

2 Corinthians 1:12-24

8-22-12

Cutting Crushing Criticism!

I. Announce:

- A. **Video FPU** (Financial Peace Univ) - a 9 week course led by Dave Ramsey (via video) during 3rd service on Sundays. Starting
- B. **Slide#1 Baptism Class** in our *new room* next to front office rt after service.
- C. **Slide#2** We are pleased to announce that a **Christ centered recovery program** is going to begin soon.
 - 1. We are asking for people who have been a part of a recovery program to pray if God is calling you to be a part of this new ministry.
 - 2. **More details will be coming in the next couple of weeks as to how you can belong and participate in this new ministry.** More info see Pastor Dan in info booth after.
 - 3. Please **pray** for this new ministry. Or come be **Part of the Team**. **Celebrate Recovery**.
- D. **Slide#3 Prayer:** Lord, deliver me from the lust of vindicating myself. - Augustine

II. Intro:

- A. **Don't you hate to be misunderstood?**
 - 1. Last week we talked about "suffering", & being "comforted by God"!
 - 2. **Another aspect of suffering is when we "verbally suffer", from verbal attacks!**
 - a) Often **verbal** wounds cause far worse pain than the **physical** one's.
 - b) **Slide#4** Ecclesiasticus 28:17 (written by Jesus ben Sira, 200bc. aka Wisdom of Sirach) (though not inspired, certainly is true) *"The blow of the whip raises a welt, but a blow of the tongue crushes bones."*
 - c) **Or**, as Washington Irving said, *"A sharp tongue is the only edge tool that grows keener with constant use."*
- B. We know the old adage we said as kids is **NOT** true, **"Sticks & stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me."**
 - 1. They not only hurt but can cause **"internal bleeding"**! – **Ask** the **employee** that gets daily berated by his boss in front of his/her coworkers. **Ask** the **wife/husband** that deals w/this daily. **Ask** the **child** who gets this dished on his/her plate at every meal.
- C. We have all experienced attacks against our **actions** (what we **haven't** done), our **words** (what we **haven't** said), or our **motives** (what we **didn't** mean).
 - 1. This is what Paul now faces w/the Corinthian church!
- D. **Slide#5 Outline:** What you **see** is what you **get!** What you **heard** is not what I **said!** What you **perceive** is not what it **is!**
 - 1. The Corinthian's misjudge Paul by his: **Actions**, by his **Words**, & by his **Motives!**

E. So how do you deal with false accusations?

1. Some plant the flag of **Passivity** & say nothing; **others** the flag of **Aggression** & lash out
 - a) **Passivity** leaves the lie unanswered – **Aggression** only complicates things.
 - b) Which do you usually lean towards?
 - (1) Paul simply uses **wisdom & truth!**

III. Slide#6 **WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET! (12-14)**

- A. **Here they misjudged Paul by his Actions!** [Paul you're insincere!]
- B. (12) Paul brings 3 things to the witness stand: (**simplicity; Godly sincerity; & the Grace of God**)
 1. **Simplicity** – Frankness.
 2. **Slide#7 Godly sincerity** – Purity.
 - a) It means “*Judged by the sun*”. “Determined by sunlight”.
 - (1) “It is something that can **bear the test** of being *held up to the light of the sun & looked at w/the sun shining through it.*”
 - b) If I held you up to the light how would you fare?
 - (1) When Jesus, the unapproachable light, eyes fix on you how will you & your actions stand?
 3. **The Grace of God** – Not mere human wisdom.
- C. We can add a new beatitude, “*Blessed is the man who has nothing to hide.*”
 1. Both **Mark Twain** and **Arthur Conan Doyle** supposedly sent similar telegrams to a dozen prominent men, “**FLEE AT ONCE - ALL IS DISCOVERED.**” **All of whom packed up and left town immediately!**
- D. (14) **In the day of our Lord Jesus** - George Whitefield said, “When I die the only epitaph that I desire to be engraved upon my tombstone is “***Here lies George Whitefield; what sort of man he was the great day will discover.***”

