God a thousand times over. Critical tongues have closed the church doors. Careless tongues have broken the hearts and health of many. It is the number one device Satan's uses to destroy Christ's church. One man on a bulldozer in one short hour can pull down a sizable building that took many people much time to build. In like manner, gossip can destroy in a very short time the years of labor and good honest work invested in building up the body of Christ.

Gossip ruins the communion of the saints that is so vital to the oneness necessary to function with the power of the Holy Spirit. The questions today is, "Is my tongue being used as a tool in Satan's workshop to destroy the church? Is my tongue use to glorify God?"

I. The Importance of a Controlled tongue vv. 1,

1.) James doesn't mention the tongue in verse one the content clearly refers to the matter of speech. He warned his readers not to be ambitious for a teaching position because a teacher has the potential to misuse the tongue and receive the greater condemnation. The word translated condemnation (*Kre'ma*) means "judgment." Being a master / teacher (*dē-dū'-skū-los*) one who is fitted to teach, or thinks himself so). Preaching God's Word is a serious responsibly because of the potential to mislead people. It can be misused to elevate oneself in the eyes of the hearers rather than Christ. Teachers need to be an example of a truthful tongues.

2. It seems some of James' readers did not recognize that teaching in the church is a spiritual gift (I Cor. 12:28) and the gift is for the edification of the church. However, self-appointed teachers were trying to build themselves up. They wanted to be thought of as intelligent, wiser than others, and as people who were a notch or two above everybody else. James cautions leaders to be careful to examine ones' motive and the Lord's direction. If any man can control the tongue he can handle the rest of his life without difficulty. This is the test.

The most sobering words Jesus ever uttered had to do with this matter of influence on others. The Lord Jesus said to his disciples "If any of you offend one of these who believe in me, it would be better for him that a millstone be hanged about his neck and he be cast into the sea and drowned," { Luke 17:2}. Think of that. It is better to be drowned than to let your tongue be an offense or a cause of offense to someone else. James gives us some illustrations of the influence of the tongue.

II. The Ability of the Tongue (3:2-5)

1. James shifts the attention from teachers to all believers in verse 2, "**For in many things we offend all.**" The word translated offend is the same Greek word translated offend in 2:10 and is a synonym for the word "sin. A good translation of this verse would be that we all stumble.

2) Those little member or object such as the bits in a horses' mouth and the helm of a ship will guide it where the captain wants it to go. What often holds the greatest influence may appear insignificant. The size doesn't matter. It can be very powerful. So we see the importance of having control over such a little yet powerful member of the body! Bite your tongue! James is demanding here that we recognize that living faith shows itself in the control of the tongue that is a "perfect" mature person. It is a small member of the body but it has potential for great good or evil. Dr. Charles Swindol once said," I am personally convinced that the number

one enemy of Christian unity is the tongue. People who spread rumors invariably display a lack of wisdom". Now that leads to point three.

III. Destruction of an uncontrolled Tongue....vv. 5,6

1) The tongue can be compared to a little fire. The tongue is like a match, when out of control this little fire can set a forest up in a blaze. Washington Irving once said, "A sharp tongue is the only edge tool that grows sharper with constant use". Don't let your tongue be a tool in Satan's demolition shop. Here is a graphic illustration of how fatal the tongue can be.

Illustration:

Arthur J. Snider, writing in the Chicago Daily News, says that the average person can see a dot as small as eight-thousandths of an inch in diameter. But this is about 14,000 times larger than the smallest known virus. Yet these microbes are the cause of at least 500 human diseases, some of which are very serious and can even be fatal. I have read that one strain was responsible for what was probably one of the greatest pestilence civilization ever experienced --- the flu epidemic of 1918-19. That scourge took more lives than World War I.

The Bible tells of another small thing that can inflict great harm. It's that "little member" known as the tongue. Unfortunately there is no vaccine to bring its deadly effects under control. When the tongue is out of control it is very noticeable in the church. There is something wrong with the spirit within the body of the church. You will notice it at times when you find people in a small group and you enter the room and there is first the hiss of the gossip and then comes that silent hush; like oh, we weren't saying anything.

#2) The Tongues can be like deadly poison vv. 7-8 too. Most deadly animals can be tamed, we see them on stages at circuses but the tongue hasn't ever been tamed. It shoots its' venom of deadly poison. This is even scientifically proven.

One doctor said it this way-There is not an organ or tissue in the human body the condition of which cannot be modified in one manner or another by means of **words**, that is to say, by way of our tongue. Our bodies secrete enzymes that can be harmful to us when the tongue shoots it venom. This poison is gossip. Beware of gossiping in the church and being gossiping members. Don't speak idle words and get into a gossip session. --- **Ephesians 4:29**

Conclusion and Communion:

A test of our faith can determine if it is real by the use of our tongue. ***Is your tongue under control or is it being used as a tool in Satan's workshop. Jesus gave stern warning in Matthew 12: 36--- **But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.**

The church is the one place where we must edify one another with our lips not degrade one another. When this occurs the communion is affected. We should not forget how sacred the sanctuary of God is.