

James 4:11-12 (ESV) 11 Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. 12 There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

I. Intro

- A. Recap last week:
 - 1. Humility marks us
 - 2. We are nothing without Christ
 - 3. Humility always comes before exaltation.
- B. Recap further back:
 - 1. The topic was introduced with the challenge to tame the tongue
 - 2. The tongue is a challenge regarding the text today, but where the mind goes, the tongue follows.
 - 3. So as you learn to tame your tongue, you are learning to tame your thought life.
- C. There is a joy in being in right relationship with God and with man.
- D. There is so much instruction about how to handle ourselves regarding other people
- E. So today we are told: not to speak evil against another, and not to judge someone
 - 1. These are related
 - 2. And in context we understand this to mean exactly what it says
 - 3. Our conduct toward others should be marked by the Spirit of Christ.

II. Text

- A. Do not speak evil against one another
 - 1. This is a real problem
 - 2. If you've nothing nice to say, don't say anything.
- B. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother
 - 1. Speak evil: a defamer: when you say bad things about others, you are speaking evil
 - 2. Judge: kreeno: to pronounce an opinion concerning right and wrong
 - 3. Leave these things out of your mouth, and eventually, grow to where you leave them out of your mind.
- C. Speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge, you are no longer a doer, but a judge
 - 1. You have just placed yourself in the position of God by making statements against someone else
 - 2. We must fight against this: The ugly physical reality meets the beautiful spiritual self.
- D. There is only one lawgiver and judge
 - 1. God is the judge
 - 2. He made the rules, understands the rules completely, and became flesh and lived perfectly by the rules.
- E. He who is able to save and to destroy
 - 1. He is all powerful
 - 2. And doesn't answer to us.
- F. But, who are you to judge your neighbor
 - 1. You are not HIM
 - 2. Let HIM be HIM

III. Points

- A. Hold fast to truth, but Give grace
 - 1. In essentials, unity, In non essentials, liberty, In all things, charity
 - 2. Often attributed to great theologians such as Augustine, it comes from an otherwise undistinguished German Lutheran theologian of the early seventeenth century, Rupertus Meldenius. The phrase occurs in a tract on Christian unity written (circa 1627) during the Thirty Years War (1618–1648), a bloody time in European history in which religious tensions played a significant role. The saying has found great favor

among subsequent writers such as Richard Baxter, and has since been adopted as a motto by the Moravian Church of North America and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

3. Always remember when handling conflict:
 - a) You are dealing with someone created in the image of God.
 - b) You do not know the whole story or what they have experienced.
 - c) You have been forgiven of much, so also forgive much.
 4. Make a stand for truth, and always yield to the tenderness of the Holy Spirit at work in you.
 - a) In this stand, recognize you have been a work in progress yourself
 - b) Your conviction and mission have been shaped by life and experience
 5. So many times we have more grace for someone when we have gone through a similar thing, less grace for someone when we do not understand their struggle.
 - a) This is the reality of our struggle
 - b) And the reason for this warning today.
- B. Fight against the flesh
1. We all have a god complex to battle against
 2. We should never assume the role of God
 3. When we assume to role of judge, we are stepping outside of our call Christian charity.
 4. A retired pastor I spent time with
 - a) would always word things very carefully
 - b) Not wanting to say a negative thing about someone, sometimes he would just not comment
 - c) Other times he would make a general statement regarding the challenge, but not singling anyone out specifically.
 - d) I was so thankful to see and hear his example
 5. We should let the word of God speak in any situation
 6. We should let the Holy Spirit of God be the one that brings conviction.
 7. Love people in the midst of the challenge they are facing, and show them Christ.
- C. Look inwardly before outwardly
1. [Mat 7:1-5 ESV] 1 "Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. 3 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.
 2. The scripture speaks, therefore we should proclaim it to ourselves and believe what is says.
 3. How is it, that believers can read this verse and assume its talking about someone else?
 4. Think about the transition here:
 - a) Look at your own issues, then help others with theirs.
 - b) Humility before exaltation
 - c) Death before life
 5. I challenge you to give much grace when dealing with other people, because you desire much grace for yourself.
 6. Also, expect more from your mouth, and your mind will catch up eventually.
 7. Honor the LORD in all things, ask Him for the strength to change
- IV. Close
- A. Our responsibility as Christians: practice Grace and Truth
 - B. Receive Grace and truth, Live Grace and truth, Practice Grace and truth