



The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Proverbs 27:17)

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The Sin of Gossip

Revival meeting times are times when we ought to get some encouragement to keep on going even in the normal routine things of life. Certainly that is where Christianity and life come together. Revival times should be times when we gain inspiration on how we can live better and do better in the ordinary things of life. We will talk about an ordinary thing of life which most of us could improve in. If

you can glean a thought that will help you to improve in this matter then, I believe, your strength will be renewed.

I would like you to notice what James 1:26 says, "If any man among you seem to be religious. . ." Let us pause there. How would a man seem to be religious? Well, he could go to church. We say, "That seems to be a religious man because he goes to church." Or, he might

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wear distinctive attire, or she might dress in a distinctive way from the world and we might look at a person like that and say, "They seem to be religious." Or, there could be other things that they do. Some people carry their Bibles with them and we say, "That person seems to be religious." Or, they are interested in handing out tracts and we would say, "That person seems to be religious."

There are many things that a

person could do that would come into this category where it says, "If any man . . . seem to be religious." Notice the next phrase, "and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." It does not matter what he seems to be. It does not matter what he says about what he is. It does not matter how he talks about himself or what impression he wants to leave or how he appears to be. If he cannot talk right, the Bible

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says his religion is vain. Is that right? “If any man . . . seem to be religious and bridleth not his tongue . . . this man’s religion is vain.” That makes this a fairly important subject, and matter because we do not want to have vain religion. The warning is that we can be right in so many areas of life but if we are not right in this area, we are not spiritual and we have a vain religion. I have titled the message “The Sin of Gossip.”

The ability to talk is a wonderful faculty which God in his wisdom has given to man. Without a tongue and the ability to use it to communicate, life would be much different. No mother could sing her baby to sleep at night. No Christian could sing the praises of God. No teacher could stretch the minds of her students as she does. No pastor could share a sermon. No doctor could give a recommendation to his patient through speech. No angel could bring his message of comfort to mankind as they have often appeared with a message of words. No words of comfort could be given to a mourner. No ambassador could represent his nation. Life would be very much different if we could not talk. What great power for good lies latent and dormant within the tongue.

It is a great day when our children learn to and begin to talk. Grandmothers often think that they hear it before parents are sure that they did, because we are so eager to hear children talk, and to express words to make sentences. It is a great day when children do begin to talk. However, it is even a better day when they use the tongue to do good, to edify, to build up when the tongue is bridled by the power of God. There is no member of our body which can do more damage, create more havoc, get us into more trouble, wreck more lives, than this little two-ounce muscle that we have behind our teeth. God has placed it there. He has made it so that it can be contained. Yes, it can get us into a lot of trouble, but there is no member that can do more good either than our tongue, if we use it in a sanctified and right way.

In James 3:6, 8 we read, “The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. . . an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.” That is quite a descriptive term for the tongue. Is it any wonder that God gives plain direction for the use and proper control of the tongue?

In this message, our purpose is to try to discern what the Scriptures say about this area of our speech — this area of Gossip.

We are told in Proverbs 10:19, “In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin.” In other words, when a person talks a lot the possibility of sinning is increased. Or, there is an increased potential for saying the wrong things. A person who is constantly speaking will have more problems with sin (sins of speech) than the one who is more reserved and restrained in speech. For this reason, the Scriptures encourage us in James 1:19 to, “be swift to hear,” and “slow to speak,” and for this reason, the psalmist wrote in Psalm 39:1, “I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle.” Literally, he is saying I will muzzle my mouth as with a harness. I will put a muzzle on it.

Gossip is one of the areas of sin which these verses refer to. Gossip is the chatter and the repeating of idle talk. It is sharing information with those who have nothing to do with the problem or the solution. It is simply liking to talk especially about the private matters of another person. The word “gossip,” in that form is not found in the Scriptures, but the sin of gossip is found in the Scriptures. There are other words that mean the very same thing. One of the dangers and the damages that can result is when

that tongue is not bridled. Oh, the danger that can result when it is not kept muzzled properly.

For example, President Abraham Lincoln’s coffin was pried open twice. The first time was in 1887, twenty-two years after he had died. Why did it happen? Tongues were wagging and people were saying that he was not in that coffin, and he was not buried there. There was a rumour which the tongues of gossipers were spreading. The story was spreading that the actual coffin was empty. Therefore, a select group of witnesses was chosen, and they unearthed the coffin. They pried it open, and sure enough his remains were there. That should have stopped the tongues of the gossipers, but fourteen years later the lead again was taken out of the seal in that box. Much to the dismay and protest of his son Robert, the bizarre procedure was performed again. Once again the decaying body of the former president was exposed to view, because the tongues of gossipers needed to be stopped. Talking busybodies had again fed the sick appetites of suspicious people.

