

Sins of The Tongue

What The Bible Says

There are a growing number of professing Christians in America today who feel that "words are just words". Many who love our Lord as we do feel that taking the Lord's Name in vain:

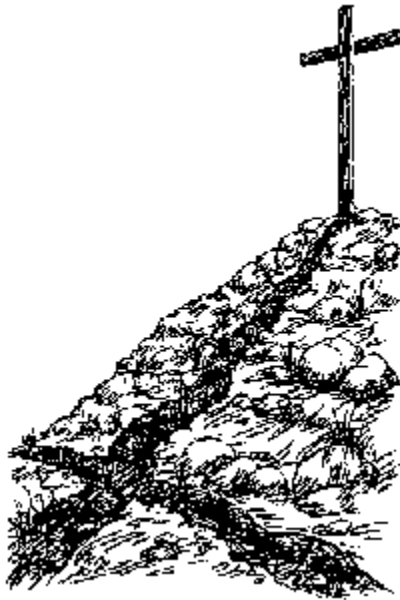
Exodus 20:7 (KJV) "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

is wrong, but feel that any other expression or misuse of the tongue is of no consequence. What do I, as a lowly shepherd in God's flock, think of "sins of the tongue"? I abhor misuse of the tongue. The first sermon I preach at any local Church comes from this text:

Ephesians 4:29-32 (KJV) "Let no corrupt<1> communication<2> proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying<3>, that it may minister<4> grace<5> unto the hearers. {30} And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. {31} Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil

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speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: {32} And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

<1> sapos {pronounced sap-ros'}, rotten, putrefied, of poor quality, worthless, useless.

<2> logos {pronounced log'-os}, word, decree, doctrine, speech, spoken thought.

<3> oikodome {pronounced oy-kod-om-ay'}, the act of building up, edifying, the act of one who promotes another's growth in Christian wisdom, piety, happiness, holiness.

<4> didomi {pronounced did'-o-mee}, Aorist Active Subjunctive, may give or bestow.

<5> charis {pronounced khar'-ece}, grace, that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness: grace of speech; graciousness (as gratifying), of manner or act (abstract or concrete; literal, figurative or spiritual; especially the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including gratitude):—acceptable, benefit, favor, gift.

I preached this text at my Beloved Rock Hill Baptist the first time I ever met these wonderful believers. I also preached this text to the Beech River Baptist Association the first time I ever preached at the Pastor's Conference. I preach this text the first time I preach revival in any flock - and I preach this text the first time I ever act as a guest speaker at any function, be it Senior Adults, youth, or children's day.

Why has God put this text so strongly on my heart? Is it because I have never been guilty of misusing my own tongue? I wish that were the case. Truthfully, the Lord has ordered that I

preach this message because of the danger of misusing the Tongue. (By the way, I have posted the original sermon "Be Kind To One Another" at the back of this booklet. Read through it, and let God's Word speak to your heart). I *myself* have been guilty of the sin of misusing my tongue, and have had to apologize to others for its careless use. I have also been - as my momma says - been "cut to the quick" by others who have misused their tongues. I have heard professing ministers of the Gospel use the phrase "O God" or "my God" carelessly in sentences or in sermons when they were neither speaking to God or preaching about God. In other words, they were using His Holy Name as slang, using it "vainly" or in an empty manner. Do not think that God holds us, who are His under-shepherds, unaccountable for misuse of our tongues! We shall be chastised along with the rest for shamefully misusing our tongues. As King David warned:

Psalms 39:1 (KJV) "... I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me."

I have heard professing Christians use horrible words that I can only abbreviate in this document. Words that begin with "f", or "b", or "s", or even

the racial "n" word. To these who are misinformed the Scripture commands:

Psalms 34:13-14 (KJV) "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. {14} Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it."

Much can be said of a person's character by the way they use their tongue. Our Lord Jesus said:

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."

