



Relating Well Pt 3: Five Challenges of Speech in a Healthy Church

October 18, 2020

Text: James 1:26, 3:2-12

So here is where we are today. Our goal is to be healthier. How we talk to and minister one to another is a key indication of how healthy we are. As we have discovered in the last two messages, Relating Well is first based in honor and manifests through prayer. Today, here is a main thought: If we are honoring Christ and one another according to Scripture, and consistently praying to God and for one another, this kind of powerful love should be reflected in our words. Beloved, words are powerful! Why?

The Power of Words

1. They reveal the heart

- **Luke 6:45 (KJV)** *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.*

2. They impact people on a personal level

- **Proverbs 15:4 (KJV)** *A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.*
- **Proverbs 25:18 (KJV)** *A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow.*
- **Psalms 57:4 (KJV)** *My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.*
- **Proverbs 18:21 (KJV)** *Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.*

3. They can powerfully unify

- **1 Corinthians 1:10 (KJV)** *Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*
- **Romans 15:5-6 (KJV)** *Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: **6** That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

4. They will be judged

- **Matthew 12:34-37 (KJV)** *O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. **35** A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. **36** But I say unto you, That every idle word that men*

shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

Concerning words, there are many biblical condemnations of ungodly ones:

Vanity (Speaking with ulterior motives, or Lying)

- **Psalms 12:2-4 (KJV)** *They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak. 3 The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things: 4 Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?*
- **Psalms 144:5-8 (KJV)** *Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke. 6 Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them. 7 Send thine hand from above; rid me, and deliver me out of great waters, from the hand of strange children; 8 Whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.*
- **Revelation 21:8 (KJV)** *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*

Talebearing (Gossip)

- **Psalms 41:6 (KJV)** *And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; when he goeth abroad, he telleth it.*
- **Proverbs 20:19 (KJV)** *He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.*
- **Proverbs 26:20-22 (KJV)** *Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. 21 As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife. 22 The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.*
- **Proverbs 16:28 (KJV)** *A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.*
- **Romans 1:28-29 (KJV)** *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,*

Harshness

- **Proverbs 15:1 (KJV)** *A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.*
- **Proverbs 12:18 (KJV)** *There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.*

CRC, how we speak to one another matters, and just like in family, is a key indicator of our health! So why is it a “challenge?” Because of our predisposition (because of our sin nature) to use our speech for evil. The tongue is a fire...

Some thoughts on James 1:26 and 3:2-12

1. We taught through James’ epistle from Feb 2015 - May 2016.
2. This epistle is thought by the majority of scholars to have been written around 40-50 AD by James, also called, James the Just, the half-brother of Jesus our LORD and the eventual leader of the church at Jerusalem. (Acts 15:13, 21:18)
3. James’ audience was the “scattered twelve tribes” or the Jewish saints throughout Judea and surrounding areas. Based on his letter, they had become somewhat worldly.
4. Before this letter was written, recall that Stephen had been martyred (likely, mid-30sAD, Acts 7), James the Apostle had been martyred (mid-40sAD, Acts 12:2), Peter was imprisoned by Herod (Acts 12), etc. It was not an easy time for the church!
5. The epistle of James is an exhortative and corrective letter to encourage Jewish Christians to live out the faith despite growing persecution.
6. One of the areas in which they struggled was their speech...how they used their mouths. In a few short (but powerful) verses, James says:

- A controlled tongue is a mark of the true believer; the opposite also true and is a sign of self-deception (1:26)
- A bridled tongue likely means a bridled (or restrained) life! (3:2)
- But it’s hard! Horses often have to be “broken” to obey! (3:3)
- A rudder is very small compared to the size of a ship, yet it moves the whole thing! (3:4)
- The tongue is small, but can set things on fire! (3:5)
- The tongue can be, if used wrongly, “a world of iniquity!” (3:6)
- Again, it can corrupt one’s whole body; it can be used by hell! (3:6)
- The tongue is, apart from God’s power, untamable. (3:7-8)
- The tongue is a pit of hypocrisy, sometimes blessing God, and sometimes cursing others! (3:9-10)
- Like a fig tree or a fountain, the church of Jesus must be consistent in the use of the tongue! (3:11-12)

For a fuller treatment of these verses, see “[A World of Unrighteousness](#)” from August 9, 2015

7. So the main two points are these: 1) It’s really important we use our speech properly in the Body of Christ, and 2) It’s really hard to do so! Again, this is why we called our message, *Five “**Challenges**” of Speech in the Local Church*. It ain’t easy!

