



WORDS MATTER -

THE POWER OF WORDS (BRING UNITY OR CAUSE DIVISION)

(from 2/26/17 sermon - John Kuhne)

I. **OPEN** - See if there is anyone who wants to share a short testimony, or if there are specific praise updates to begin CG.

II. **PRAY**

III. **READ ALOUD** Philippians 2:14-16 - **The Power of Words**

“Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.”

Q - Sermon takeaways from those who were in attendance?

IV. **REFLECT**

Throughout this series we have been reminded over and over again of the power of words. We see in Gen. 1:3 that God created everything by the use of His words, and we see in Heb. 1:3 that He holds the universes together by the power of His word as well. Words. They have the power to create, and they have the power to destroy. They have the power to unite, yet they also have the power to divide.

Proverbs 18:21 says that *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue...”* a) Take the time to write on a notecard samples of words and/or sentences that bring death...that hurt, that divide, that destroy. b) Now, write down words and/or sentences that have negatively impacted you in some way. Q - Share why these words seemed to have (or have had) such power over you. (*You may choose to share words that you have spoken that have brought death instead of words that have been spoken to you.)

God’s words unite. Have someone read John 17:17-26. We have discussed for the past few weeks the truth that the words that we speak come directly from our hearts. In this and other passages we can see the heart of Christ...He speaks words that unite believers, not divide them. Yes, it is true that the Cross of Christ is offensive and will bring division because light and darkness/belief and unbelief can never co-exist together. However, the words that are spoken *within the body* of Christ are to unite...to edify...to encourage, and not to tear down, bring division, or destroy. Key reminder - Any word or action that moves us apart from one another should be suspect.

So, if our words are truly a reflection of OUR ATTITUDES toward God, others, and ourselves then when we hear destructive words flowing from our hearts we are to get to the root of these destructive attitudes. How do we do so? We follow the pattern of Christ as found in Philippians 2:7-8 (Read) and we empty ourselves....we humble ourselves.

Q - Practically speaking, how should the truths of the Gospel enable us to empty/humble ourselves? Discuss. Why is it important that this not just take place at salvation but each and every day?

When we truly humble ourselves before God, we learn to be content. We learn to simply let God be God. The Gospel truth enables us to come to a place where we, like Jesus did for us, are able to extend our forgiveness to others on an ongoing basis. As we learn to walk in humility and to "paid it forward" with our forgiveness and life-giving words we become essentially unoffendable. We can't be offended if we're forgiving everyone who wrongs us. That's the impact the power of the Gospel can have on us.

Returning to our Proverbs 18:21 passage ("*Death and life are in the power of the tongue...*") a) Take the time to write on a notecard samples of words and/or sentences that bring LIFE, EXHORTATION, UNITY, AND ENCOURAGEMENT. b) Now, write down words and/or sentences that have POSITIVELY impacted you in some way. **Share with one another.**

V. FURTHER APPLICATION -

Remember, it's the Gospel that sets us free...free to forgive and free to love. As you apply the love of God through the Gospel to your own heart, think of a brother or sister who needs a word of encouragement and exhortation. Will you commit to not letting this night end before you either write these words to them, place a call to them, or drop by and see them? As we humble ourselves, we are able to use our words to bring life! As you see the effects of these life-giving words be sure to take the time to worship THE WORD HIMSELF.

VI. CLOSE - Final thoughts...OR WORDS?

VII. LOOKING AHEAD_-

Next week we will begin to better understand our position in Christ by walking through sections of the book of Ephesians. You are encouraged to spend some time in Ephesians 1 this week and begin praying for this next series.