A person is judged by what comes out of their mouth. How many people have died and gone to eternal *damnation*¹ because a professing Christian

"damnation". See Matthew 23:14; 23:33; Mark 3:29; Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47; John 5:29; Romans 3:8, et. al. The unbeliever uses forms of the word "damnation" carelessly, but Jesus and the Apostles used the word properly when speaking of eternal punishment)

has carelessly used his or her tongue. Christians are walking advertisements of Christ - we must be careful to advertise Jesus in our words and in our lives. As Proverbs says:

Proverbs 18:21 (NASB) "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit."

It would be foolish to carelessly handle a loaded gun. I can testify to this, because I lost a child who did that very same thing! As tragic as that incident was to me, I can scarcely describe the many instances when believers who should have known better hurt me and my wife with their tongue. My wife and I nearly suffered starvation because a Christian maligned us at one time in our ministry. I have been acquainted with and loved dear Christians who, misled, used their tongues to hurt my ministry or that of other ministers of whom I know.

¹(this is, by the way, the proper use of the word

The tongue can truly cut to the quick!

What Saith The Scripture?

What are the different *sins of the tongue*? Are there different *sins of the tongue*, or does what I say really not matter? Our standard and our shield shall be the Word of God, God's precious gift to us.

The Lying Tongue

A lie goes half way around the world before the truth can get its pants on. (Winston Churchill)

The lying tongue is the tongue that speaks untruths, exaggerates, or in any way speaks that which is not reality. The Bible says:

Proverbs 25:18 (KJV) "A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow."

A lying tongue is, quite frankly, considered by God to be the same as *assault with a deadly weapon*. The tongue can be mis-used to harm others near at hand (a maul), a few feet away (a sword), or a great distance away (an arrow). Many

people have been driven to financial or social ruin because of the lying tongues of others. What does God say to this? First of all, He tells us that the father of lies is Satan:

John 8:44 (KJV) "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

and that people who fall into the trap of lying are guilty of mimicking Satan himself. What a *terrible charge* to level against a professing Christian! Further, God says that He *hates* the lying tongue:

Proverbs 6:16-17 (KJV) "These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: {17} A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,"

and considers lying to be one of the *seven deadly sins*. Is there such a thing as a "little white lie"? Not according to God! A lie is a lie - and liars are excluded from the Kingdom of God (Revelation 21:8).

The Flattering Tongue

Psalms 5:9 (KJV) "For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue."

The Bible speaks of *flattery* as a sin. "Flattery" does not mean to *compliment* someone, for there's nothing wrong with compliments. "Flattery" is the Hebrew *chalaq* {pronounced *khaw-lak'*}, and means "to speak smooth words so as to win over". Flattery is based in deception, whereas Christians are commanded to:

Ephesians 4:15 (KJV) "... speaking the truth in love ..."

... speak the truth in love one to another. The body of Christ should not be filled with politicians, but with disciples, students of Christ.

The Proud Tongue

Psalms 12:3-4 (KJV) "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?"

Pride is the mark of the unbeliever, and the mark of a carnal believer. Our Lord Jesus showed us how we should behave in each other's presence when He knelt down and washed the disciple's feet:

John 13:14-15 (KJV) "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. {15} For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

The proud or boastful tongue comes from a heart that truly does not understand the Grace of God. None of us who are saved have either earned or deserved that great salvation. It came to us by faith in the *finished work of Christ on the Cross (Ephesians 2:8-10)*. I myself have a tendency toward pride, and it is for this reason that I reject all titles other than "Brother David". Pride must be squashed in my life, and in yours as well. We are not good enough to be saved ... Jesus alone made our salvation possible. Therefore I cannot boast:

1 Corinthians 1:31 (KJV) "That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

of myself, though I will boast of what my Jesus has done for me - blessed be His name!

Pride is the utter poverty of soul disguised as riches, imaginary light where in fact there is darkness. (John Climacus)

The Swift Tongue

Ecclesiastes 5:2 (KJV) "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."

Proverbs 18:13 (KJV) "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."

Also called the "foot in mouth disease", the swift tongue speaks hastily, and often without thought. Oh, if I could grab past words out of the air and suck them back into my mouth! Yet this is not possible, dear friends, because words - once spoken - cannot be called back.

Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habits. Watch your habits; they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny. (Frank Outlaw)

This is good advise. Mark Twain also gave some good advice when he said, "It is better to keep your mouth shut and be supposed a fool, than to open it and remove all doubt!".

The swift tongue can be combated if we train ourselves to *be* still and listen to what others are telling us. I have never regretted hearing someone out - but have often regretted words I spoke before I put my brain in gear. Beloved, careless use of the tongue not only wounds, but it leaves scars that may never heal in others.

The best advise I can give you is the advise of God, Who said:

James 1:19-20 (KJV) "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: {20} For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

The Backbiting Tongue

Proverbs 25:23 (KJV) "The north wind driveth away rain: so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue."

Backbiting is closely related, Scripturally, to pride. In fact, both conditions come out of a inner

The purpose of your life is far greater than your own personal fulfillment, peace of mind, or even your happiness. It's far greater than your family, your career, or even your wildest dreams and ambitions. If you want to know why you were placed on this planet, you must begin with God. You were born BY his purpose and FOR his purpose. (in "The Purpose Driven Life")

desire to make oneself feel better while casting dispersion on others. In short, we backbite others because it makes *us feel better about ourselves*. If we see and point out a flaw in others, it makes our flaws seem less important.

It is important to remember that God does not like us to backbite others - to malign them behind their backs. We are to speak the truth in love to one another.

What does our Creator think about backbiting? Look at this list:

Romans 1:28-32 (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, {30} Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, {31} Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: {32} Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

Backbiting is listed as a sin of the *reprobate mind*, and is classified alongside of murder, atheism, pride, homosexuality, and lying. I have heard many preachers over the past few years enter the pulpit and preach against homosexuality - but I have heard few ever preach that homosexuality² and backbiting are equally sinful in God's eyes! This may offend you (it does me, for I myself

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have been guilty of backbiting without considering its ramifications), but as the Scripture says:

² the Greek astorgos (pronounced as² -tor-gos), see also verse 26, the subject of this text.

Romans 3:4 (KJV) "... let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."

We must avoid backbiting as surely as we avoid homosexuality and murder.

By the way - there is a difference between *backbiting* and *reporting sin to the pastor* in the Church of God. Nothing is served in the Church when its members look away from sin. Paul himself reported and condemned those who would not, once he approached them, repent of sin:

1 Timothy 1:20 (KJV) "Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme."

2 Timothy 2:17-18 (KJV) "And their word will

eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; { 18 } Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some."

Backbiting is defined as *talking about someone behind their backs*. The Christian, however, is commanded by Jesus Christ to (1) talk with an offender face to face, then (2) talk to an offender in the presence of two or more witnesses. Finally, if the person will not repent, (3) report the offender to the Church of God (Matthew 18:15-17). There is no error nor sin in these steps. We correct those in sin using these steps *out of a heart of love*,

James 5:19-20 (KJV) "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; { 20 } Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

and we approach these people *face to face*. God commends us for this, for correction of sin in a professing believer rescues them from a premature death due to Divine Discipline³. However, we are never called to *talk about one another behind our*

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backs - this is backbiting, and exceedingly sinful to God.

³ Does God discipline or punish Christians? Yes! There are three stages of Divine Discipline. There is the Warning Stage: James 5:9; Revelation 3:20; The Intensive Stage: Psalms 38:1-14; 2 Thessalonians 3:11; James 5:14-16; and finally the Dying Stage: 1 Corinthians 10; 11:27-32

Proverbs 18:8 (KJV) "The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly."

The Cursing Tongue

Some people, Christians included, have a nasty habit of using their tongue for cursing.

Psalms 109:17-18 (KJV) "As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. {18} As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones."

God does not condone, nor does He hold faultless a person who *curses* either *His name* or *speaks*

terrible unedifying words. You cannot justify using the "f" word, the "n" word, the "s" word, or any other word that classifies as *foul language* because it *isn't actually God's name*. I've heard this line of reasoning before, and Beloved, it doesn't wash with God!

