

Communication:

Recap:

Ephesians 4:29 ESV

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Paul has been stepping us through the implications and ramifications of a life that has been touched and transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. He is talking about both of these things happening.

You see there is a difference.

Many lives have been touched by the gospel
Many people have been impacted by the gospel, by the preaching and work of the church. A lesser number have been transformed.

But there is a difference between a life **touched** and a life **transformed**.

To be **touched** means to be affected emotionally.

It means to show signs of pity.

To be touched means to be slightly marked or modified by something.

To be **transformed** means something entirely different

To be transformed means to undergo complete change

For something or someone to be completely and comprehensively altered.

Paul is not talking about a life touched by the gospel.

He is talking about someone who has been totally transformed by the gospel.

Coming to Christ affects every part of you:

Paul is talking to this early church, these new Christians about the transformation that has been one for them through Jesus Christ that they now have a responsibility to implement.

He says this transformation is complete;
He has been going through the different aspects of our lives and how they are affected by the Holy Ghost and our salvation.

It must affect every part of you
It must affect the quality of your relationship
It must effect how you conduct yourself in your intimate relationship
It must affect your work ethic.

And now he comes on and says....it must effect how you communicate with each other.

Ephesians 4:29 ESV

(29) Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Our communication with each other should be affected by our conversion.

Have a look at the progress that Paul outlines of this transformational effect that the gospel has in our lives.

He starts off by telling us to but away falsehood, then to speak the truth.

Don't let the sun go down on your anger....speak to each other and resolve the differences of your heart

All of these exhortations are around the aspects of our interpersonal communications.

Introduction - The importance of speech:

This transformation of our soul, this being born again in our spirit has to affect every area of your life.

Now this issue of language.

This affect of salvation on our words and communication is not only highlighted by Paul,

Our Lord himself said a similar thing (Luke 6:45):

“For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”

What is in you will come out of you.

You can't hide it.

Who you are should change how you speak.

If your heart has truly changed, then your mouth should follow suit.

Now this is something that we must actively do.

It is not something that passively happens.

It is not something that comes easily, but it is something we should actively pursue.

James, said the same thing.

James 3:5-6 ESV

So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.

James here is saying that as Christians you have got to realize the vital importance of guarding the tongue and the lips.

What havoc, he says, occurs in the lives of people by the misuse of the tongue! It is something that can kindle a flame and a fire that is terribly destructive.

How this little organ, this little rudder, this little bridle can turn the course of an entire life for good and for God or for destruction and evil purposes.

Think on this....I know in my own life my biggest regrets, the things that I wish I could change the most are not so much things I have done, but things I have said and things that have been said to me.

Our economy took a hit these last 12 months...no doubt about that.

But I am firmly convinced that the media and political pundits who prophesied doom and gloom got exactly what they wanted.

They devalued the economy.
They devalued the stock market.
They devalued the dollar, by what they said.

Church, our intimate relationships should be like fine wine, they should increase in value over time.

If you stand around a critique your husband, your wife, your kids, your pastors, your boss, your friends;
If you speak ugly words, hurtful words, that rip down and don't build up-
Then you will end up with what you are going for.
You will devalue them.
You will no longer see them as important,
Beautiful
Special
Valuable

Every word we say counts:

Now in our intimate communication it is not the volume of the words,
It is the nature of the words.
We are all slow to realize the importance of speech.
We talk so freely, so glibly, so loosely;

And we don't understand the fact that heaven hears everyone of these words and according to scripture we are accountable for them.

And yet, says our Lord,

Matthew 12:36-37 ESV

I tell you, on the Day of Judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Jesus here is saying that every careless, or the NKJV translates it, every idle word we will give account for.

That is every not working word.
Every barren word.
Every word that is lazy and not performing.
Every thoughtless or unprofitable word.
All the false and injurious words will condemn us.

John Wesley when commenting on this verse put it like this....

