

40 Days of Love - Day 15

One of my favorite movies is the classic Paul Newman film, Cool Hand Luke. There is a scene in the movie that is called The Captain's Speech. The famous words have been repeated many times; "What we've got here is failure to communicate". These eight words were not meant to bring comfort or healing. They were used to punish and demean.

Proverbs 12:18, "Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing". To be speakers of the truth, we must use wise words to communicate to others that they are loved by our Heavenly Father and by us. Each of us as believers in Jesus has been forgiven of reckless words and deeds and has been given the ministry of reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:20 tells us that we are ambassadors for Christ. God uses us to make His appeal of love known to all mankind. As His ambassador, I don't want to have "a failure to communicate". I am pledging to put down my electronic devices and other distractions and observe more closely the needs of those that God puts in my path. By building new relationships based on Godly wisdom, I can speak words of truth into their lives and offer the hope and reconciliation that only comes through Christ our Lord. I promise to encourage each one of you to communicate the Wonderful Words of Life to others. We can pray for one another as we serve as ambassadors for our wonderful Savior.

See you Sunday,

Senior Associate Pastor, Alan Davis

40 Days of Love - Day 16

“Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’, or your ‘No’, ‘No’; anything beyond this will come from the evil one.” Matthew 5:37

The question to consider: Is the way I’m using my words eroding trust or building trust?

In a courtroom when a witness is called to the witness stand to give testimony about what they have seen or know about the case in question, the truth is critical to solving the case. The witness is asked to place their hand on a Bible and repeat the following words, “Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?”

What would happen if lying were the norm in our everyday life? Spouses would not be able to trust one another. Leaders would not be credible. The news would be meaningless. Everything depends on honesty. That’s why it’s critical to “tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.”

We can’t build relationships if we mistrust what our friends say. We won’t follow leaders if we mistrust what they say. We won’t make good decisions if we doubt the accuracy of the information we receive.

Without truth, we spend our time second guessing people’s intentions, trying to separate the truth from a lie. The end result is that trust is eroded in the relationship. We should be building trust in every relationship not the opposite.

So simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’, or your ‘No’ be ‘No’. Speak the truth in all things!!!

See you Sunday,

Executive Pastor, Dave Berryhill

40 Days of Love - Day 17

Verse To Remember: “Change your hearts and lives because the kingdom of heaven is near.” Matthew 4:17.

Disclaimer: If you read Day 17 in the book, *The Relationship Principles of Jesus*, and I hope you did, you’ll notice that Matthew 4:17 is listed as the ‘Verse To Remember’; however, for today’s devotional thought, I am choosing to focus on Matthew 12:34, “Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks”.

This verse is most often taken in the negative sense, i.e. if you have evil in your heart, you will speak evil words, which is most definitely true. It can also be said, if you have love in your heart, you will speak words of love, right? Verse 35 explains, “A good man brings good things out of the good stored up on him...”. Then it stands to reason, if you and I want to speak loving words, kind words, encouraging words, words that are “apples of gold on settings of silver” (Proverbs 25:11), we must keep the focus on the heart! The mouth and the heart are directly connected, but no one knows what’s in our heart until we open our mouth. The wisest man who ever lived, King Solomon, who gave divinely inspired advice to his sons, said this, “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it”. Wow! What an imperative! The most important thing you can do is **Guard Your Heart**.

Volumes of books have been written to give us advice on how to control our words, but only God’s Word tells us how to not only guard our hearts but how to gain a new heart. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old is gone, the new is here” (NIV). Hallelujah, that includes a brand-new heart!

Our great challenge is to **Guard Our Hearts** so they stay in like-new condition full of the Love of Christ. May our hearts be so full of Jesus that His love flows freely out of our mouths.

One more verse to remember, “May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight oh Lord, my strength and my redeemer” Psalms 19:14.

I hope you, like me, can sense God’s love more freely and more evidently every time we gather. I look forward to hearing from our Pastor’s heart this Sunday!

See you Sunday,

Minister of Prayer & Recreation, Buddy Reeves

40 Days of Love - Day 18

What is honesty and why is it so important? What's wrong with a little white lie? The Bible actually has a lot to say about honesty, as God has called all of his followers to be honest people. Even little white lies to protect someone's feelings can compromise our faith.

I remember as a little girl my parents saying to me, "Mary, you always tell the truth every single time!" I also remember them saying that my punishment would be less if I chose to tell the truth, thus encouraging me to tell the truth. As parents, we have reiterated those same words to our children and now our grandchildren. I have found myself on many occasions wanting to compromise this principle. There have been times along the way that I have made the choice of the little white lie to hold back the truth in love to avoid hurting someone's feelings. It is easier to be nice than honest. But what does the Bible say about this?

In our verse today, the Bible says to speak the truth in love. It goes on to say in Ephesians 4:29, "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth but only what is helpful in building others up according to their needs." If we follow these commands as we speak the truth in love, then God will use our words to build trust and acceptance in our relationships. There will be times we will be rejected, but if the words out of our mouth are words from God, then God will use them, and they can potentially produce change in our lives as well as the lives of others.

See you Sunday,

Minister of Preschool, Mary Wishon

40 Days of Love - Day 19

The kids at FBCPS attend Treehouse Worship the first three Sundays of each month. Treehouse Worship is a fantastic environment where our kids learn about, encounter, and engage with God in an age appropriate environment. Every fourth Sunday however, our children join their parents in our regular services. On those fourth Sundays, we schedule baptism so that our kids are in attendance when it occurs. Over the course of the last year in my worship planning, I've added the practice of our church corporately praying the Lord's Prayer at the conclusion of the baptism of our new believers. Our kids need to learn to pray corporately. They need to learn to join their hearts with other believers and pray the prayer that Christians have prayed in generations before them.

Think about it.

The Apostle Paul prayed this prayer. Peter (along with all the other disciples) prayed this prayer. Martin Luther (as well as Martin Luther King Jr.) prayed this prayer. J.S. Bach prayed this prayer. Charles and John Wesley prayed this prayer. C.S. Lewis prayed this prayer. John Calvin prayed this prayer. Jonathan Edwards prayed this prayer. Charles Spurgeon prayed this prayer. Lottie Moon prayed this prayer. Desmond Tutu prays this prayer. Charles Stanley (and his son Andy) pray this prayer. Johnny Cash prayed this prayer. Bill Gaither prays this prayer. Bono prays this prayer. Chance the Rapper prays this prayer. Rick Warren prays this prayer. Billy Graham prayed this prayer.

We need to pray the words that the church has prayed since Jesus himself spoke those words. We need to regularly return to the words of Jesus. That doesn't mean we simply memorize them and recite them without thinking. We need to actively, intentionally pray these words. We need to return to these words and join with other believers across denominational lines, and across political borders, and across age demographics, and we need to pray. As the global Church of Jesus, the bride of Christ, we need to collectively cry out to God for His will to be done, for forgiveness of our sins, and for deliverance from evil. The best way to improve your prayer life is to pray. So stop reading ... and pray.

'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one'' (Matthew 6:9-13).

See you Sunday,

Minister of Contemporary Worship and Arts, Joel Lanier