Not only does sin hinder prayer; prayer hinders sin. The two are always opposed. The more careless we are about sin, the less we will pray. The more we pray, the less careless we will be about sin. Both sin and prayer are powerful forces. Which one is moving you? (Dr. Alvin Vander Griend)

Sins of the tongue - especially cursing, hinder our walk with Christ.

Ephesians 4:29-30 (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. {30} And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

"Corrupt communication" is anything that does NOT edify or build up others - and foul language certainly tears down, instead of building up. King
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David prayed:

Psalms 19:14 (KJV) "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."

As Christians we must be careful that what comes out of our mouth be *honorable* - not just to others, but to God. If you wouldn't say it in the Throneroom of God, you shouldn't say it anywhere else. We are exhorted in Scripture to be careful what we say:

Proverbs 8:6-8 (KJV) "Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things. {7} For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. {8} All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them."

But God *holds us accountable* for a wicked tongue. The writer of Ecclesiastes warns us that God hears our words:

Ecclesiastes 5:2 (KJV) "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore

let thy words be few."

If that's not enough, Jesus Christ our Savior gave a clear warning:

Matthew 12:36-37 (KJV) "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."

We WILL be judged for every idle word. For every use of words that destroy or tear down, that offend, that hurt. I have heard the uninformed say that certain words are merely "made up" and of no consequence - but God wants our speech to be sound, clean, not condemnable:

Titus 2:7-8 (KJV) "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing 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."

God loves His righteous ones, but will hold accountable every person who foolishly uses their
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tongue.

1 Peter 3:10-12 (KJV) "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: { 11 } Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. { 12 } For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

And finally, the Beloved writes:

James 3:9-13 (KJV) "Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. { 10 } Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. { 11 } Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? { 12 } Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh. { 13 } Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom."

James 1:26 (KJV) "If any man among you seem to be

religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

God has never condoned foul language, whether it invokes His name or not. As Christians we are called to be *clean fountains* that spread the Word of God to others. We are to be places of refreshing where unbelievers can come and, in drinking our presence, come to know Christ as Savior. If our language is no better than that of the unbeliever around us, how can we hope to win any to Christ? My prayer and God's demand is that we all - that is, all who call on the Name of Jesus - be clean in both lifestyle and in speech. If we are not sanctified or holy in our speech we harm the cause of God, and bring God's sure punishment on ourselves. God give us the strength to honor Him with our tongues, and so bring others into the House of God.

by His Hand and for His glory,

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Sermon:
Be Kind To One Another
God's Message To This Generation

1. Be Kind With Our Communication

Ephesians 4:29 (KJV) "Let no corrupt<1> communication<2> proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying<3>, that it may minister<4> grace<5> unto the hearers.

Many a church has been emptied by the improper use of the tongue. Many souls have been wounded because believers have failed to understand how critical it is that our tongues always be used graciously, edifying and uplifting one another.

There was a time in our history that we called "The Cold War". During this "war" no shots were fired, no coasts invaded, no people captured, no governments overthrown. During the Cold War both America and the USSR built weapons of mass destruction, terrible nuclear weapons that had the capability of destroying thousands of people. At one time the combined weaponry of both nations had the ability, if unleashed to its

fullest potential, to destroy all life on this planet several times over. We possess weapons that are terrible in their power. We continued the arms race, building more and more weapons, arming ourselves so that our enemy would never be greater in power than we are. Then, miracle of miracles, the great wall that separated East and West Germany was torn down. The USSR, once a superpower as fierce and terrible as the United States, fragmented into independent and, so it seems, democratic states. What happened? How did such a fiercely communist powerhouse become democratic? Did we unleash Armageddon on them, dropping weapons of mass destruction on them? No! The Spoken Word defeated communism, fragmented the Soviet Union, drove these people to a more democratic form of government.

Listen to this, my Beloved. What we speak has more power to destroy than any nuclear weapon. What we speak has immense power to build, if we season our speech with Grace. The Scripture says:

Colossians 4:6 (KJV) "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

Our speech, what we say about and to one another, has terrible power. The nuclear bomb has the power to kill a person so quickly that only his shadow would be left behind. This is terrible power. But our speech, what we say to one another, has the power to wound and scar a person in such a way that they die inside. They continue to live and function in this life, but they carry a hurt that lingers, even if it is unseen.