*Ye may perhaps think, God does not so much regard your words.
But I say to you-That not for blasphemous and profane words only, but for every idle word which men shall speak-For want of seriousness or caution; for every discourse which is not conducive to the glory of God, they shall give account in the day of judgment.*

Can I also suggest that this includes what you put on FB, My Space and Twitter?

These are your words.
These thoughtless jabs and jibs.
These needless insults and accusations.

I had a pastor friend recently contact me distressed because of what people we saying about him and his wife on FB. Do you think because you type it and don't speak it, that it doesn't count as murmuring or gossip?

What, are you insane?! In fact I would suggest that this is the WORST sort of idle talk.

John Calvin in his commentary said of this verse:

An idle word means one that is useless, or that yields no edification or advantage.

Many look upon this as too severe; but if we consider the purpose for which our tongues were made, we will acknowledge, that those men are justly held guilty who unthinkingly devote them to trifling fooleries, and prostitute them to such a purpose.

Our tongues were made to praise God.
Our mouths were made to give Him worship.
To steward this earth.
To order His creation.

Now, since NONE of us are so cautious in our speech-
Since none of us have this level of self control-
Since all of us have made mistakes with the things that we have said,
the tone that we have said them,
the place that they where said,
the content of what we said....

We have all made mistakes.....

We made them last week
Last year
Last night....

Have I covered it all??

We need not be condemned or judged by this...let's just stick with convicted.
We must be aware be of how seriously Jesus takes the things we say.

We must ask forgiveness, and commit ourselves to change.
That is what I believe Paul is trying to say.

Think about it, no man in early church history stood more judged by these words of Christ than Paul.

He was a Jewish debater, a Pharisee.

They reviled in standing around engaging in vain and useless conversation aimed at disproving the claims of Christ...that was the context that Christ was speaking too, the Pharisee and religious people of His day.

That acted all godly, yet their mouths were full of poison and accusation against the Son of God.

They would praise themselves, yet deride others.

So what are we to do?

What is Paul telling us?

How is he suggesting we live?

How do we deal and cope with this very real aspect of our life?

Ephesians 4:29 ESV

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths

This is not about repression.

Well first of all Paul is not talking about repressing your emotions.

We are NOT talking about being able to put on a show at church or around your Christian friends.

We are not talking about being fake, pretending like we have control of our tongue...that is exactly the sorts of issue Paul has just finished trying to address.

What we have been discussing for the last 4 weeks is a transformation that changes the way you see yourself and others to such a degree that it affect the very core of who you are.

To the degree that it affects how you interact and communicate with those around you.

So Paul is talking about a lasting change, a deep and very personal change...this is how I see it.

Paul starts with a negative and then moves onto the positive.

He starts by saying,

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths

Then he moves on to the positive, he explains how we should change.

“But only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion”

Then he applies it to our life and the impact it should have on others

“That it may give grace to those who hear”

Let's paraphrase this verse:

You Ephesians,

You were once pagans and you were typically pagan in your conversation and your speech.

But now, he says, you are new men, you have put off the old man, you have put on the new man, and this change of heart, this spiritual experience, it needs to be seen plainly in what you talk about and how you talk about it and how you talk to others.

So let's look at this verse in the same manner.

Let's look at it in the order Paul did.

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths

Ephesians 4:29 ESV

“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths”

Corrupting : from the Greek Word {sap-ros' }

Meaning:

Of poor quality

Unfit, not worthy of something or someone

To make something not longer fit for use

Worn out.

Paul is talking about the fact that we should be stopping a communication style that is no longer fit or worthy of these new Ephesians Christians

A communication style that they enjoyed when they didn't know Christ and know they should change because they are not in Christ.

So what 'corrupting talk' could he have been thinking about when he wrote this?

Well he is writing to new Christians, so it is logical to think that he is trying to contrast who there WHERE to who they NOW are.

I think the easiest thing for us to do is simply think about what we were like before we were saved.

