

Let The Bible Speak Series

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If We Only Knew

I want to read this morning from 1Corinthians 2:7-8 where Paul writes "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." The mystery to which Paul refers dominates the sixty-six books of the bible. God announced it in Eden where Satan's part in it was revealed. It was progressively unfolded verbally, in the OT prophecies, and was systematically prefigured in the types and shadows of the Mosaic dispensation. It was explicitly heralded in the lives of great typical men of the old covenant, and came to a crisis at the cross of Christ, where its great essentials were revealed. One of the essential elements of the mystery is that of the incarnation of God in Christ, this being the precise element that was unknown to the rulers of this world. In Mt. 21:38, the Jewish leaders, under the figure of a wicked husbandman, said, "this is the heir; come, let us kill him, and take his inheritance." What they did not know was that the "fullness of the Godhead" dwelt in him bodily (Col. 2:9). Acts 3:17 "And now brethren I know that through ignorance you did it, as did also your rulers. Acts 13:27 "For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him." Luke 23:34 "...Father forgive them, for they know not what they do..." These people certainly knew what they were doing. They had cried for his blood. They were obviously engaged in a murder. They were not aware of the fact that they were fulfilling prophecies or that they were killing Him in whom the Godhead dwelt. Had they fully understood what they were doing, Paul declared, "they never would have done it." These Jews, children of God, God's covenant people, should have known better. Jesus came to and through them, yet when he arrived they missed not only him but His message as well. We need to be careful, lest we do the same thing. There is always the danger of overlooking lessons of which we need to be aware, or mistakes that need to be corrected. We often do things without grasping the far reaching consequences of our behavior. If we only knew where it would lead or end, or who it would affect and what it would do to them, we would never act as we do.

If We Only Knew The Consequences of Sin, We Would Be More Careful.

People lie, steal, commit immorality etc. They know what they have done. But many never really take into account the end result of their actions. Today sin is down played, justified, glorified, painted in bright colors, splashed with happiness, etc. Paul wrote: "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." 1Tim.1:13 He violently persecuted the church--- all the while thinking he was doing the right thing. If we can see Paul's situation, we need to look at self. Today, if we really comprehended what we are doing when we sin, what we do to God, Christ and others, we would never do it. Romans 6:23 "...the wages of sin

is death..." Sin has consequences. People often say "It's my body, my business, my life..." If we could only know the high cost of fornication, (the girl who could not go to college because of a baby) alcohol (the teen-ager who killed three people in an accident) lying and cheating (the man convicted of false tax-information, sentenced to prison) perhaps we would be more careful with our words and actions. If we only knew how many Mothers and Fathers have been crushed and dismayed because of their children's actions. If couples only knew the horrible pain they inflict on their children when they get a divorce. They wouldn't go that far. Numbers 32:23 "If ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against God; and be sure your sin will find you out." (The specific sin here was if they failed to cross Jordan and help the other tribes conquer the land) The idea was that sin had consequences. Be Sure (no doubt about it) YOUR sin will find YOU out i.e. your sin will not go unpunished. (We often think of others, but not self) Our sins find us out in a number of ways:

a. One's sins will find him out in his own conscience.

The sin of Judas found him out in his own conscience. After "selling" the Lord he was remorseful, he regretted what he had done. He brought the blood-money and said "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood." He later hanged himself. A man's conscience is in a deplorable condition if it does not condemn him when he does wrong. It is "seared" or "past feeling." Sometimes people say "If I had only known how bitter the consequences, I never would have done it."

b. A man's sins will find him out in his cowardice.

Prov. 28:1 "The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion." Adam and Eve "hid themselves" they were afraid, because they had sinned. Never before afraid, but now cowards in the presence of God.

c. One's sins will find him out in his defeats.

Why was it Reuben could not enjoy the rights and blessings of the firstborn; the right of primogeniture? In the family of Jacob the kingdom went to Judah; the prophetic office to Levi; and the double portion to Joseph. Why didn't Reuben obtain them? He was firstborn. Answer: because of his sin. Why was it Moses didn't lead Israel across Jordan into Canaan? Because of sin. Why was it Israel was defeated at Ai? Because there was sin in the camp.

d. Our sins may find us out in the conduct of our own children.

Jacob lied to aged and blind father Isaac---later on his heart was set on Joseph, son of his old age. His ten boys brought blood-sprinkled garment and said "here it is." "We found it out in the field." They lied to him as he had to his father. David sinned and even though the prophet told him his sin was forgiven he also told him "the sword will not depart from your house." The little son born to David and Bathsheba died. When they looked down on the face of that innocent little one they knew he had died because of their sin.