What causes corrupt communication in the Church? Sometimes it comes from carelessness ... a word spoken without thinking, a word allowed to slip without careful consideration. Sometimes corrupt communication is the output of a wounded person, retaliating for some offense, either real or imagined. Most often corrupt communication erupts because the speaker cannot see the bigger picture in the Plan of God.

There are two things that are real, Biblical truths that we always need to keep in our forethoughts as Christians. First, the enemy is Satan. The Bible clearly teaches that:

Ephesians 6:12 (KJV) "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Our battle, our strength, our anger must not be directed against flesh and blood. This is what the devil, that old slanderer, wants us to do. If he can make us think that the enemy is human, part of the Body, part of the church, then he has won a great battle. Keep this in mind, Beloved of God, that the enemy is Satan, the enemy is Satan, the enemy is Satan. Define the enemy. Look for the enemy. Draw together as family and refuse to be overwhelmed by the enemy. When our Lord Jesus told Peter that He would have to go to the Cross, to suffer and die for us, His church, Peter said:

Matthew 16:22 (KJV) "Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee."

What was Jesus' response? Our Lord told Peter:

Matthew 16:23 (KJV) "But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

The enemy is not flesh and blood, it is the devil. Satan tempted Peter, Peter took the temptation and

tried to talk Jesus out of dying for His Bride. Jesus looked through Peter and saw the source, Satan, and rebuked that old devil for rebuking the Messiah. Christ had to present Himself to the Cross for His Bride. Christ had to die for us, to redeem us so we can serve Him and promote His Will on this earth.

The second thing we need to keep in mind is that we are the Bride of Christ, the Church of the Living God. We are blood bought sheep. Our Bridegroom is Jesus Christ, Messiah, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. All of the redeemed are, together, the Bride of Christ. It is this Bride, the Church, that Jesus said:

Matthew 16:18 (KJV) "... upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Though the gates of hell shall not overcome the Bride of Christ, a carelessly misused tongue has often severely damaged that institution that Christ laid down His life for.

Application: Words have power, my friends, power to heal or power to kill. Because of this the Apostle warns us to avoid "corrupt communication", rotten or foul speaking to one

another. In particular, Precious Ones, remember to control your tongues when we speak to, around, and in the Bride of Christ. We desperately need the unity of the Body if we are going to do the work of the Great Commission on this earth.

Remember that we are a Body, a Bride, and that we must be attentive to our Bridegroom Jesus. Consider how terribly He suffered for us, His church. Consider our Precious Jesus. Beaten, hanging on terrible nails, struggling for breath as He bled out for us: what were His words? Did He curse those who hurt Him? Did He attack us for driving those nails in His flesh, for tearing His beard from His face, for beating and mocking Him, the Son of God? As soldiers gambled at the foot of the Cross, Jesus said:

Luke 23:34 (KJV) "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots."

To the thief that deserved death for breaking the Law, but who asked Christ to remember Him:

Luke 23:43 (KJV) "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in
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paradise."

To the grieving mother and friend who stood, horrified at what was happening to Jesus:

John 19:26-27 (KJV) "... he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! {27} Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother!..."

Remember Jesus and His example before you speak. Consider His graciousness in speech, even to those who tormented Him. None of us have ever suffered both physically and spiritually as our Savior suffered. As children of Grace, let us follow our Savior's example.

2. Disharmony and Unkindness Saddens Our God

Ephesians 4:30-31 (KJV) "And grieve<6> not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. {31} Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

<6> lupeo {pronounced loo-peh'-o}, Present Active Imperative + me {pronounced may}, = and stop grieving, making uneasy, causing sadness.