Gossip is a cruel master, not only to the living, but even to the dead. It is a cruel thing. It has been well stated that a sharp tongue is the only cutting tool

that grows sharper with constant use. Psalm 52:2 warns that the tongue is, “like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.” It is a razor that literally slashes and shreds another person’s character or their reputation. Gossip is one way in which is done.

Sometimes gossip takes, what shall we say, more innocent forms? Passing on idle tales, or simply chatter that really does not amount to anything, exaggerated talk or things that keep growing as they are shared. It is like this example. “Did you hear that so and so’s baby swallowed a pin?” The next time it was repeated it was, “Did you hear that so and so’s baby swallowed a big pin?” After a while the story was, “Did you hear that so and so’s baby swallowed a couple of pins?” Then, after another while, “Did you hear that so and so’s baby swallowed a coupling pin?” Well now, that was ridiculous, but it started with the exaggerated talk of gossipers.

I have six points I would like to share in relation to gossip. I will share them in a form of an acrostic, using the letters of the word “gossip.” *The first letter is ‘g,’ and under that letter we would like to point out God’s concern about this matter.* I have already said that while the word, “gossip,” is not found in the King

James Bible, the sin of gossip is. If you want to turn with me to some of these references, you can begin by turning to Leviticus 19:16, “Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD.” Expanding the meaning of these words we could say, “You shall not go up and down as a dispenser of gossip and scandal among your people.” Do not move among your people as a dispenser of gossip.

Apparently gossip was a problem that existed long before the 20th century, long before telephones and cordless phones and that kind of thing expanded methods of communication. *This warning also, against being a talebearer is found in six other places in the Old Testament.* A few examples are Proverbs 11:13 which says, “A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.” A gossipier revealeth secrets. Proverbs 26:22, “The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.” The innermost nature of the person. Any time we do what God says, “Do not do,” we become guilty before Him. We must guard our speech such that we do

not get into this rut of “wholesaling” (how do you say that) and “retelling,” (retailing) stories. Let us not be wholesaling and retailing stories. Someone said it this way:

“If your lips would keep from slips,

Five things you must observe with care,

To whom you speak, Of whom you speak,

And how and when and where.”

You must be careful.

Proverbs gives us a good bit of admonition about this subject. Proverbs 16:28 says, “A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.” What is a whisperer? It is one who would rather tell something secretly behind the back — quietly speak to another person about someone else — rather than facing the individual they are speaking about and checking and clearing the matter. “A whisperer separateth chief friends.” Proverbs 17:9 says, “He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.” Again, the thought is this matter of talking about others to others, and driving wedges between friendships. We need to guard that temptation to say things to others about others that we are unwilling to say to the individual, or to check with the individual.

It is gossiping when we spread stories about someone that we never really have checked. We do not know for sure if it is right, but it makes interesting talk, you know, and so we keep talking about it.

Proverbs 25:9, 10 would be another reference. Now, listen to this. This is straight from the Scriptures, “Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another: Lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away.” We become out of rapport when people discover that you are talking to other people but you never really approached them about the matter. The encouragement is, before you start talking about something go and make sure it is right. Be certain it is correct. A gossip usually thrives on things that really have not been verified out and really are not accurate, but the story is spread. We can so easily become guilty of this whispering or this telling others.

A few New Testament references. This is not only a truth that the Old Testament was concerned about. It is also a concern of the New Testament. In 2 Thessalonians 3:11, 12 we have these words, “For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working

not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.” Notice the last part especially. A busybody is a person that is too nosy. They are saying too much about other people. The encouragement and exhortation in relation to a person like that is that they would “with quietness . . . work.” More work and less talk you see. Work more and do not talk as much. That is the remedy.

The sin of gossip comes into focus is in 1 Timothy 5:13 also. “And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.” Tattlers and busybodies are people who say things that they would have better left unsaid. Romans 1:29, 30 give a list — a whole catalogue of things like fornication, uncleanness, wickedness, covetousness, and envy, and murder, deceit and malignity, “proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,” and sandwiched in all those other terms we have these two words, “whisperers,” and “Backbiters.” I said the words “gossipers” is not found in the Bible, at least not the word in

the King James version, but right here, the word “gossipers,” is used in many other English translations. The word “gossipers,” and “whisperers,” is synonymous.