Wasn't long until his son Amnon ravished his daughter Tamar and in turn was slain by Absalom. Later Absalom rose up in rebellion against David. No sadder picture than David fleeing. His feet bare, his head covered, his heart broken, his eyes weeping, fleeing from his own son, Absalom. He had rebelled against God and now his son rebelled against him. Then when he came to Bahurim (bi yhoo rim) old Shimei (Shem e i) cursed

and threw rocks "be gone thou man of blood." One of David's men asked if he might go over and take his head off. David said "let him alone, let him curse, for Jehovah hath bidden him." 2Sam.16:9-13 He realized he was reaping what he had sown. If we only knew, we would never sow as we sometimes do. Gal. 6:7-8 "Be not deceived..."

II. If We Only Knew The Harm and Hurt Caused By The Misuse of The Tongue, We Would Take Greater Care in What We Say.

Sins of the tongue seem to be the common malady of mankind. James 3:2 If any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also."v. 8 "the tongue no man can tame." A graphic Bible description of the evil man's foul mouth is found in Psa. 10:7 "His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression: under his tongue is mischief and iniquity." A person's speech reveals the condition of his heart. Mt. 12:34 "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Many people have ruined their reputation and effectiveness by being careless with their words. Since our words tell so much about us, whether bad or good, we ought to choose them carefully. Prov. 25:11 "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a network of silver." Col. 4:6 "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one." If we only knew the result of sharp, cutting, often insulting remarks, we would be more careful with what we say.

a. Insulting speech.

There are several words that are used in the Greek NT to describe speech that is derogatory of others. One of these is blasphemia i.e. to blaspheme, evil speaking, railing, and revile. Such evil speaking or blasphemy is often directed against mankind. While some would never dream of blaspheming God, they think nothing of railing at people. We are told, however, "speak evil of no man" Titus 3:2 Condemned people are described by Peter thusly "...they are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignities (glorious ones) whereas angels though greater in might and power, bring not a railing judgment against them before the Lord. But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand and will utterly perish in their own corruption." 2Peter 2:10-12. There is an even stronger word used in the scripture, translated "reviling" Of Jesus it was said "when he was reviled he reviled not again." 1Peter 2:23 i.e. he did "not speak evil of." Christ is our example. We are to walk in his steps. Hence, Peter points out in 1Peter 3:8-9 Finally, be ye all like-minded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humble minded: not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing." The amount of church trouble, and misunderstanding among brethren could be greatly reduced if we all were more careful about what we said, and the way we say it.

b. Whispering, Backbiting, and Gossip

Blasphemy, cursing, and faultfinding are direct forms of abusive speech. Perhaps an even more insidious form is that which is done behind the scenes. Whisperers and backbiters are both denounced in 2Cor. 12:20. Whisperers are gossipers who secretly attack others. Backbiters seem to be those who are simply more open and loud-mouthed about their remarks as they go about slandering and defaming. Peter tells us to put such speech or

“evil speaking” away. Paul declared both whisperers and backbiters “worthy of death” Romans 1:29-30 One of the greatest evils in every age is the tendency to find a malicious delight in defaming the character of people by repeating, either secretly or openly, evil reports about others. James said “speak not one against another, brethren” James 4:11. Lev. 19:16 “Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people.” Psa. 101:5 “Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him will I destroy.” God only knows how many marriages have been destroyed by the tongue, how many churches have suffered heartache and trouble and even division, how many friendships have been ended, how many feelings wounded, how many Christians discouraged, by foolish and careless language. Sign which read: You are the master of the unspoken word. But once it leaves your lips, you are its slave.” “Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few” Eccl. 5:2 A sobering passage from the lips of Jesus reads “And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy works thou shalt be condemned. Mt. 12:36-37

III. If We Only Knew How Brief Our Life Could be, We Would be More Diligent in Our Service To God and Others.

“As the life of a flower, as a breath or a sigh, so the years that we live as a dream hasten by True today we are here, but tomorrow may see just a grave in the vale and a memory of me” Thousands who left this world yesterday, would have made things right had they known that was their last day. We all have a duty to God. If unsaved, we are responsible for obedience to the commands of truth. “If ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart...” “Now is the accepted time, today is the day of salvation.” If we are Christians, we have a duty not only to God but to others as well. The Lost--Mk.16:15-16 This could be our last opportunity to reach them. “You met me day by day and knew I was astray, yet you never mentioned Him to me.” The Sick-- Mt.25 “I was hungry...” May never be able again to visit or help. The Weak--Romans 14:1 “Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye but not to disputes over his opinions.” We must encourage, and strengthen while we can. Tomorrow may never come, Tomorrow may be too late.