

Articles and Sermons :: One of You Is a Gossip - Frangipane

One of You Is a Gossip - Frangipane - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2012/6/9 10:53

One of You Is a Gossip - Francis Frangiapne

A perverse man spreads strife, and a slanderer separates intimate friends. --Proverbs 16:28

Jesus made a remarkable statement concerning Judas: "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?" Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him" (John 6:70-71).

To what was Jesus referring when He identified Judas Iscariot as "a devil"? Was He speaking figuratively or factually? Is Jesus saying that a human being could not only have an evil spirit living in his soul, but that a person could actually become a demon?

Some teach that Judas had become so perfectly possessed by Satan that he actually lost his humanity. Before we accept this interpretation, let us remember that after this fallen apostle delivered Jesus up, he felt such remorse for betraying Christ that he committed suicide. Could a demon feel such remorse for sin? I do not think so.

What I believe Jesus is identifying in Judas Iscariot as a "devil" is something that, today, exists unchecked among many Christians: slander. In the New Testament the Greek word diabolos, which is translated "devil" in this text, is translated impersonally elsewhere as a "false accuser," "slanderer" or "malicious gossip." In fact, 1 Timothy 3:11 and 2 Timothy 3:3 both translate diabolos (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, #1228) as "malicious gossip(s)."

In other words, Jesus is not saying "one of you is a devil" in an organic or theological sense, but that one of you is "a slanderer, a malicious gossip." So while the disciples were almost bragging about their loyalty to Christ, Jesus corrected them, in effect saying, "Yes, I chose you, but even among you there is one who is a malicious gossip, whose words will eventually betray Me to My enemies."

Gossip in the Last Days

This problem of gossip in the Church, Paul tells us, will continue right into the end of the age. Listen carefully to what Paul wrote to Timothy about the last days: "Men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips" (2 Tim. 3:2-3), and the list goes on. In the midst of this list of great sins of the apostasy, the apostle includes "malicious gossips." This is the exact same word translated "devil" in John 6:70.

Perhaps you know people who always have something negative to say about others, who always bring negative information about people into their conversations. I pray that the Holy Spirit will reveal to us how "malicious gossip" is kin to the nature of Satan himself!

The Scriptures say that we will be justified or condemned by our words. Yes, our words---even those spoken in secret with a spouse or friend about others---are used by God to measure our obedience to His will. James writes, "If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man" (James 3:2).

Words have power. Scripture reveals that "death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Prov. 18:21). Our words, expressed as a confession of faith, bring us into salvation; but words without faith can lead us and others with us into destruction and heartache.

James 3:8 warns, "The tongue . . . is a restless evil . . . full of deadly poison." "The tongue," he says, "is a fire, the very world of iniquity" (v. 6). And James reveals a most profound thought: "The tongue . . . sets on fire the course of our life, and it is set on fire by hell" (v. 6).

Satan gains access to our world, to destroy all that is good and holy in it, through our tongues. The very course of our life, the direction and quality of our earthly existence, is "set on fire by hell" through the words we speak. If we talk negatively about someone or maliciously gossip, the destructive fire of hell itself is released through our words. Lord, help us to

understand the power of our words!

I believe God wants to break the power of gossip and negative speaking from the Church. We may have a perfect analysis of what is wrong and why it is evil, yet if all we do is talk about it, we have yet to disavow our allegiance to hell. God calls us to be a house of prayer for all nations---a spiritual community that is mature, fully capable of seeing what is wrong, but positioning itself to release redemption into the world.

If Paul Visited Your Community

Imagine if the apostle Paul came into a typical American city. Do you know what he might say about our divisions? Probably what he told the Corinthians: "I am afraid that perhaps when I come . . . there will be strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances" (2 Cor. 12:20).

Does that remind you of any churches anywhere? Strife? Jealousy? Slander and gossip? How can we approach God with these things existing in us? I believe God desires to give the Church a whole new approach. But we cannot lay hold of the future unless we first let go of the past.

