



Sunday March 29, 2015
Shhh!!! No Gossip!
Ps Ashish Raichur

[We realize that this is not a message in line with the theme for the Passion week of Good Friday and Easter Sunday]

Lets begin by reading

Psalm 15:1-5 (A Psalm of David)

1 LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill?

2 He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart;

3 He who does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;

4 In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those who fear the LORD; He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;

5 He who does not put out his money at usury, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved.

vs 3 Those who refuse to gossip or harm their neighbors or speak evil of their friends. (New Living Translation)

WHAT GOSSIP IS, AND WHAT IT IS NOT?

Some common terms that we will use interchangeably in today's message:

Gossip, backbiting, slander, back-stabbing, whisperer talebearer

The NKJV Bible uses the word 'talebearer' for a gossip, backbiter, slanderer.

Gossip is idle talk or rumor, especially about personal or private affairs of others. It is the spreading of dirt and misinformation.

Unfortunately quite a few people enjoy gossip (or talebearing)

Proverbs 18:8 The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, And they go down into the inmost body. (same as Proverbs 26:22)

Proverbs 18:8 Rumors are dainty morsels that sink deep into one's heart. (New Living Translation)

Backbiting is malicious talk about someone who is not present. Harming some ones reputation without offering them any chance of defense. It is, as the word depicts, to bite them behind their back.

Back-stabbing the action of criticizing someone in a treacherous manner despite pretending friendship with them.



Slander is making a false, negative, malicious, and defamatory statement or report about someone.

Tattle tale (talebearer) One who reports the wrong-doings of others to an authority, usually with the intent of getting them into trouble, and not to resolve a problem.

In the Old Testament, when giving instructions about the community life among His people, God stated:

Leviticus 19:16

You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

The New Living Translation of Leviticus 19:16 says: "Do not spread slanderous gossip among your people"

WHAT IS NOT CONSIDERED GOSSIP

Now there are times when we do have to speak "about others" but we do it in a non-malicious manner:

Examples:

1, When casual talk/sharing of information without demeaning anyone: For example you may talk about meeting someone and whether or not you found your time spent useful, what happened, outcomes, etc.

2, Sharing about a certain experience that may include what others said/did - where you do this with no harm intended to any of the people.

3, Assessment of an experience or evaluation an individual or situation professionally, e.g. when you are reporting about an interview of a candidate; doing performance appraisals; resolving a difficult situation, etc. here we honestly discuss strengths/weaknesses, good and bad in order to present an accurate picture

4, Seeking to get a matter resolved (Matthew 18), in such situations we review the series of events and things that transpired in order to arrive at a fair conclusion.

5, When addressing a matter where there is sin, wrongdoing, failure, etc. we need to talk about the wrong that was done and work towards restoration (James 5:16; Galatians 6:1).



6, In exposing wrong so that people will not be led astray (Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 5:20).

In all of the above situations, the underlying premise is to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).

COMMON SITUATIONS WHERE GOSSIP HAPPENS

A, Community Gossip

Usually among a community that is connected together for various reasons "news" spreads as people talk to each other.

The local church is a community, where we are all connected together because of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and fellowship.

Now in a community, there will and has to be sharing of information of each other.

For example the Bible does tell us :

Romans 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

1 Corinthians 12:26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

If this is going to happen, it does mean that we need to get to know what is happening - the good and the bad - in each other's lives. So we rejoice, we weep, we suffer, we honor each other and journey together in these things. We share life together.

However, all of these must be done in a honorable manner, without the wrong ways of gossip, backbiting, slander, backstabbing, or talebearing.

We find in several epistles the issue of gossip, idle talk, is addressed in relation to a community of believers:

To the Corinthian Church, where Paul had to address the issue of sexual immorality and call the church to repentance, Paul fears that when he comes he will find people engaging in " backbitings, whisperings," when he comes:

2 Corinthians 12:20



For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults;

To the church at Ephesus, as Paul writes to Timothy who is overseeing the church there, that when people stray from the core things of love, good conscience and sincere faith, they indulge in idle talk:

1 Timothy 1:5,6

**5 Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith,
6 from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk,**

To the same Church, Paul states about young widows and this would apply to all in general, that when they become idle, they begin to indulge in gossip, and say things they ought not to say:

1 Timothy 5:13

13 And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.

Similarly to the Thessalonians, Paul rebukes those who are busybodies and commands them to get to work (2 Thessalonians 3:11,12).

B, Workplace gossip

Where people at work engage in gossip, backbiting, slander, backstabbing, or talebearing, maybe about the boss or colleagues without intention of furthering a solution or speaking to co-workers about something someone else has done to malign their reputation, etc.

C, Social media gossip

Social media has also provided a much faster way to share gossip. In only a matter of minutes harmful gossip and rumors can spread online.

NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF GOSSIP

1, Time spent in gossip is unproductive and time wasted

Sometimes hours can go by, with people engaging in gossip. That is why it is called "idle talk". It is completely unproductive.

2, Gossip erodes trust as a person's reputation is marred and character assassinated



The person who is gossiped about has no opportunity to explain himself, while he is being "assassinated" and his reputation is destroyed.

Proverbs 11:13

A talebearer reveals secrets, But he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter.