There are people who talk quietly in the absence of people not face to face. That is the thought I get from backbiters. Backbiters — behind the back talk. There was a little dog some time ago, when we were handing out evangelistic literature. This little critter did not seem to enjoy my presence on the property, so he came sneaking up behind me and bit the back of my leg. When I turned and looked at him, well, he soon ran away. However, as soon as I did not look at him, he came sneaking up again. I discovered the only safe way to get off that property was to look at the dog while I was going forward. That is what I call a backbiter. When he was in my gaze, he did not do anything when he knew I was watching him. However, when I was not watching him he was nipping on my leg when he had an opportunity. I think he only caught my pants if I remember right, but I did not trust him. A backbiter is someone you cannot quite trust. You are not sure what they are saying when you are not there. You are not quite sure what they will do

when you are not looking. That is a term that goes well with a whisperer — a whisperer and a backbiter sit together quite well. These are God's concerns which we have been sharing. And that is what I see in the letter G, gossip — God's concern.

The next letter is an O — let us think about our problem. What is our problem if this gossip matter has a grip on us? I would like to suggest a few things that probably are a part of our problem at least. 1) We like to talk too much. If we are involved in gossip, one of our problems is we like to talk too much. Remember what God's concern is, "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin" (Proverbs 10:19). Someone has observed that God has given us one mouth and two ears, and that we should use them in that proportion. Listen more than you talk. Some people like to talk so well that they will even tell their own secrets if they do not have anybody else's to talk about. It seems like they must be talking. The problem is they like to talk too much.

2) Another problem is some people like to have their ears tickled. They like to listen too much. I do not think gossip would be too much of a problem if sometimes we simply tell a person "Well, I would rather not

hear. Thanks, but no thanks." There is something about human nature that likes to hear the sensational and the unusual. The problem is so acute that we tend to amplify a situation so that the unusual becomes more extraordinary. That is what gossip thrives on. If we have a divine nature — a totally divine nature — I think the problem would be eliminated. However, the bizarre and the sensational things still attract our attention. Was it not the Athenians in Acts 17:21, of whom the Bible says they "spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing." That is human nature.

We have a brother in Texas who made this statement one time, "Do not let your ears become somebody else's garbage cans." If what they are saying is not wholesome and upbuilding tell them that you would rather not listen, but we like to have our ears tickled. That is maybe the second problem.

3) The third problem perhaps is that there is too much idleness. I get that thought from 2 Thessalonians 3, and 1 Timothy 5, which we have already read, where it tied the busybodies and the tattlers directly with an unwillingness to work. It said part of the cure was to work quietly. We have learned to work

now with cordless phones and different things. Maybe that only increases the problem where we can talk while we work even to someone who is many miles away. Let us guard that. I have been in a few homes already where they have what is called a scanner going all day long. It is constantly scanning all the emergency frequencies, and it is latching onto the first announcement of a catastrophe, an accident, or an irregularity in the community. Some people will drop everything and run to be the first spectator in the fire or accident scene. It can become a habit forming thing. I have even heard people make claims how they get there before the emergency vehicles, if it is nearby. I think it would be better to work with a little more quietness than to have that thing going all the time. Learn to work with quietness.

Some people seem to have their gossip antenna stretched up like that scanner. It is sniffing everything that is happening and catching, and then tuning in on, and sending out over their broadcasting frequency the irregularities or the difficulties and that kind of thing that they have picked up. I know of one individual of whom the problem was so pronounced that they finally called the individual a broadcast-

ing station, because it seemed like everything that came in went out, and went out maybe on a little higher frequency even than what it came in. They were referred to as a broadcasting station.

4) Problem number four that we struggle with at times, is that subconsciously we tend to colour and shade the things we say about others depending on our attitude or our feelings toward them. I think we all are prone to do that. We may hear something and when we repeat it, our own attitudes toward that person, or our feelings toward them tend to colour and shade the way we repeat something. We may think we are giving something like we heard it, but even the tone of voice, our expressions, or our actions all communicate. We can be communicating something maybe that is a result of our feelings and not actually a part of what we heard. Jesus did not capitalize on our faults and failures, and we do not like if other people do it too. Let us not do it to them.

5) Another problem that contributes to gossip is that at times we simply do not think enough before we talk. You have likely heard the advice to count to ten before you talk. Sometimes maybe we ought to count to ten

thousand, so that we are out of range before we stop counting and that we do not get started talking at all.

