

## Speak Light Wk. 3 “Gossip: The Cancer of Darkness” Believers Statesboro 03-27-22

Speak Light Week 3 Pastor Scott Moore / Believers Church of Statesboro / www.believersstatesboro.com

As Children of the Light, we are called to speak words of life and light to ourselves and others! We are grateful for our Gideon representative for sharing with us today, because we know the Word that they are getting into the hands of people is the Word of Life and Light! Next Sunday we will focus on that as we learn how to “Speak the Word of Life”!

But we must realize that all the words of life and light that we speak can be covered with a veil of darkness if we use our tongues in a destructive way. If we are not careful, a cancer can creep into the church. If left unchecked, it will grow and spread until all the light is consumed by “The Cancer of Darkness” which is gossip in the church. Gossip will bring darkness rather than light.

### **This Cancer of Darkness Had Been a Problem in Churches for a Long Time**

Paul feared that he would find this cancer growing in the church of Corinth. **2 Corinthians 12:20** **For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be.** (I may be upset when I get there.) **I fear that there may be discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder.**

### **What is Gossip?**

Melody Green defined gossip this way **“Sharing anything about someone, when the act of sharing it, is not part of the solution of that person’s problem.”** Gossip can be a lie, but gossip can also be the truth. Truth telling with the wrong motives is also gossip.

**Next Step – Today, I commit to memorize this definition of gossip: “Sharing anything about someone, when the act of sharing it, is not part of the solution of that person’s problem.”**

### **How the God of Light Feels About the Darkness of Gossip**

God commanded His people not to gossip. **Leviticus 19:16** **“Do not go about spreading slander among your people. “Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor’s life. I am the LORD.**

**Proverbs 6:16-19** There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: **17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, 19 a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community.** (NKJ one who sows discord among brethren)

**Psalms 101:5** **5 Whoever slanders their neighbor in secret, I will put to silence; whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, I will not tolerate.** Let’s silence the gossip before God does.

### **The Results of Gossip**

**Proverbs 11:13** **A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret.**

**Proverbs 16:28** **A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends.**

**Proverbs 18:8** **The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to the inmost parts.**

**Proverbs 26:20** **Without wood a fire goes out; without a gossip a quarrel dies down.**

**Romans 1:28-32** (People that God gives over to a depraved mind are also gossips.)

**28 Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done.**

**29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31 they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. 32 Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.** (Warning- if you listen to a gossip; you approve of the gossip.)

## How to Kill the Cancer of Darkness with Light

### 1. Stop talking about people and let's start talking to people.

*Did they really mean what they said, or in the way that I think they said it?*

Let's talk it out to understand each other and, like we said last week, begin to speak light to each other.

**Ephesians 4:29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.**

Don't miss the last part of that verse, **"Building others up,"... "According to their needs."**

If someone is in sin, what good does it do to tell someone else? What can they do about it?

- If we talk about "awful things" we see in someone else's life and ask others if they have noticed it or if they have seen it too, we are causing them to form judgments against the one we are talking about.
- This talk is a form of "speaking curses over that person's life." It brings no benefit to the one in sin.

Restoration is always the goal! Instead of tearing down a fallen believer, try to restore the one in sin to fellowship with God.

**Galatians 6:1 1 Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.**

- The person in sin may have blind spots in certain areas of their lives.
- Confronting in love, may be exactly what they need to recognize their problem, and be set free.
- Don't think that you are above or immune to the trap they have fallen into.

REMEMBER WE ARE A LIFE-GIVING CHURCH. We are not looking to tear down and destroy, but like our Lord Jesus, we are in the restoration business.

**Next Step – Today, I commit to stop talking about people and start talking to people.**

### 2. Learn to deal with offenses.

How do you respond when people really have hurt or offended you?

**Matthew 18:15 NLT "If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back.**

A face-to-face talk, in an attitude of grace and love, will resolve most problems. But, if not, Matthew's text goes on to tell us in Step Two to take a few others with you and try again to work it out. If that doesn't work, Step Three is the only time you make it public, not to the world, but only to the church.

- When you are wounded by someone and you can't work it out with them, the only person we have a right to go to with that hurt is God. He is the only one that can do anything about it.
- If the hurt is something you can't seem to work through, then you should take your problem to a counselor not "your favorite person to talk to." ***A counselor is someone who is mature in the Lord, exhorts you to godliness and reconciliation, points out your sin in the situation, will not repeat the matter or be stumbled by it, and is seeking God's will first and foremost-not yours.*** (A person like this is usually in a leadership role in your local church or a professional counselor.) This definition rules out most of the people we normally run to, looking for someone to take sides with us.

### 3. Stop listening to Gossip. (I'm just concerned and listening to gossip, not spreading it!)

**Proverbs 17:4 A wicked person listens to deceitful lips; a liar pays attention to a destructive tongue.**

Why do you listen? This was the question David asked Saul in **1 Samuel 24:9** when Saul was needlessly trying to hunt down and kill David. **“He (David) said to Saul, “Why do you listen when men say, ‘David is bent on harming you’?”** Good question for us today? “Why do you listen?”

It takes two to tango. If people are always coming to you with the latest gossip, you may be part of the problem! **Proverbs 20:19 A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid anyone who talks too much.** Break the gossip chain by refusing to listen to gossip.

Love doesn't listen to evil. **1 Corinthians 13:6-7 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.**

Are you walking in love towards your brother or sister when you allow someone to speak evil of them?

When someone brings gossip to you why don't you say gently but firmly...

- *“I'm sorry, but you're telling me something I really don't think I should be listening to. You need to take this to the Lord, and to those involved...not me.”*
- *“Have you spoken to this person you are talking about concerning this situation? If you haven't then you don't need to be telling me.”*
- *“If you have talked to them already, are you willing for the three of us to sit down and talk this situation over together and resolve this problem?”*

**Next Step – Today I will consciously make an effort to stop listening to gossip.**

#### **4. Light up the darkness by asking for forgiveness.**

**Matthew 5:23-24 “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.**

If you or someone else is speaking darkness rather than light, a relational chasm is created between you and the other person. Jesus says, **“Go to them and make it right.”**

- Jesus says, “Because of your **gossip**, complaining, criticizing, not being able to control your tongue, if it's created conflict with somebody, go and make it right.”
- Jesus says, “If you have spoken a curse rather than a blessing on yourself or others... Go and make it right.”

Basically, this verse teaches us that our heart can't be right with God, if our heart isn't right with others. We can't worship in spirit and in truth when we have caused pain to your brothers or sisters.

So, if you are sitting in a worship service and suddenly, the Holy Spirit brings to mind someone that you have offended and need to reconcile with... Jesus is saying, “Go and Make It Right!” Then come back and worship freely.

**Next Step – Today I will ask myself, “Who have I spoken darkness to, rather than light? Who must I ask for forgiveness?” I will take action to go to them and make it right!**

Agree with Paul in **Acts 24:16 So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.**

If you want to begin to speak light rather than darkness, you can start by talking to people instead of about people and when damage has been done, ask for forgiveness.

#### **Salvation Call - Go and Make It Right.**

Why did Jesus tell us to Go and Make It Right when we have a relationship problem?

Because the heart of God, the passion of God, is reconciliation. That's why Jesus gave His life for us, to reconcile us to God. The problem with all of us is that we had a big relationship problem with God, but we didn't have the power to make it right...Only Jesus could do that. Will you accept what Jesus did for you?