Sticks and Stones: Tearing Up the Grapevine
Psalm 141; Proverbs 12:17-22; Matthew 12:33-37; James 3:1-9

Words kill, words give life; they’re either poison or fruit; you choose. – Prov. 18:21

Words that come into our heart will eventually make their way out of our mouth.

The power and potential danger of our words - James 3:1-9
- Followers of Jesus have better uses for their tongue than gossip. - Eph. 5:4
- Followers of Jesus fight to cure the “cancer” of gossip.
- Take advantage of every opportunity you get to “bite your tongue.”

The “Boomerang Effect” of Gossip – Matthew 7:1-2
- “People who gossip to you will gossip about you.”
- “THINK” before you speak – “Is it: True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, Kind?”
- Think about others the way God thinks about us. – Psalm 139:17
- “The tongue of the wise brings healing.” Proverbs 12:18

The source of the “small spark” is the human heart.
- You extinguish the “small spark” with love.
- Our words determine the direction of our lives – heaven or hell! - Matt. 12:37
- “Set a guard over my mouth…” – Psalm 141:3
  
  “Live in such a way that you wouldn’t be ashamed to sell the family parrot to the town gossip.” - Will Rogers

Challenge: Spread “Godly Gossip” about Jesus, this church and others.

Daily Readings: Tearing Up the Grapevine

Let’s uproot the grapevine. Everyone wants and needs a “cheering section,” a group of people who sit in the “bleachers” of our life and cheer and clap and believe in us. Replacing gossip with encouragement has the power to turn enemies into friends.

MONDAY – Read Psalm 141. Why is it unwise and ungodly to return slander with slander? When is it hard for you to keep your mouth shut? Do you think David writes about a good life situation or a bad one? Given his situation, why did David ask God to guard his tongue? How can God guard your tongue from speaking evil about others?

TUESDAY – Read James 3:1-9. Is James talking about what we do say or what we don’t say? Why does James emphasize the negative example of the fire so much more than the positive examples of the horse’s bit or ship’s rudder? What are some examples of an untamed tongue?

WEDNESDAY – Read James 3:1-9 (Again!) There’s an old saying, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.” Is it true? If no human being can control the tongue (v. 8) why bother trying? Have you ever said contradictory things as in vv. 9-10? How is the power of words used by the Holy Spirit within a person of faith?

THURSDAY – Read Matthew 7:1-6. Pastor Don said, “People who gossip to you will gossip about you.” Do you agree? What is the “boomerang effect” that Jesus speaks of in these verses? Do you criticize the media, politicians, teachers, pastors, your boss, coworkers, neighbors or friends? Can you watch a football game without being critical of the quarterback, the coach, or the referee? Can you watch the news without being critical?

FRIDAY – Read Proverbs 12:17-22. How have you personally experienced v. 18? How have words pierced you like a sword? How have words brought you healing? What could you do in a volatile situation to help to make sure that you don’t say something that you will regret later? Hint: Bite your tongue!

SATURDAY – Read Matthew 12:33-37. What impact – positive or negative – can our words have on our usefulness for Christ? How have your words impacted your own witness to others in the past? Ask God to reveal how your speech has been “careless” and how you can move forward in using your tongue to honor Him and advance His Kingdom.