

## **Cherished-Chosen-Challenged – June 27, 2010**

### **What Say You?**

**“Indeed, we put bits in horses’ mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. 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. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! 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. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. *It is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. James 3:3-10**

We were instructed as children that if we couldn’t say anything nice then we shouldn’t say anything at all. Such instruction was recognition that the sinful human being has a tendency to speak in a negative manner about all sorts of topics. Greater is the propensity towards criticism than towards praise. Greater is the temptation to speak evil of our neighbors rather than the discipline of self that is portrayed in speaking well of others.

In an “instant information” driven world there are a multitude of individuals who make their livings on gossip. Gossip magazines sell by the thousands in the grocery store. Gossip programs on TV have a faithful following. Gossip websites on the internet get millions of hits each day. People just love to hear gossip...and even more they love to repeat it. Exposing and tearing down our neighbor gives us a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment that somehow we got the truth out. After all we did not do anything more than share the truth of the matter. If the facts are misconstrued then it is the fault of the one who told us...we are simply the

conduit of information! The world needs to know! Really? Have we forgotten that “love covers a multitude of sins”?

The words we speak about others can build up or tear down. And...it is not just their reputation which is being furthered or damaged...it is our own. Those who have a propensity towards gossip are eventually identified. No one wants to associate with them because they know that sooner or later they will become the fodder for the gossip's tale bearing and an object of their scorn. Gossips eventually label themselves as being untrustworthy and having tongues that cannot be controlled. No one wants to confide in them, knowing that whatever is told to that individual is told to the world. No one wants to associate with them because their words are often unkind and hurtful.

Now, the truth being told, we are all guilty of gossip and unkind speech at one time or another. We have been guilty of “cursing men” and “praising God” with the same tongue. Of this we must confess. But shall this continue to be the lifestyle of the forgiven and faithful? Let it not be so! Our duty, as those for whom Christ shed His blood, is not to repeat idle speech, nor to simply ignore false and unkind words about our neighbor. Instead we are to “defend him, speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything.”

We who have heard and believed the story of Christ's forgiving love seek to “speak the truth in love”, for our words and deeds are meant to glorify God and serve our neighbor, just as Christ commands. As we have been forgiven so we forgive. As we have received mercy, so we are merciful. Let us then think of Christ and our Christian duty before we speak and let us pray that God would give us purity of heart that we might bridle our tongues and use them only to His glory and praise.

- Remember: Many spoke evil of Christ. He did not revile them, but prayed for them. Let us also then be prepared to suffer the unjust slander against the Gospel and in such times love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us.

- Remember: Speak kindly of others. Defend them against slander and false accusation. Build up the church by your example and encouragement and so serve well the preaching, teaching, and sharing of the Good news.

How blessed we are to be the people of God. He has chosen us to be in this place. He has prepared us for this time. He has equipped us for service to Him. **Don't wait for someone else to do it. If you wait on someone else to do it...it will never get done!** God bless you in the growth of your faith and in service to Him and His people, for your labor in the Lord is never in vain.

Pastor Jacobs

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