The first letter S in the word gossip — We want to look now at some of the symptoms of gossip. These are some little clues as to when gossip is probably about to happen, or in the making already. What are some indications that gossip might be around, or some signs of its presence? Here is a sample of these symptoms. It is often prefixed with these words, “Have you heard?” or “Did you hear?” or “I am not sure if this is true but . . .” That is a symptom of gossip. “I am not sure if this is true but . . .” Maybe we ought to be big enough to stop a person right there and say, “Sorry, if you are not sure it is true, why not go and check first to see if it is true and then I will listen to you.”

Another symptom is, “Somebody said. . .” Or, “They say that . . .” and another story. “I was told that. . .” “The word is out that. . .” These are symptoms of gossip. You do not identify the somebody, at least not right away. You do not really say where you got the information and you are reluctant to share that. These are symptoms of gossip. Here is another one. “I want to tell you something confidentially.” That can be a symptom of

gossip. Or, “I have something to tell you if you promise that you will keep it a secret.” That is usually the prefix of gossip.” Keep it a secret. If you need to promise not to repeat it, not to share it, or not to talk about it maybe again it would be a good place to say, “Thanks, but no thanks. I do not really enjoy having that kind of information. I would rather not know it.” The gossiper likes secretiveness.

Another symptom of gossip is this question, “Can you keep a secret?” Or, “I have something I want to tell you but. . .” Remember the whispering definition. Another one of the symptoms of gossip is “Shh . . . come over here,” (away from the group you know). Or, wait until you are away from the group and then latch onto something. In one area they had a problem with the electronics system. Something went wrong, and telephone conversations were sometimes very unexpectedly broadcast over the radio station. People were on edge for quite a while because they never knew when what they were saying on the telephone was going over the airwaves and into people’s home on the radio. I understand the phone conversations were a little more subdued until they got the problem solved. Well, it probably would be for all

of us, but especially if you are sharing things that could be embarrassing. These are symptoms of gossiping.

It has been observed that some people operate with this as their motto, "If you cannot say anything good about a person, let's hear it." That is a bad way to operate. If you cannot say anything good about a person do not say, "Let's hear it," but then let us be quiet. Let us watch for the symptoms of gossip, check our own speech and put a few stops in the tales of others. It is likely only a story.

Maybe this is another symptom of gossip, but I want to give an illustration. It is likely only a story though. I read of a happy man who went through life this way. He had two pockets. The one pocket, he intentionally had the bottom cut out of it so that anything he put in that pocket did not stay there. In the other pocket he kept the bottom very carefully because he wanted to retain everything that was put in that pocket. The story goes that everything that he heard that was harmful to another person, an insult or an injury, or a cutting, unkind remark, or gossip, he would write on a little slip of paper and carefully put it in the pocket that did not have a bottom in it. The things that he heard

that were good about a person, he would carefully write on a slip of paper and he slipped that into the pocket that had a bottom in it and it would retain what he put in it. Then at night, he always emptied out his pockets. First he would reach into the pocket that had the holes and well, there was nothing there. He had nothing to review and he would reach into the pocket that did have a bottom in it and pull out the nice things he had heard about people that day and review them before he went to sleep. He went to sleep with good and pleasant things on his mind for that day.

The problem is the moral of this little account. Sometimes people get their pockets mixed up and the things that they should retain and think about slip away from them, and the things they should not retain and keep, somehow those are the things they review at the end of the day. Let us make sure that we have our pockets straight.

Another S as we look at the word gossip, I will call this little point "some distinctions." Is everything that is said about a person or anyone else always gossip? Can there be a difference between sharing a legitimate concern, answering an honest question, and gossip? I would like to say "yes." I believe there

are some distinctions that can be made here. I want to read several Scriptures again and ask this question, “Was Paul guilty of the sin of gossip when he shared these words with others?” In Philippians 3:17–19 we read, “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction.” Was he gossiping when he gave that warning about people who were around other people? No, he was not gossiping, he was giving a fair warning. There was a genuine concern there. He says, “I . . . now tell you even weeping.” There was a deep concern about it. I do not think he found joy in sharing those concerns. He was not a gossip. God would not have allowed it to be in the Scriptures if that were the case.

Therefore, we could say, “Yes, we can share other things about other individuals at times without gossiping.” There were no specifics here necessarily. It was more of a general warning. However, look at the next chapter. Philippians 4:2 says, “I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the

same mind in the Lord.” Who were Euodias, and Syntyche? Well, they were two women who had a problem getting along with each other. It was no secret. They were gossiping about each other, slandering each other, and talking about each other and it was affecting their ability to relate. It was affecting the church. Paul outright mentions and exposes it. Would you not have felt good if you were in the church at Philippi when this letter was read, and if you had been one of those women sitting in the congregation listening to this letter read to the whole church and suddenly your name is mentioned with the encouragement, “Get along with that other woman?” I think it would have been the most humiliating thing to be exposed like that. It was likely not the first time that he had addressed this problem.