Is it possible to hurt God? Absolutely! How do we hurt God? By misusing our tongues. When a person realizes that he or she is a sinner, lost and undone, unable to reach Heaven or God's Presence in their own power; when a person realizes that he or she is on a one way road to eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire; when a person realizes that faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ - accepting that Jesus died for me, paid the penalty for me; then that person is saved by faith in Christ. At the moment you accepted Christ as Savior the Holy Spirit of God enters you, comes and literally lives inside of you. We become partners with God the Holy Spirit in all that we say and do. This is part of the wondrous package of salvation that our Lord Jesus Christ

promised us, for He said:

John 14:16-17 (KJV) "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; {17} Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

This is the big picture that we must always keep before us: the Spirit of God indwells every believer, and every believer is part of the great Bride of Christ.

If you are a Christian the Spirit of God indwells you. You may not be aware of His presence at all times, but He is there whether you sense Him or not. The world can never have the Spirit, but the Spirit of God dwells in you and is with you - and as you grow as believers, studying the good Word of God, seeking God's Will and purpose for your life in prayer, you will become more and more aware of the indwelling Spirit. This wonderful Partner who lives in each one of us who believe guides us as we walk through this life:

Romans 8:1 (KJV) "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

The Holy Spirit that indwells every believer is the seal or mark of our salvation. If the Spirit of God does not indwell you, Beloved of God, then you are not saved - for the two things go together in absolute and pure partnership. As the Apostle has said:

Romans 8:9-11 (KJV) "But ye are not in the flesh,

but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. {10} And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. {11} But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

Romans 8:9 (International Standard Version) "You, however, are not of the flesh but under the control of the Spirit, since God's Spirit lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him."

Application: As a Bible believing Christian I know that the Spirit of God lives inside of me. Everything I do, I do it with the full awareness of God's Gracious Spirit. When I use my tongue negatively; when I engage in evil speaking of others, the Spirit of God is grieved, shaken, hurt by my actions. Christ died for all men, and none of us deserved the great salvation that has been freely given to us. When we orient our minds to Grace; when we realize fully that we are saved though we do not deserve it, when we realize that misuse of our tongues against anyone

automatically involves the Spirit of God, then we will be more careful in our speech. We will put off or put away any speaking that hurts God the Holy Spirit Who indwells us. The world is full of negative things, nay sayers, destroyers, those who tear down one another without thought. The Church is greater than the world, for the Church is Christ's purchased possession. As the Scripture says:

Colossians 3:8 (KJV) "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth."

If we love Him, we will not harm Him by carelessly and hurtfully speaking about others. We will remember that each member of the Church has value. Every member is a priceless, blood bought soul that must be encouraged to grow into what God wants them to be. Each member is part of the Bride of Christ. Each member must be cherished as part of the Body. No one person can do the work that the Church must do. Our work, our Great Commission, demands that we work together as one Body, loving Christ and loving one another.

3. Kindness To One Another Promotes The Gospel of Christ

Ephesians 4:32 (KJV) "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

No greater reason can be given in the Scripture for wholesome, encouraging speech within the church. Every person who has accepted Jesus Christ as Savior automatically has something in common with his fellow believer - we have been forgiven. We are brothers and sisters, joined together in one great Body called The Church. We are, at the same time, in partnership with God Who indwells us, and with our fellow believers, our brothers and sisters in Christ.

We may not always agree with one another, but even our disagreement must be marked with graciousness. We are to be kind to one another. We are not in competition with one another, nor do we struggle to see who is the greatest in this church. As Christians together we are partners with one another and partners with God. The Apostle said that God's ideal for the church is not "one upmanship", but a life of submission and

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service to one another. Jesus Christ our Savior told us:

Matthew 5:43-48 (KJV) "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. {44} But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; {45} That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. {46} For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? {47} And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? {48} Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Love for the unlovable is the undeniable mark of a growing, healthy, mature Christian. If we are going to reach God's ideal for us, we must learn to throw out all of our hatred, all of our evil speaking, all of our desire for vengeance - and love as Christ loved. Speak graciously to those who are ungracious, do graciously to those who do harmfully. The old Quakers had a saying (and I paraphrase), "The only one that can truly harm me

is me". When we repay evil for evil we scar our own souls. When we allow hatred to find harbor in our hearts, we burden ourselves with that badness. When we forgive wrongs, speaking graciously toward all men, then we pattern our lives after Jesus Christ to the glory of God.