IV. Slide#8 **WHAT YOU HEARD IS NOT WHAT I SAID! (15-22)**

- A. **Here they misjudged Paul by his Words!** [Paul you don't keep promises!]
- B. (15,16) Paul's writing this letter from Macedonia (ad55-57).
- C. **Read** 1 Cor.16:5-7 where he “*promised*” to come to them.
 1. Note the words: “it may be”(6); “I hope”(7); “if the Lord permits”(7).
 2. They mistook his **full intentions** for a *firm promise*.
 3. Their conclusion, “if you can't trust a man to keep a promise, how can we trust him as an apostle?”
- D. (17-20) Words can both **reveal** or **conceal** our thoughts.

1. Sometimes we say things because "it is the right thing to say"; or "to be agreeable"; or "to avoid trouble".
2. Samuel Goldwyn said, "A **verbal** agreement isn't worth the paper it's written on."
 - a) No promise, **verbal** or **written**, is of any value except in relation to **the integrity** of the one who makes the promise.
 - b) Some recall a time when "a man's word was his bond." - If we make promises, we ought to keep them. **God does.**

E. (20) **Yes & Amen!**

1. We often think that both the Yes & Amen are God's, but they are not. - The **Yes** is **Him**, & the **Amen** comes from **us!**
 - a) NIV For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

F. **Slide#9 God's "Yes"!**

1. **Note: In Him** – In Jesus is the **Yes** to every Promise! – He is the *personal guarantee* of God to every promise.
2. Literally, "in Him **yes was & continues to be a reality**" (the *perfect tense* emphasizes continuous action)
3. Sometimes a political candidate who wishes to be returned to office will say, "**I stand on my record.**"
 - a) **Our faith stands on** the record of what **God has done**, on the record of promises kept.
 - b) John 20:31 says "**These are written that you may believe.**"
 - c) **Faith is not** inherited, nor does it come by accident.
 - d) **Faith comes by** hearing the Word of God, and discovering that God keeps his promises.
 - e) **Faith is** "*standing on His promises.*"
4. D.L.Moody said, "**God never made a promise that was too good to be true.**"

G. **Slide#10 Our "Amen"!**

- H. Amen means: "*so let it be*", "*true, trustworthy*". It was used as a strengthening & confirming statement.
 1. It wasn't just a formality or ritual. – **It expresses our confidence!**
- I. If you truly have the Holy Spirit residing in you, then you should from the depths of your soul, w/o any hesitation, **believe** all of God's promises are **Yes** & thus shout **Amen!**
 1. Can you say, "True, Trustworthy, or Amen to His love for you?"
 2. **Are you assured of His love? Can you say Amen to his Forgiveness? Can you say Amen to All of His will for your life?**

J. **Amen** is the voice of "*absolute, personal, unshakeable, & unreserved faith*"!

K. **Slide#11** (21,22) **Establishes us, Anointed us, Sealed us; & has Given us** (a guarantee).

1. Note the **Trinity** at work here in us! - Establishes us (in Jesus). Anointed us (in God). Sealed us & has Given us (the H.S.)
- L. The “seal” impresses its likeness upon everything it touches.
 1. All these are the **marks** of His **divine ownership**.
 2. All of these take place at salvation when God raises *the flag of heaven* over the territory of our soul, & seals it w/the Spirit.
 - a) **Slide#12** Remember how exciting it was on July 20th, 1969 – When Apollo 11, the first manned lunar landing mission, reported... "HOUSTON, TRANQUILITY BASE HERE. THE EAGLE HAS LANDED." – For the 1st time a Flag was flown on the moon & the USA was proud to plant it!
 - b) When God saves your soul, He seals you with a big seal that says “*Mine*” then raises Heavens flag to fly over your soul!
 - (1) **Like** the mountain climber who whips out his flag when he reaches the top & has conquered the mountain!