Titus 1:10–13 says, “For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: (11) Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake. (12) One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. (13) This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply,

that they may be sound in the faith.” That is a quite straightforward rebuke of the Cretians, but Paul says it is a true report. One of their own prophets said that and it is true. Did he say, “Mark that man as a gossiper. . .”? No, he said “Believe that the report is true.” It is no idle tale.

Two other examples. 2 Timothy 4:14, 15, “Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: (15) Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.” We can turn to 3 John 9 and read about Diotrefes, a man’s name in particular, “who loveth to have the preeminence.” There is a warning given that he should be recognized for what he is. 3 John 9, 10, “I wrote unto the church: but Diotrefes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. (10) Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith. . .” It is quite an outright exposure of someone who was not doing right. Even though these individuals were called into focus and exposed, I do not think we would say, “Now, that Gospel writer, that writer of that passage was a gossiper.” It was done to keep harm from others.

Therefore, I believe there are some distinctions that we should make, namely a distinction between sharing a legitimate concern and merely gossiping. Guard your motives and be sure that what you are doing is part of the solution and not simply contributing to the problem. I further believe that Paul and others had spoken to these individuals in person before they wrote these things about them. I think they surely would have done that. Even with Alexander, he said that he had done him “much evil” and had “withstood” his words. I am sure he would have confronted him on that. Before we say anything to anyone else, let us make sure we have properly spoken to the individual themselves, lest we are guilty of gossip.

I — some important questions. Here are a few questions to ask to check the genuineness of a concern, to help us divide between gossip and concern. 1) “Will you please identify people by sources and names? Please identify the ones you are talking about.” If someone is sharing information that is damaging or harmful and simply being very general, there may be times when that is right, but most often it is not. Gossipers do not like to be clear and specific because they do not like to be verified and traced.

“Who did you say told you this?”
“Oh, You are not going to check are you?” “Well yeah, who did you say told you this?” “Where did this information come from?” “Where did you hear this?” “Who are you talking about?”

2) “Can you support what you are saying with facts?” is a good question to ask. Hearsay and rumour are fertilizer for gossip, and genuine truth is rarely veiled or uncertain. Often gossip will fade if it is exposed to light.

3) A third question, “May I quote you?” “May I go back to the individual and check this out? May I quote what you are saying here?” Or, even sometimes it might be all right to say, “Now, wait a minute, I like to be sure I have exactly what you say. I like to write it down so that I can check it out for sure.” “I like to write it down so that I am sure I have it straight.” Sometimes it is remarkable how quickly a report can be shortened if they know it will be written down.

4) A fourth question, “May I have the privilege of doing with this information whatever I feel appropriate? Can I have that privilege?” Can I do with it whatever I feel is appropriate?” On one occasion Abraham Lincoln (this was before his untimely exposure in his casket) was given a paper listing specific

objections to his appointment of one of his most trusted friends in his administrative term. He received and reviewed the paper and was with his interviewers and the one that gave him the paper. His first question after he read the paper was, “Well, is this the paper that you gave to me?” The man replied, “Yes.” Then President Lincoln said, “Am I free to do with it whatever I please?” The man said, “Yes,” and Abraham Lincoln turned around and put it into the fire-place. Then he said, “Good day gentlemen,” and that stopped it. That was the end of that one.

So often gossip hurts three people. It hurts the person who is telling it. It hurts the person that is spoken about, and it hurts the person who hears it. We can at least stop the hurt by not allowing ourselves to be hurt by listening. If you are sure it is gossip you can reduce it to at least two.

My last point is an extension of the thought on how to curb gossip and that is *P — a few preventive measures*. I want to say, first of all, under this heading it is good for us to remember that “He who throws dirt always loses ground.” If all we are doing is throwing dirt then we are losing ground ourselves. In God’s program you can never advance yourself by bringing harm or hurt

to someone else. “He that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 14:11). Most of the gossip would be silenced (if not all) if 1 Corinthians 13:5–7 would be carefully followed. 1 Corinthians 13, that love chapter, a chapter I think every child of God ought to read occasionally says, “(5) Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; (6) Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; (7) Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” Carefully follow that.

1 Peter 2:12 also offers some help. “Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.” You do not fight gossip with gossip. When you are doing well and people speak gossip against you, what will you do? The answer is keep doing well. Persistently plod along in good. Do not falter. Do not go into hiding. Do not let your sights become dim, or your eyes fail, but let your light shine. As they behold and see your steadfastness and your faithfulness, they may yet glorify God too, in

their day of visitation.

