

Sunday July 17th, 2016
Life, Love, and the Pursuit of Communication

Ps 19:14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.

When John first asked that I speak today I felt like I had a decent idea of how the message was going to go. Metaphorically speaking I set off on a quick day trip to Daytona Beach and somehow ended up in the middle of nowhere Ohio. This was tough. Standing in front of you today is arguably one of the hardest feats I have had to accomplish in a very long time. It's not that I am a terrible writer, nor am I necessarily a terrible speaker, but when you decide to write a message on communication, you should go ahead and plan for the worst. A lot of flesh was stripped away these past two weeks and the wounds are still fresh. All I can say is that those of you planning on doing this in the future, be prepared to learn from the process.

My wife pointed out to me last week that the creation of this message is really no different than our journey to the Judgment Seat of Christ. There are days when you feel like you are going in the right direction, and the next thing you know your map is upside down. It is important to realize even though you may be sitting in a proverbial ditch, you do not give up the fight, you keep moving forward. We as believers go through continual growth. We are sharpened, refined, and sometimes have our feet stuck to the fire to create an end result that is acceptable in the eyes of the Lord.

God is not done with me yet, we all know that. I still have a ways to go, but hopefully what He has taught me with regards to communication and our interactions with each other will be as much a benefit to you, as it has been to me.

Pr 3:11 My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor detest His correction. 12 For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights. 13 ¶ Happy is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding; 14 For her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, And her gain than fine gold.

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Here is something to consider, the company that I work for spent a considerable amount of money to collect the data I am about to present. When faced with how people interact with each other in the workplace, they came up with the following findings:

When we communicate with someone face to face, 7% of what is relayed is what comes out of our mouths, 38% of our message is through our tone of voice, and 55% of what we are attempting to state is spoken through our body language.

Now if I were to call you on the phone, 16% of what I need to say is relayed via words, and a staggering 84% of my message is relayed through my tone. How much body language can we demonstrate over the phone? None.

And finally, here we are in 2016. How do we communicate in this day and age? Text message. Per the study that cost a lot of money from the company that will remain nameless, 100% of our message is relayed through words when we email, or to apply to ourselves here, text message. Our tone and body language cannot be factored into this.

It is important to clarify that the level of communication I am referring to is only applicable to those operating in the world system. These statistics have nothing to do with our interaction with the Lord. Thankfully for us, nothing is lost in translation when it comes to our intent when we communicate with Him - Joh 16:13 *"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*

1Co 2:14 *But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

We, as believers, in pursuit of the Kingdom are to respond to each other as scriptures command as the Holy Spirit teaches - not as the world would see it. The Word of God takes precedence above everything else. When we speak to each other we should only do so according to the scripture.

Eph 4:25 *Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.*

Our communication with God is not hindered, so long as we have aligned ourselves with scripture and properly dealt with our sin.

1Pe 3:8 ¶ Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. 11 Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil."

Our interaction with each other will not be problematic if we are walking in the spirit and remaining faithfully obedient to the Word. So in essence you can throw out any and all statistics and not allow outside influences to impact the way you and I as like-minded believers communicate – as always it is the Word that is to govern what comes out of our mouths.

1 Cor 3:19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.

If our interactions with each other are impacted by how a message is delivered, then we should look to ourselves first to see if we are responding in the flesh or the Spirit. Miscommunication is something we should be exempt from if we are being obedient to the scriptures, and naturally the scripture provides guidance on how we handle every given situation.

Matt 18:15 "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' ¹⁷ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

So don't be like the IRS. We have enough problems in the world!

If we are interacting with each other with the scripture in the forefront of our mind, we should see our interactions replicate that which we have seen before in the Word.

Heb 12:1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

Heb 10:24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of

some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

We see in Hebrews that we are to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. With that said we must make the act of assembling together an intentional act that goes beyond Sunday morning and Bible Study. From a scriptural perspective, we are not required to “hang out” just for the sake of doing so, but the best way for us to ‘stir up’ one another to love and good works and encourage one another, because the Day is approaching, would be spending time together with those who are like-minded. This creates cause and effect as we can see here from Acts Chapter 2 –

Ac 2:46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

As much as I dread the 45 minute drive, I genuinely enjoy the time I am able to spend fishing with Dave on a Saturday morning. Unfortunately I currently neglect my fishing time with Dave due to a side business that has consumed much of my free time. I can’t help but to ask myself even today if the extra money I am making is more beneficial than the encouragement and exhortation that is no longer happening between Dave and I on Saturdays? The assembling of one another can happen in many ways. Corporately we may meet and have a cookout, or two of us may get together for breakfast. It does not matter how it is done, do it. If you enjoy knitting, I guarantee you someone else in this room would love to spend time knitting with you. We all need to prioritize this time to spend together.