V. **Slide#13 WHAT YOU PERCEIVE IS NOT WHAT IT IS! (23,24)**

- A. **Here they misjudged Paul by his Motives!** [Paul you’re not a servant but are seeking to *Lord it over us!*]
 1. If we are honest, *seldom* do we do anything w/absolutely **unmixed motives**.
 2. **Purity of Action** is difficult, **but purity of Motive** is still more difficult.
- B. **Slide#14,15 (23)** Paul calls God to take the stand – There’s a great check for us... **Can we call God to the stand to speak for us?**
 1. **Spare you** – **Spare you what?** – **See 2:1-4.**
 2. **His 1st visit** he flew in to Corinth, but instead of fixing things it stirred up more problems which broke his heart. **He then wrote** a letter of rebuke w/tears. For this reason he didn’t return because it would only have hurt them...& him.
- C. (24) **Dominion/rule over your faith!**
 1. **Paul you’re trying to throw your spiritual weight around!**
 - a) **No way!** Paul knew the duty of the teacher is not to impose beliefs on other people, **but** to enable & to encourage them to think out their own beliefs.
 2. No – I’m a **fellow worker!** - I’m your bondservant (4:5)
 3. He always rebuked to restore joy!
 - a) “The effective rebuke is that given w/the arm of love around the other person.”
- D. Like Paul, let’s set our sites on the target of: no hidden actions; no hidden meanings; no hidden motives!

VI. **Slide#16 CRITICISM...WHAT DO WE DO WITH IT?**

A. Proverbs 26:4,5 says, **Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you also be like him. Answer a fool according to his folly, Lest he be wise in his own eyes.**

1. This tells me **different circumstances** dictates **different biblical methods!**

B. **Slide#17** 6 ways to deal with criticism:

1. **17b Expect it!** Jesus was unjustly criticized. So how can His followers escape the same treatment?

2. **17c Wait on the Lord!** Don't phone friends, don't email the pastor, quiet your heart & focus on 2 things: 1] **Bringing glory to the Lord through this** 2] **Praying for the critic.**

3. **17d Evaluate it!** Consider the source.

a) **Not all criticism is bad.** Even if it is given to us in an unloving way by an unsympathetic person. (www)

b) Tozer, "If the critic is **right**, he has helped you. If he is **wrong**, you can help him. Either way, somebody gets **helped.**"

4. **17e Confront the accuser!** Don't run around to tell a lot of people.

a) Swindoll, "Go directly to the person holding the knife. For until you take the knife away, the back stabbing will only continue."

5. **17f Remain silent!** Sometimes the more you try to defend yourself the more you appear guilty.

a) Go immediately to God, pray for His vindication then step out of the way!

(1) **Read Ps.26:1-3.**

b) A pastor once told Warren Weirsbe, "Never kick a skunk. You may manufacture a worse problem that you started with."

6. **17g Never take revenge!** That's God's business.

a) Deut.32:35 **Vengeance is Mine(God's), and recompense; Their foot shall slip in due time; For the day of their calamity is at hand, And the things to come hasten upon them.**

b) Ps.40:13-15 **Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me; O LORD, make haste to help me! Let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion Who seek to destroy my life; Let them be driven backward and brought to dishonor Who wish me evil. Let them be confounded because of their shame, Who say to me, "Aha, aha!"**

C. **Slide#18 Criticism** - Let the man who **says it** cannot be done not disturb the man **doing it.**

Chinese proverb

Remember, there is no city in the world where they have a statue to a critic.

The story is told of a judge who had been frequently ridiculed by a conceited lawyer. When asked by a friend why he didn't rebuke his assailant, he replied, "In our town lives a widow who has a dog. And whenever the moon shines, it goes outside and barks all night." Having said that, the magistrate shifted the conversation to another subject.

Finally someone asked, “But Judge, what about the dog and the moon?”

“Oh,” he replied, “the moon went on shining—that’s all.”