It may be one of the best preventive measures to gossip that the Bible gives in Deuteronomy 13:14, “Then shalt thou enquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you.” Take four steps that are mentioned in this verse — inquire, search, ask, and ascertain. In other words be sure you know what you are saying, and be sure you know what you are listening to.

This subject is important because there will be no gossipers in heaven. Psalm 15:1 asks the question, “LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?” The answer is in verse 3, “He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.” Those are the ones who will dwell in the eternal city. May God help us to guard the use of our tongue. Colossians 3 encourages us to put away all speech that is not sanctified and to “let the Word of Christ dwell” (verse 16). Be careful. “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Colossians 3:17).

Scripture References

Leviticus	Luke	3:11, 12	250
19:16 249	14:11 259	1 Timothy	251
Deuteronomy	Acts	5:13	
13:14 259	17:21 252	2 Timothy	257
Psalms	Romans	4:14, 15	
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From the Previous Issue:

A Well-Disciplined Church

From a message by Lynn Diller

Friday, December 03, 2004

Gospel Light Fellowship

Book Reprint (Continued)

One Hundred Lessons In Bible Study

LESSON 12.

Sermon on the Mount. — Concluded.

[Matthew 7.]

VII. True righteousness obtained. — verses 1–14.

1. Not by rash judgment of others (1–5). — Luke 6:37, 38; Romans 2:1; 1 Corinthians 4:5.

2. Not by unwise disposition of God's gifts (6). — Proverbs 9:7, 8; 23:9; Acts 13:45, 46.

3. But by appropriate application (7, 8). — Isaiah 55:6; Matthew 21:22; John 14:13–15.

4. Illustration (9–11). — Mark 11:24; Luke 11:9–13; James 1:5, 6; 1 John 3:22.

5. Righteous dealing (12). — Luke 6:31; Leviticus 19:18;

Romans 13:10.

6. Self-denial (13, 14). — Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34.

VIII. False righteousness. — verses 15–23.

1. How practiced (15). — Matthew 24:4, 5, 11, 24; Mark 13:21, 22; 2 Peter 2:1–3.

2. How detected (16–20). — Romans 8:9; Galatians 5:22–24; 1 John 2:4; 4:2, 3.

3. Deceives.

a. By saying prayers (21). — Hosea 8:1, 2; Matthew 25:11, 12; Luke 6:46; 13:25.

b. By doing works (22). — Romans 4:5; 1 Corinthians 13:2.

c. Results — Condemnation (23). — Matthew 25:41; Luke 13:26–29; Psalm 6:8.

IX. The final application. — verses 24–27.

1. A message to the hearers.

a. To those who hear the word and do the same (24, 25). — Psalm 85:8; Isaiah 55:3; Luke 6:48; James 1:22.

b. To those who hear but fail to act (26, 27). — Luke 6:49; John 13:17; James 1:25; 4:17.

2. The effect (28, 29). Mark 1:22; Luke 4:42; John 7:40, 41.

1. Do we understand from verses 7 and 8, that all prayers are answered?

2. Discuss the Golden Rule.

3. Explain Matthew 7:21–23.

4. In what respect did Christ's teaching on the Mount differ from that of the scribes?

5. Give a summary of doctrines presented in this sermon.

LESSON 13.

Our Lord's Prayers.

1.

Prayer: At His baptism.

Character of the Prayer:

Probably a prayer for strength.

In Whose Behalf:

References: Luke 3:21.

Remarks: A direct evidence that God answers prayer.

2.

Prayer: The Lord's prayer.

Character of the Prayer:

Disciples instructed how to pray.

In Whose Behalf: Of self.

References: Matthew 11:2-4

Remarks: A perfect model. The prayer is nearly all for self and still unselfish.

3.

Prayer: The Lord's prayer.

Character of the Prayer:

Disciples instructed how to pray.

In Whose Behalf: Of self.

References: Luke 11:2-4.

Remarks: Given to the disciples more than a year after the prayer mentioned above.

4.

Prayer: At the grave of Lazarus.

Character of the Prayer: A prayer of thanks.

In Whose Behalf:

References: John 11:41, 42

Remarks: There is victory in the heart before the same is manifest in works.

5.

Prayer: Upon the return of the Seventy.

Character of the Prayer: A prayer of thanks.

In Whose Behalf:

References: Luke 10:21.

Remarks: Self-importance shuts

out much light.

6.

Prayer: In an hour of triumph.

Character of the Prayer: A prayer for aid; and for the glory of the cause.