Five Challenges of Speech in the Local Church:

1. Speaking with Edification, Grace, and Salt (Eph 4:29; Col 4:6)

- **Ephesians 4:29 (KJV)** *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.*
 - **Colossians 4:6 (KJV)** *Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.*
2. Speaking the truth in Love (Eph 4:11-16)
- **Ephesians 4:11-16 (KJV)** *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; **12** For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: **13** Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: **14** That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; **15** But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: **16** From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*
3. Speaking sound doctrine (Titus 2:1-8; 2 Tim 1:3)
- **Titus 2:1-8 (KJV)** *But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: **2** That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. **3** The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; **4** That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, **5** To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. **6** Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. **7** In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, **8** Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.*
 - **2 Timothy 1:13 (KJV)** *Hold fast the form (pattern, ESV) of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.*
4. Speaking of Eternal Things
- **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (KJV)** *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. **14** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. **15** For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. **16** For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: **17** Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. **18** Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

- **Hebrews 10:24-25 (KJV)** *And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: **25** Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*
5. Speaking to one another in Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual songs
- **Ephesians 5:17-20 (KJV)** *Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. **18** And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; **19** Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; **20** Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;*
 - **Colossians 3:16 (KJV)** *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

A few suggestions and a prayer:

Like honor and praying for one another, let us put what we have learned about our speech into practice NOW!

1. **Each week (and especially on Sunday) SEEK OUT people to encourage and edify!** (You may even want to set a goal of how many per week until you get used to it!) Ask the LORD how you might minister grace to them and exhibit the “salt characteristics” in your words: preserving (the truth of Scripture), adding flavor (enriching their lives), and producing thirst (for Christ)!
2. **This is about the “how;” make sure your words are always filled with biblical wisdom AND loving kindness!** Law and Love, Truth and Grace aren’t at cross purposes; they work together! (John 1:17; 2 John 1:3)
3. **Say what Scripture says one to another! Help undergird our church by speaking sound doctrine!** You might be surprised how quickly we can deviate from it (*Gal 1:6 - I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel*) and how often we need the truth reinforced! (*Php 3:1 - To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.*)
4. **Speak of heaven! Speak of our coming inheritance! Exhort one another in those things which cannot be taken away!** Speak of the glory of God’s Presence forever! Scripture says these things will comfort us! This may take some practice if you are used to “chit chat” only!
5. **Speak songs, hymns, and spiritual songs; yes, quote lyrics to one another...they are easy to remember!** Of course this passage applies to our church services and our homes, and of course songs of praise should be sung in our hearts. But songs can lift you right up; theologically rich songs and change your whole mood! So:
 - Quote the Psalms to one another for encouragement...literally. (A good use of technology too!)
 - Sing or quote a verse or two of a favorite song to lift up and encourage a brother or sister. It’s amazing what can happen when everyone knows the words! (“This joy I have, the

world didn't give it to me..." "On Christ the solid rock I stand...") Music is powerful. It was created by God for His worship! It can uplift the soul, alter mood, and inspire action! There is a reason why oppressed people sing!

- So go ahead and have little praise sessions! Why do we only do this in church?

May we never forget CRC that...

Proverbs 25:11 (KJV) A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

We prayed back in 2015, "Lord, by Your undeserved but freely given grace, help us control this "world of unrighteousness...this restless evil, full of deadly poison." Sanctify our minds and our mouths that we might speak and declare what You have said, in love and grace, building one another up."

Let us offer our King the same prayer again, that our speech towards one another in 2020 and forward might be Christ honoring, prayerful, and spiritually and emotionally healthy!

Amen!