

Communication 101

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 31 March 2013

[0:00] James chapter 3 And starting from verse 1.

James chapter 3 We're going to talk about communication.

Ephesians 4.29-32 We're talking about talking. Ephesians 4.29-32 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice.

And be ye kind one to another tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you. Thank God we're forgiven people. Amen?

[2:11] Thank God we're forgiven. God has forgiven us of our sin. Because but for the grace of God we could be Christless and cursing like the world at large. But thank God, God ministered to us.

And grace came. Grace came. And we read here that we should minister or give grace to the people that hear us. We want the words that we speak to speak grace to people that we touch. What will you choose? Will it be bitterness or tender heartedness? Let all bitterness and such like come out of your mouth and rather be kind one to another.

Bitterness or tender heartedness? These are the words we can choose to use. Will it be words that grieve the Holy Spirit of God or please the Holy Spirit of God?

There's great power in the spoken word. Great power. In Proverbs 18.21 it says that death and life are in the power of the tongue. And think that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

[3:16] Death and life are in the power of the tongue. Your mouth speaks life or it speaks death. On an average day we use about 18,000 words.

That's a lot, isn't it? 18,000. Some people speak a lot. You know, there was a preacher who preached a sermon in Washington in 1955 and it took 48 hours and 18 minutes to deliver it. Now, my sermon's a little bit shorter than that tonight. But there's some people that talk a lot. They use a lot of words and sometimes we can say it a lot shorter than we do. And it's been said if we put all of our words into print, the result would be this.

A single day's words would fill a 50-page book. That's amazing, isn't it? Well, in a year's time the average person's words would fill 132 books of 200 pages each.

So it's important that we watch the words that we speak. Amongst those words that we speak could be words of anger. Words spoken carelessly or in haste.

[4:25] Or could they be words of kindness and consideration? The words that we speak are a matter of life and death. And are our words life-giving words? In 1 Corinthians 15, 33 it says, Be not deceived.

Evil communications corrupt good manners. The communication that we participate in, the conversations, the mixing together with others, the associations we keep and the communications out of our mouth can corrupt the good manners of our lives.

It can compromise the wholesomeness that God wants for our lives. The evil communications. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, 33, Be not deceived.

It's easy to be tricked into associating with that which is going to harm us and hurt us. Other people, as well as communications, the words that we speak can corrupt our lives.

What sort of things do we mean by that? I'm talking about backbiting, evil speaking, contention, gossip, angry words, flattery, evil communications is the deadly enemy of fellowship.

[5:38] Now I heard a wise man one day who exhorted me, Speak evil of no man. He was quoting the scriptures. Speak evil of no man. That's a man that I can trust.

I can tell him my darkest secrets. Not that I have done, but I know that he will not repeat that to another or to speak behind my back or stab me in the back as has happened over my life. And evil speaking is not a healthy thing. It's something that the Bible condemns. It's the deadly enemy of fellowship. And some of those things are idle words, murmuring, impure language, gossip, slander, all of these things that we read of in Ephesians 4 that I just read earlier, those things such as clamour, wrath, and bitterness, they can damage fellowship and they can corrupt good manners.

It's offensive to God, evil speaking, as well as to men. We read of some examples of such things. For example, Numbers 11. It says, The people complained and it displeased the Lord and the Lord heard it and his anger was kindled and the fire of the Lord burnt among them and consumed them. Numbers 14. It says, The congregation lifted up their voice and cried and the people wept and the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron. It said, Good God that we have died in the wilderness.

[7:06] Exodus 15. It says, When they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah for they were bitter and the people murmured against Moses. Murmuring, evil speaking, complaining, words that hurt.

Will we use words that hurt or words that heal? Will it be words that minister grace to the hearers? Let's rather have such words. Such words were such that I could picture the early church that the words that they spoke had an impact on the people that saw them and mixed amongst them.

There was a man called Julian, the apostate, and he's reported to us there, See how these Christians love one another. There's something about them. See how they love one another. Do we minister grace to the hearers in our lives? Will we be a channel of God's grace? In Matthew 12, the Lord Jesus says, A good man brings out the good treasure of his heart.