Php 2:1 Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Eph 4:16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

We are knit together by a common thread. I am running the same race that you run, and the salvation of our souls at the Judgment seat of Christ is what we both have to gain. Are we not mindful of our hand when it aches? Do we ignore a skint knee? Do not ignore this obligation to fellowship with like-minded believers. You and I may not appear to be compatible in the flesh, but we are compatible through our common goal in Christ.

Eph 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ...19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

Gal 3:29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

It is also highly important to remember that this does not just exist within these four walls. Cornerstone as a whole is a church of believers across the entire world. For those of us fortunate enough to reside in Jacksonville, it is our responsibility to consider how we continue to provide encouragement and edification to those who are part of our fellowship in remote locations. To those of you listening to this message from elsewhere, let us know what we can do to help you. Hang in there, you are not running this race alone, we are here for you.

As we engage with one another, do not forget though that we are accountable for every idle word.

Matt 12:33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. ³⁴ Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. ³⁶ But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. ³⁷ For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Our mouths are the pathway to our hearts.

We see in James 1:26 that we must bridle our own tongue as to not deceive our heart. ²⁶ *If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.*

This makes for an interesting two way street. We see in Matthew that the abundance of our heart produces that which comes out of our mouth, but in James we see that if we do not control our tongue, we end up deceiving our own heart. The ability to control our tongue goes back to being able to control our flesh. As my mother used to say, if you do not have anything nice to say, you do not say anything at all.

Pr 17:27 He who has knowledge spares his words, And a man of understanding is of a calm spirit. ²⁸ Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; When he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive.

Jas 1:19 ¶ So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

If we do not keep our tongue in check, we can allow it to dismantle that which we have worked to achieve. If we are walking in the flesh, we will allow our tongue to have free reign.

Jas 3:3 Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. ⁴ Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. ⁵ Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things.

Ps 32:9 Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, Whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check.

James goes as far as to call the tongue an 'unruly evil, full of deadly poison.' In fact the commentary provided on the tongue in general is rather scathing.

Jas 3:5b See how great a forest a little fire kindles! ⁶ And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. ⁷ For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. ⁸ But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

We must be mindful of that which comes out of our mouth. It is better that we remain silent, than cause harm with our words. We must not allow our tongue to deceive our heart. We must not allow our own words to be our demise. To tie into last week's message, be on the alert, make no provision for the flesh, or the devil.

Ro 13:11 *And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.* 12 *The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.* 13 *Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.* 14 *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.*

Remember who has the most to gain from an unruly tongue controlled by the flesh. Even from the beginning, it was Satan's goal to cause division and pervert that which God had intended. Satan uses the most cunning of the beasts to deceive Eve, which in turn causes Eve to disobey that which God had commanded.

Gen 3:1-6 *1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"* 2 *And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"* 4 *Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."* 6 *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.*

As Jake masterfully pointed out last week, it is not each other that we fight against.

Eph 6:12 *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

And as we see in John 8:44b *He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*

With a few simple words Satan deceived Eve causing her to fall; do you not think he can do the same to us? We have seen it before, right here in front of our very eyes! Do not give credence to his deception. If something is not right then call it out and deal with it according to God's Word. Most importantly though we must be careful because there is a fine line we have to toe when it comes to scripture. Sometimes there are certain things we may not fully

understand, or agree with at the time. But if we are unsure on these items, we need to take them to the Lord, ask Him for understanding - Jas 1:5 *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*

It may be a month, it may be a year, but if we are diligent and faithful the Lord will reveal the truth to us. That doesn't mean that we allow incorrect teaching to exist. We all have a firm responsibility to not allow false teaching into our household. We as a whole body must be on constant alert.

Gal 5:9 *A little leaven leavens the whole lump*

I would like to leave you with a few key points:

- Satan is the father of lies. Even as we see in the Matthew 13 parables that if given the opportunity he will take from us that which we were given for understanding.

Matt 13:19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart.

- Communication should not happen in the flesh. Remain faithfully obedient to the scriptures and respond to one another in a scriptural way.
- Eph 5:19 *speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,21 ¶ submitting to one another in the fear of God.*
- Encourage each other daily. We may not have physical interaction on a daily basis, but we are all capable of picking up a phone and calling one another. Hopefully those phone calls result in plans to spend time together in the near future!
- Keep our tongue in check. Be intentional with our words because out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Sometimes it is better to remain silent and then deal with our heart issue.

Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

As I stated in the beginning of the message, I truthfully struggled more than I ever could have imagined getting to this point. I have more pages of edited material than I have of actual message. I was not able to clearly communicate the message I intended to share with you all and often felt as if I were underwater screaming at the top of my lungs, only for the end result to sound inaudible, but thankfully I didn't drown and the Lord has given me a voice to speak His Word. Continue to pray for me. I may be done with today's message, but I am not yet done learning this truth. Above all, remain steadfast in your race of the faith. The Kingdom is at hand and at this point it is ours to lose.

Eph 5:15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,21 ¶ submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Ro 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

Col 4:6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.