God says:

Ephesians 5:19-21 (KJV) "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; {21} Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

Not all of you may understand this principle of Christianity. Some of you may have become immersed in the world, so much so that you believe a proper response to anything offensive is to attack back. There are procedures that the church follows when a member walks away from God and becomes unruly. There are methods, Biblical methods, of enacting discipline if a member of the Body of Christ becomes destructive to those around him. Yet, Beloved of God, these methods of discipline - Biblical church

discipline - always seek one goal, that being the restoration of the fallen believer. We do not shoot the wounded, precious ones. We follow this pattern:

Ephesians 4:15-16 (KJV) "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."

God, for Christ's sake, forgave us. We did not earn nor deserve that forgiveness. Christ, Oh Boundless Love, lay down and died for us! Christ, Oh Sacred Head now Wounded, bled for us. We were all sinners, deserving of eternal torment, and Christ took that torment on us.

Application: You are in one of two states today: You are either a Christian, a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus our Savior, or you are an unsaved, unbelieving sinner. A sinner? Yes, a sinner, and no other title better describes the lost. Our God is eternal, our Creator without beginning or end. If you have ever lied, you have violated His ninth commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false

witness". If you have ever cursed His name, you have broken His third commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of God in vain". If you have been full of pride, covetous, envious, you have broken His tenth commandment, "Thou shalt not covet". In short, if you have not accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, you have committed sin in God's sight - and God never forgets an unforgiven offense. The church is not made up of sinless, perfect people ... the church is made up of forgiven sinners. People who are forever forgiven, because "God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you". If you do not know Jesus Christ, if you have not accepted Him to be your Savior, today is a perfect day to lay down your life. Submit yourself to God in Jesus' name. Believe that He died for you. Share in that boundless love that every believer, every Christian shares in. Come, accept Christ as Savior.

2 Corinthians 6:1-2 (International Standard Version)
(1) Since, then, we are working with God, we plead with you not to accept God's grace in vain. (2) For he says, "At the right time I heard you, and on a day of salvation I helped you." Listen, now is really the "right time"! Now is the "day of salvation"!

2 Corinthians 6:1-2 (KJV) "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. {2} (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)"

Romans 10:12-13 (KJV) "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. {13} For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

God Bless you all.

In the name of Jesus Christ:

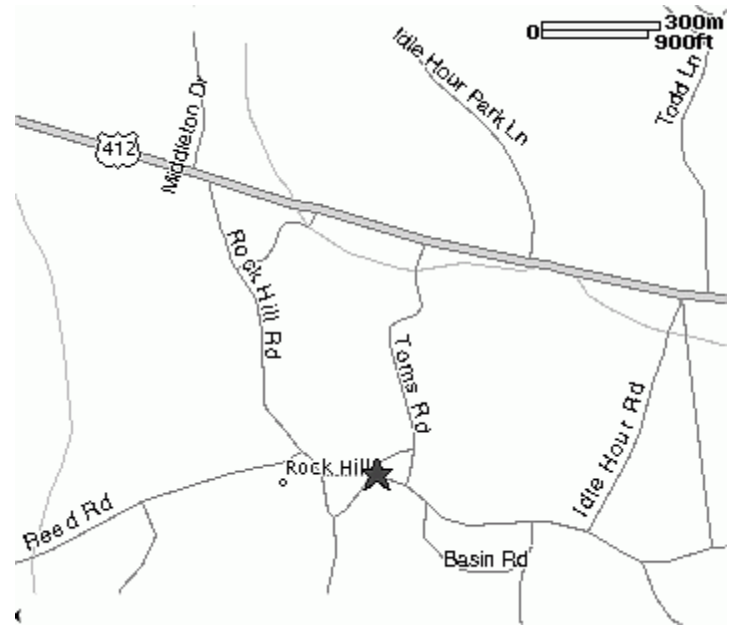
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