In Whose Behalf: In His own behalf, and of the cause.

References: John 12:27, 28.

Remarks: He had just made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Well may we pray, when in time of apparent success. "Father, save me from this hour." Equally important is the second prayer. "Father, glorify thy name, not my name."

7.

Prayer: The night of the betrayal.

Character of the Prayer: A prayer of supplication.

In Whose Behalf: In behalf of His disciples.

References: John 17.

Remarks: The longest recorded prayer in the New Testament.

8.

Prayer: In Gethsemane.

Character of the Prayer: A prayer for comfort.

In Whose Behalf: In His own behalf.

References: Matthew 26:39; Mark 14:35, 36; Luke 22:41-44.

Remarks: These groans were for

me. Do I always say “not mine but thy will be done”?

9.

Prayer: On the cross

Character of the Prayer: A prayer for forgiveness.

In Whose Behalf: In behalf of His enemies.

References: Luke 23:34.

Remarks: Only a heart hardened in self-righteousness could resist the influence of such a prayer.

10.

Prayer: On the cross.

Character of the Prayer: A prayer of lamentation.

In Whose Behalf:

References: Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34.

Remarks: First the world rejected Him; then the disciples forsook Him; now God hides His face from Him. The Son was dying.

NOTES. — 1. Among the features of these prayers we notice sincerity, earnestness, directness, and simplicity.

2. Pray what you will, and if your prayer is in harmony with God’s will, you will find it in substance in the Lord’s prayer.

3. Though the Lord’s prayers are brief, John 17 shows that He is not opposed to long prayers.

4. Christ prayed for His friends, for His enemies, and for Himself. This includes everybody.

5. For others of our Lord’s prayers, not recorded, see Luke 5:16; 9:18; etc.

1. To how many of the recorded prayers of Christ was their an immediate answer?

2. Is it obligatory on us to couple the Lord’s prayer with every prayer we make?

3. “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” What lesson for us?

4. Can unconverted persons pray the Lord’s prayer consistently?

5. How much have we to do with the answers to our prayers?

And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding. (Job 28:28).

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever. (Psalm 111:10).

“GREASY”

the Robber

Fascinating Story of the Salvation of a Robber Band
Translated by Charles Lukesh

GREASY

**the thrilling true story of the salvation of a whole
band of robbers by reading a New Testament**

Introduction

THE FASCINATING STORY OF THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

In the following pages you will find one of the most gripping true stories of the power of the gospel. It is a story of Russian immigrants on the way to Siberia with their family. The parents succumb to cholera, leaving the two children, Shura and Pasha, to fend for themselves. The boy is picked up by robbers, joining the band, and helps kill two Christian travellers, finding a New Testament in the loot.

What happens after that only

the angels will be able to fully reveal. However, enough is known from the testimony to stir the coldest heart. Nothing like it has ever come to the desk of the publishers. Every Christian ought to read this testimony for inspiration; all persons who doubt the power of the gospel will be stirred to the depths. Christians should make this booklet available to lost sinners.

— Cyrus Osterhus

Foreword

This story of the former penitentiary inmate was translated from the German after being translated from the Russian. The original translators stressed their endeavor to maintain the simplicity of the author; similarly we pass it on in the English translation in the hope that it may be a

blessing to many that read it. The story proves in Romans 11:33, 36: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! . . . to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”

— Charles Lukesh

Historical Note

STUNDISTS — To the South of Russia nearly two hundred years ago, there migrated some tens of thousands of German colonists, most of whom were Mennonites. The Christian colonists conducted meetings for the study of the Holy Scriptures, which in the German language was called *Bibel Stunde* (Bible Hour, or the hour devoted to Bible study and prayer).

When many neighbouring Russian people (under the blessed influence of these German believers) were also converted to Christ, they also commenced to hold meetings

similar to their German brethren. Then the Orthodox clergy began to nickname them as “Stundists”, a perversion of the German *Bibel Stunde*, and classified their faith in Christ as “German Faith.” This designation was given in derision, and with the object of rousing popular feeling against them so as to hinder dissemination of the Gospel.

After the Russian believers increased in numbers, the churches were officially organized as Evangelical Christians, and Baptists. As late as 1930 they were still sometimes called Stundists.

Greasy

The nickname “Greasy” was given to Paul when he was but eight years old under special circumstances that will be mentioned later. His real family name was Tichomirov. He was the son of a farmer from one of the poorest villages in the government of Mogilev. The family consisted of the father, the mother, and two children — ten-year-old Shura (Alexandra) and eight-year-old Pasha (Paul). They lived peacefully, were religious in the orthodox way, and enjoyed the respect not only of the inhabitants of their own village, but of those of all the district.