Good things. An evil man brings out evil things out of the evil treasure of his heart. There's much said about the tongue, about the speaking, about communication.

[8:23] It's replete through the word of God. For example, Proverbs 15, verse 4, It praises a wholesome tongue, wholesome language, wholesome speech. It says, A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.

A tree of life, a wholesome tongue, words that are wholesome and wise, are healthy and good and minister grace. Are your words wholesome or are they not?

In Proverbs 16, 24, it says, Pleasant words are as a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and health to the bones. Proverbs 10, verse 11, it says, The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life, but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life. You can have a good, healthy drink at that spring, at that fountain of someone who is wise, someone who loves the scriptures, someone who loves the Lord.

And yet, we know the contrary is someone who does not. And the word tells us of such in James chapter 3 that we started with. Someone has said that the most ferocious monster in the world has his den just behind the team.

[9:44] The most ferocious monster in the world has his den just behind the team. We see that in James 3, the scripture that we started with. It tells us how our words can direct and guide our life.

It has an influence on the direction of our life. The words that we speak can have a tremendous influence and control over our life and those that we interact with.

Look at the things that you say. Consider the words that you say. What is that you talk most about? What is that you talk about? Are they wholesome things?

Are they godly and good things? We shape our words and then our words shape us. In James we read that the tongue is small and yet it has a massive, tremendous power.

We see in James chapter 3 verse 3 we read about the bit in a horse's mouth. James 3 verse 3 Consider that huge stallion.

[10:46] Some 2,000, 3,000 pounds of the power and on his back is a 95 pound jockey. And yet that jockey can control that tremendous mighty horse by that little piece of metal that is strategically over the tongue of the horse.

And likewise your tongue controls the direction of your life. Wherever you want to go what you say can affect the total direction of your life.

Think of an ocean liner. Another picture that James painted is an ocean liner and thousands of pounds in size yet it's directed by a small rudder.

And even in the midst of storms it's that small rudder that dictates the direction. And likewise our words have power to direct people to the Lord Jesus or away from him.

Many people think if the tongue has such an influence maybe it's best to say nothing. Now this is slightly tongue in cheek so to speak.

[11:52] A story about a man who joined the Trappist monastery. And of course we know monks and monasteries are not something that are commended at all in the word of God.

But just for a bit of light entertainment let me talk about this monastery. And a man joined the Trappist monastery and for three years he was given a probation period where he was not to speak at all but at the end of each year he could say two words.

The first year at the end he said bed hard. At the end of the second year he said food cold. At the end of the third year he just about had it and he comes in and he says I quit.

And the head priest says that doesn't surprise me all you've done is complain since you got here. We can say lots of words or we can say no words and we can still get into trouble with the few words that we speak.

And so we ought to measure our words and watch our words carefully. Abraham Lincoln used to say it's better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt.

[13:01] Sometimes it's better to say less than to say much. Of course it says somewhere in James to be slow to speak doesn't it? That's a wise counsel from God's word because your words have tremendous power tremendous power in the words that you speak because your words can destroy or your words can build.

James uses another illustration the illustration of a fire. You can think of bushfires. I know every time I hear there's a bushfire in Montree Hill I think of my brother Brown and his family and I think I'm not that far away if it was to come down the creek and how a bushfire can do such tremendous damage in just a few moments of time especially if it's fanned by the wind.

And if you can imagine a beautiful forest with tall beautiful trees that it can all go up in smoke with just a little tiny match a spark can get that fire going and James says that our tongue is a light to that fire that can just be sparked and burn and do much damage and can destroy and damage.

Gossip is like fire. Gossip spreads quickly and it wrecks havoc and will we consider the careless words that we speak and stop speaking them before it's too late.

I'm not sure if this is prepared behind me I should have just got this ready and let me just illustrate this for you.

[14:42] It's a good acrostic to help you consider before you use certain words or before you speak gossip it's called think. It's a good idea to think before you speak.

That's always a wise thing to do isn't it? To think before you speak and this acrostic helps us to consider is what I'm going to say gossip?

Is it evil speaking? First thing to ask is is it true? Is it the truth? As Christians we should speak the truth.