- We were selfish in how we talked
- We talked before we thought
- We were not sensitive or delicate in what we said or where we said it
- We were lose in our communication
- We were hurtful in what we said and how we said it

So let's look at these areas as a staring point:

1. We were selfish in our communication

Have you ever had one of those occasions where you are sitting at a dinner table or in a group of people...and there is that one person....and they don't seem to breath...everything is about them, what they do who they are?

And it doesn't matter who else is in the room.
You could be sitting with Albert Einstein, Neil Armstrong and Genghis Khan....but they are absolutely oblivious to the rest of the world.

I took an Australian friend some months back to a BBQ with some Texas mate, and I have to tell you I was embarrassed.
The guy was a preacher, so obviously he thought that if there are more than 2 people in the room he has to preach and try and get an offering....and that is exactly what he did.

Don't be like that.
It wears everybody around you out.

Before we were saved...it was all about us.

We talked too much,
And we talked too much about ourselves.

Everything was about us.
Everything was about what we were doing.
Everything was focused on our needs and our desires.

You can't have authentic relationships when all you do is talk about yourself.

Some time it is very important that we get our point across, but we should come to a place that we can sit in the room and not be heard and be confident that we are important and valuable.

2. We talked before we thought

Before we met Christ we would just say what ever came to our mind without any thought as to the ramifications or implications.

We didn't care if it offended or hurt someone else feelings.

That was their problem, not ours.

They had to deal with it.

I have a right to say what ever I want to say...everybody else has to put up with it.

We would just blurt things out and often round it out by saying things like...that is just who I am.....often to cover up our embarrassment or another's.

Both Christ and Paul are saying...don't do that.

They are urging us to have a greater understanding of the impact and importance of your words.

You are not only representing them, but you are misrepresenting yourself.

See yourself as something more valuable.

See what you have to say,

And what you are called to accomplish, as being worth the discipline to control your mouth.

3. We lacked delicacy in our communication

We didn't care who was our audience.
If there were ladies present, we didn't care.
If kids were around we just said what ever we wanted to say.

You see that now.

You go to restaurants or football games and people are crude and vulgar and they don't care.
They will cuss and swear, be crude and profane and you just have to put up with it.
Their communication is putrefied. Worthless. Bad. Rotten.

Don't be like that.
Be aware of yourself and aware of your audience.
And boys...if you come back from the hunting trip....leave it in the deer stands.

Because if God won't getcha, momma probably will!

4. Loose communication:

Before we were saved we could never keep our mouth shut.

We could not be trusted.

We were gossips, celebrating the struggle or downfall of another.

I learned early on that if ever I found or heard myself being negative about another's success or opportunity, to instantly turn that criticism into praise!!

I was not going to speak badly of them.

I was not going to gossip.

Don't be lose in your communication, be aware of your communication.

Paul I believe is saying he wants believers to consider the influence of their words upon others, so he says, Do not let any corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth; a bystander may hear it and it may do harm to him.

Be aware of the example you are setting around others.

5. Hurtful communication:

Your words can wound or heal.

They can destroy or build up.

.And the people we are around the most, the people we love the most, are the people that can so easily be hurt by what we say and not say.

Be careful with your words.

I often go to God to apologize for what I say carelessly in conversations.

I often go to my family to say the same thing.

If you are big enough person to mess up.

You are a big enough person to fess up.

I think it would be great if we had argument referees in marriage.

You know, you have a fight coming up and you book an argument referee, just like in boxing.

You come in

You all suit up, and then you have at it.

Things get heated

The ref steps in and say *you can't say that...that is a low blow.*

Or *that is an illegal shot.*

Or *go to your corners and cool down.*

Or what about a life director...like in movies

You start talking, you say soothing dumb or mean....*CUT. The director walks in and says....you'll regret that, lets take that out and try again.*

A) Come out of your mouths

Ephesians 4:29 ESV

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths,

Paul says...don't let these types of things come out of your mouth.

Even if it comes into your mind.

Hold your tongue.

Hold your mouth.

You have control.

Don't allow these selfish

Polluted

Self centered

Indelicate

And potentially hurtful words to come out of your mouth.