On the holy days, the local orthodox priest used to visit them

to play cards with the father — not for money, but merely to pass the time. Sometimes the game was “Dulatchki.” in which it was customary for the losing one to suffer the pack of cards to be thrown at his nose. If either of the players had some money, they sent the children for liquor, which would put them in a hilarious mood. The priest, whom they called “Batushka” (Daddy), used to say, “It is no sin to drink with moderation. Even the Lord Jesus loved to be joyful and at the wedding in Cana changed water into wine.”

The children loved to look on and noted with special interest how the nose of the priest would

become more and more red — they did not know whether it was from the use of the liquor or from the frequent hits with the pack of cards thrown at him cleverly by the father, who usually won the game. The good-natured priest used to say with a croaking voice, “He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. {Matthew 24:13} I shall have my turn, my beloved, and then look out, because it is written, “Owe no man any thing, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” [Romans 13:8; Matthew 7:2]

This hilarious life came to an abrupt end. Several successive bad harvests compelled the farmers of the village of Sosnovka to consider moving to Siberia. In groups they talked over the matter with one another and finally decided to send out messengers to find an appropriate piece of land in one of the Siberian districts. Because he was a clever and experienced man, Tichomirov was among those land-seekers. After three months the messengers returned; they had found land in the government of Tomsk. Promptly selling their land and property, the farmers started on their way. That was in the year 1897.

During the trip, the trains made slow headway and had to

make long stop-overs at the crossroads in Samara, Tcheljabinsk, and Omsk. The moving farmers had to wait for weeks to get trains for further travel and had to spend the days and nights in the small railroad stations, lying on the floor. The boiled water was not sufficient for all, nor could the people afford to buy warm food from the restaurants. Consequently, the poor, simple people satisfied themselves with dried herring or other dried fish and drank unboiled water. As a result, many had stomach trouble, and cholera set in. The older people were especially afflicted by the plague.

On the last stretch before Tomsk, Mr. Tichomirov became sick. All indications signified cholera. To the horror of his wife and children, he was taken from the train in one of the stations and put in the barracks for people with infectious diseases. It was only natural that Mrs. Tichomirov and the children leave the train also. They found refuge not far from the barracks behind the snow fences along the railroad tracks, Daily they inquired about the condition of the father, but the information was more sad every time.

After three days had passed, the sorrow-stricken mother had

to declare to the children that she was sick. It was a heart-breaking scene when the mother was taken away on a stretcher from the crying children. In her they lost their last support. With a sad heart the mother parted from her children, suspecting that she would never see them again. But more terrible to the mother was the possibility that her beloved children would be fully orphaned in a strange land.

As the mother was carried into the barracks, the desperate children ran crying behind the carriers until the heavy barracks door was slammed in their faces. How lonesome and miserable Shura and Pasha felt. As if bereft of their senses, they circled the barracks crying now for the father and then for the mother. The only answer they received was a coarse cry from the guard, threatening them with a whipping if they would not leave the barracks. But the children did not cease crying and asking to be let in. They wanted to die with their parents, since they felt that they

could not live without them. Thus they kept running around the barracks until late at night when the severe cold compelled them to think of their warmer clothing, which they had left with some other things behind the snow fences. However, when they came on the spot where they had abode with their mother before her sickness, they found no sign of their baggage. Apparently someone had taken the few poor things of the immigrants.

Crawling behind the snow fences, the children huddled together to keep each other warm. Shura, who was the older, was very concerned about her young brother. During the night, which seemed to her like an eternity, she did not close her eyes. As soon as Pasha awoke, the children hastened again to the barracks. The first guard they met told them, "Do not come again. This morning we carried away the body of your father, and your mother is likely to die today."

FIFTY FUNDAMENTAL FACTS

40. Christian people are not to be "unequally yoked together with unbelievers"

Just as the yoke of Christ assures safety, a forward movement in the work of the Lord, and

sure success in Christian service, so the unequal yoke with unbelievers puts us under their power and means disastrous results in the end. The yoke of Christ leads upward; that of the unequal yoke

The Pulpit Exchange



with unbelievers, downward. Some tell us that while we should not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, it is all right to be equally yoked together with them. The weakness of this argument is that it fails to recognize that the “equal” yoke between the two is impossible. It is like

traveling in opposite directions at the same time. It takes a long yoke to reach from the neck of one traveling on the highway of holiness to one on the road to eternal destruction. The unequal yoke with unbelievers is incompatible with Christian freedom.

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