Amen? What we speak should be true. If we're not sure that it's true we should not repeat it. If it's true. Secondly is it helpful? Is it helpful?

Is what I'm going to say going to help somebody or is it not going to help them? Is it helpful? Thirdly is it inspiring? Is it inspiring?

[15:44] Is this going to bless somebody? Is it going to bring blessing or is it going to bring cursing? Is it inspiring? Is it something that's godly and wise?

Fourthly is it necessary? Is it necessary? If it's not necessary to say it then it's better not to say it. If it's not necessary it's better to not say what you're thinking of saying.

And lastly is it kind? Is it kind? Are the words that we say kind? We read in Ephesians 4 that we should show kindness in what we say.

So think is it true? Is it helpful? Is it inspiring? Is it necessary? And is it kind? Some thoughts to consider.

The tongue not only has the power to direct where you go but it also has power to destroy. It's like a fire. fire. And James says it is set on fire of hell.

[16:49] So we need to be very guarded about what we say. Our words reveal our true character. They tell what's really going on inside us. Let me read a short poem that someone put together.

Again along the theme of should I say what I have in mind to say or would it be wiser to keep my mouth shut? It's called unsaid undone.

And there's times that there's unsaid things that we should have said. Amen? There's things that we should have said to encourage and edify and build up our brothers and sisters.

There's thoughts that we had well I should thank them for that. I should compliment them. I should show appreciation to them. And I never did. And I regretted that. There's people in my life that I could have been more appreciative of.

I look back and think of some that I was probably more critical of than kind to. And we can all think of that can't we? And so let me read this to you.

[17:54] Unsaid undone. It's not always the thing that you're saying that brings the heavy heart. But that which you have left unsaid oft brings the keenest smart.

For many a heart might be lightened be, though, I'll say that again. For many a heart might lighten be through words which you might speak.

And some foresaw new strength receive that now is sad and weak. It is not always the thing you do that brings the load of care, but often things you leave undone bring souls nigh to despair.

The kindly deed, the pleasant smile, the look you might have given perhaps at lifting fainting ones and brought them nearer heaven.

Not only for things said and done must we an answer make, for things unsaid and things undone have caused full many an ache, and many a load had never been, and many a care had flown, had you and I God's voice obeyed, left not unsaid undone.

[19:04] Maybe there's someone in your life that you could spare a moment to bring a word of encouragement to those people in your circle of acquaintance.

Let's not leave things unsaid, undone, that we'll regret, that we never have done. And just another quote, only a word, only a word, you know, consider the word, sometimes we utter words hastily, unthinking, words of rejection, words that are hurtful, and consider this as I read it, only a word, only a word of anger, but it wounded, one, sensitive heart, only a word of sharp reproach, but it made the teardrops start, only a hasty, thoughtless word, sarcastic and unkind, but it darkened the day before so bright, and left a sting behind, only a word of kindness, but it lightened one heart of its grief, only a word of sympathy, but it brought one's soul relief, only a word of gentle cheer, but it flooded with radiant light, the pathway that seemed so dark before, and it made the day more bright.

Consider those words, only a word, only a word. I know a dear sister made a call to my wife, and that was a thought that someone had, and I know others have been very thoughtful with cards and appreciation, and just those little things that people can do can make such a big difference, and we just need to spend a moment to think of the people in our lives that we could do something kind to. Another quote here, when we consider someone's last hours of their life, and I know some of us have been with people in their last hours of their life, and we hear the talk of the last words that people say, sometimes you try to catch the last words that people say, and there's much that's been written about the last words of atheists, as they're crying out, as they're seeing the fires of hell, as they know the doom that awaits them, and yet we see the joy and gladness of saints in their last hours, in those last moments, as they know they'll see him face to face, at that last moment, as they take that step from death, from this life, to eternal life.

And we think of those words that we use, and how in those closing chapters of our lives, what words will people remember us for? And this tells us of that, we stand by the side of him from whose loved one eyes the light of this life is fading.

[22:07] And eagerly do we strive to catch the word which the lips of the dying man are struggling to pronounce. Often even to the most attentive ears, that word is lost.

The man would like to speak, but cannot. To ending ending ending ending ending ending Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[24:55] Thank you.