They will damage relationship.

They will damage business opportunities.

And they will damage your reputation as a Christian.

So that deals with the negative...now let's look at the positive.

B) But only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion,

Ephesians 4:29 ESV

*(29) Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, **but only such as is good for building up, , as fits the occasion,***

So if that should not come out of your mouth...what should?

What should the sort of things be that do come out of your mouth?

1. That which is good for building up

That which builds up ourselves.

That which builds up other.

See it is more than just having 'clean speech'.

It is having a speech and communication style that affects people in a positive and God glorifying manner.

When you come to Christ you are the light of the World, the Salt of the earth.

Your words can bring peace and healing, no longer destruction and pain.

Paul is saying beware that this change that has happened within you.

It is a powerful change

It is a glorious change and you should allow it to touch and change every aspect of who you are and what you do.

Let me put it this way...the person who can hurt me the most is my wife....but the person who can help me the most is my wife....that is the power of marriage....you can tell me well done...and I will appreciate it...but when Beccy tells me her life was impacted by a sermon...then the world looks brighter.

2. That which is not self centered

Don't be the sort of person who is waiting for someone to stop talking so you can.

Engage in the conversation.

Engage in the relationship.

Be interested in them.

The Christian is a concern for other people.

With every one of these points Paul is steering us towards the qualities of lasting authentic relationships.

Be honest with each other.

Don't let an argument continue over night.

Work hard and honestly.

In each one of these points – it is our neighbor, our boss, our friends who are the focus.

We can no longer think that no one notices who we are or that our life has no impact on others...it does.

I believe if you live your life with others as the focus, God will bring people along who will make you the focus of their concerns.

How wonderful it is when we can spend our life loving and giving, not lusting a getting in every area.

Including our communication.

3. Fits the need/fits the occasion

So a Christian talking is not just someone who has control of what they are saying.

Who knows what not to say,
and when not to say it.

That is just good, basic communication skills.

But a Christian is ready in and out of season to bring a Word.

A word of encouragement.

A word of exhortation.

A word of testimony.

A word of faith and possibility.

Something that fits the occasions.

Something that edifies someone and builds them up.

It has to fit their need to hear.

Not our need to speak.

You have to learn to tailor what you say to your audience.

It is not a "one size fits all" situation.

Do not be unfair to people, do not expect them to be what they are not.

Our business is to take people as they are and to try to bring them from that one position to another.

So let us be careful that our word, our good word of edification, shall always fit the occasion and be appropriate for whatever circumstances apply in each individual case.

d) That it may give grace to those who hear.

Ephesians 4:29 ESV

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

The object of our communication is 'that it may minister grace unto the hearers', that is, that it may impart grace to them in some shape or form.

MLJ when commenting on this verse says:

Never forget... that the man or woman or company of people to whom you are speaking, possess immortal souls; that their life does not end in this world, they go on to eternity. And if we keep that in mind it will surely govern and control our whole conversation.

That it may give grace.
What are marvelous thought.

Grace.

Your words have the power to give grace.
When someone is weary
Worn down
Despondent
Desperate
In need

You can speak.....you can give grace
You can give hope
You can give possibility.

That is what Paul is saying

There are weary people round and about us, weary of sin, weary in sin, weary of life.

There are people round us carrying burdens, carrying loads, suffering illness and sickness, disappointment, the treachery of friends, some fond hope suddenly gone, dashed and vanished illusions; there are men and women round and about us who are weary.

It is to these people that we are called.
Measure them grace.
Give them a sense of hope and possibility.

Where to start?

Again don't be condemned by this word.
Be convicted by your words.
This is all a process.
This is all a journey.
This is all something that we all have to overcome.

- a) start at home with those you love
- b) have an honest conversation about how you are going and what you can do to help each other
- c) be aware of what makes you negative, what triggers negative behavior

Is it lack of sleep?
Bad food
Stress at work?

- d) Replace bad words with good
- e) Realize the impact that your words can have and allow yourself to be held accountable for them