When you are a faithful friend, you will seek to stand by your friend and not reveal his failures to demean or destroy him.

3, Increases anxiety and demoralizes people by spreading inaccurate information

Wrong information spreading can actually act on the emotions causing anxiety, demoralizing people.

For example, in the workplace employees can get demoralized as rumors circulate without any clear information as to what is fact and what isn't. It creates an unhealthy work environment and good employees will want to leave.

Similarly, in a church community, if believers engage in gossip, backbiting, slander, talebearing, it causes people not to want to be part of such a community and they tend to drop out of church or leave.

4, Causes discord, strife, hurts feelings, ill-will and destroys relationships

Proverbs 16:28

A perverse man sows strife, And a whisperer separates the best of friends.

Proverbs 25:23 The north wind brings forth rain, And a backbiting tongue an angry countenance.

Proverbs 25:23 As surely as a north wind brings rain, so a gossiping tongue causes anger! (New Living Translation)

Proverbs 26:20

Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; And where there is no talebearer, strife ceases.

Relationships are destroyed. People are divided as they are forced to take sides. This can happen in a workplace setting or in a church community.



Consider the seriousness of the emotional impact of gossip:

Teenagers are "bullied" online through social media by friends, schoolmates, gossiping and slandering, them to the point where a few have committed suicide. Cyberbullying is the use of technology to harass, threaten, embarrass or target another person, and is a serious thing.

A useful resource site for parents of teenagers: <http://cyberbullying.us/>

Some of you may be aware of the March 2015 TED Talk, by Monica Lewinsky "The Price of Shame" where she states "Public shaming as a blood sport has to stop,". "In 1998", she says, "I was Patient Zero of losing a personal reputation on a global scale almost instantaneously." "In 1998, I lost my reputation and my dignity, I lost almost everything. And I almost lost my life." The kind of online public shaming she went through has been horrendous. She called for compassion in what we do online.

NO GOSSIP

Consider some of the serious rebukes concerning gossip.

God rebukes His people for indulging in slander

Psalm 50:19-21

19 You give your mouth to evil, And your tongue frames deceit.

20 You sit and speak against your brother; You slander your own mother's son.

21 These things you have done, and I kept silent; You thought that I was altogether like you; But I will rebuke you, And set them in order before your eyes.

Being a false witness and sowing discord among brethren are among things that are detestable to God.

Proverbs 6:16-19

16 These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him:

17 A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood,

18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil,

19 A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.

A slanderer is called a fool

Proverbs 10:18 Whoever hides hatred has lying lips, And whoever spreads slander is a fool.



Romans 1:28-32, puts gossip (backbiting) in the same list as murder, immorality, etc.

Romans 1:28-32

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;

29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers (gossip),

30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;

32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

In essence, gossip, backbiting, slander, back-stabbing, tale-bearing are things we must not engage in.

HOW DO YOU HANDLE GOSSIP?

What can we do, if we find ourselves in situations where people around us begin to gossip, slander, back-bite, etc.

A, Rise above the gossip

don't participate in it, don't descend to their level and engage in gossip

Psalm 34:13 Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit.

Psalm 39:1 I said, "I will guard my ways, Lest I sin with my tongue; I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle, While the wicked are before me."

Psalm 139:4 For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.

B, Confront lovingly if possible

address the matter with the person engaged/involved in gossip or spreading rumors.

C, Let it die out

Don't fuel gossip. Allow for the gossip to die out.

D, Pray

Psalm 31:13-16

13 For I hear the slander of many; Fear is on every side; While they take counsel together against me, They scheme to take away my life.



14 But as for me, I trust in You, O LORD; I say, "You are my God."

**15 My times are in Your hand; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies,
And from those who persecute me.**

16 Make Your face shine upon Your servant; Save me for Your mercies' sake.

Closing

Let's be a community of people who have zero tolerance for gossip, backbiting, slander, back-stabbing, tale-bearing.

Gossip, backbiting, slander, back-stabbing, tale-bearing - these will not exist among us!

Gossip is a weed that troubles and chokes God's beautiful garden, the church. Let's create a culture and develop self-discipline that keeps His garden weed free.



USEFUL RESOURCES



Watch our online Sunday Church service live stream every Sunday at 10:30am (Indian Time, GMT+5:30). Spirit filled, anointed worship, Word and ministry for healing, miracles, and deliverance.

YOUTUBE: <https://youtube.com/allpeopleschurchbangalore>

WEBSITE: <https://apcwo.org/live>

Our other websites and free resources:

CHURCH: <https://apcwo.org>

FREE SERMONS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/sermons>

FREE BOOKS: <https://apcwo.org/books/english>

DAILY DEVOTIONALS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/daily-devotional>

JESUS CHRIST: <https://examiningjesus.com>

BIBLE COLLEGE: <https://apcbiblecollege.org>

E-LEARNING: <https://apcbiblecollege.org/elearn>

WEEKEND SCHOOLS: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/weekend-schools>

COUNSELING: <https://chrysalislife.org>

MUSIC: <https://apcmusic.org>

MINISTERS FELLOWSHIP: <https://pamfi.org>

CHURCH APP: <https://apcwo.org/app>

CHURCHES: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/churches>

WORLD MISSIONS: <https://apcworldmissions.org>