Perhaps you are thinking, "So and so should hear this." Yes, but we must start with ourselves. Pastors must stop talking negatively about people; they need to refrain from "leaking" problems with people into their sermons. Intercessors must stop negative gossip about the people for whom they should be praying. If we discuss what is wrong for ten minutes, let us pray for redemption for twenty.

Judge Not

How do you respond to life's imperfections? Do you gossip? When you hear of someone's failure, are you quick to spread the news? If Jesus was looking at the Christians with whom you fellowship, would He say to you what He spoke to His early apostles, that "one of you is a malicious gossip?"

Even if you are not a gossip or slanderer, you must be careful to avoid "fellowship" with gossips. Criticisms incubate. Paul warned that "a little leaven leavens the whole lump" (1 Cor. 5:6). If we walk with the wise, we will become wise, but if we open our hearts to the cynical and critical, then we become like them. That is why Jesus said we were to "take heed" to what we hear. For whatever we intently focus upon, we absorb in abundance (see Mark 4:24).

Thus, we must not even listen to gossip. When God shows us what is wrong in life, it is so we can pray for redemption, not spread the bad news all over town. Prayer has a positive focus. People with Christ's love have a spiritual vision that causes them to see beyond the imperfections and limitations of the present world into the potential awaiting in the future---and they pray until what they see comes to pass.

Remember: None of us stands perfectly upright. Every time we judge someone, we position ourselves to be judged as well. Indeed, we each continually lean in the direction of our weakness. Only by the grace of God are we kept from falling. The moment we begin to self-righteously judge or gossip about another for their failings, we lean a little closer toward our own fall.

Our actions and words should be motivated by mercy. If we must discuss the situation or individual, let us harbor no malice or ill will. Let redemption be our guide, not revenge. Let us keep ourselves from becoming those who betray the work of Christ on earth. Let us keep ourselves from the realm of the malicious gossip.

Lord, purify my lips with fire from Your holy altar. Father, forgive me for my words that have not always been redemptive. Lord, deliver the Church from the realm of spreading gossip to the work of spreading grace. Help us to be a house of prayer. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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**Re: One of You Is a Gossip - Frangipane - posted by learjet, on: 2012/6/9 11:57**

I've pointed out many of the rampant financial abuses that are going on today and a few of my pastor friends on Facebook responses were "Hey man, don't get negative..."

The problem with that line of thinking is NO ONE, wants to address the issues that are crippling the body of Christ because they are silenced by these demonic arguments. As Christians we are called to 'speak the truth in love' not use new age philosophies regarding speaking positive about everything. Rank unbelieving sinners can recognize what is going on and we in the body can't recognize it or speak about it because 'that would be negative'?

Imagine Jesus and John the Baptist calling people the 'brood of snakes' that they are today, they would be flatly rebuked for 'speaking negative'.

For years these very issues have been covered in a cloak of silence because of the retribution that men of God will face should they buck the system. It's wickedness to the very core!

Someone needs to speak up about the rampant 'profiteering' in the body, the Lord has given assurance to us though and we can take courage in this:

"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." -Matthew 10:39

This scripture is not just about the 'sweet by and by' it's also about losing your reputation when you call out wickedness. Men will hate you.

I'm so thankful for the few men that will actually address the issue, what a pleasure it is to know that these men are my brothers and sisters!

**Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2012/6/9 14:42**

"The problem with that line of thinking is NO ONE, wants to address the issues that are crippling the body of Christ because they are silenced by these demonic arguments. As Christians we are called to 'speak the truth in love' not use new age philosophies regarding speaking positive about everything. Rank unbelieving sinners can recognize what is going on and we in the body can't recognize it or speak about it because 'that would be negative'?"

Even the hard sayings of Jesus speaking to the Pharisees were done in the love of God because it was love speaking.

I don't believe that not addressing false teaching and error within the Body of Christ is a problem that we have on Sermon Index. The problem is that there are some that feel that they are ordained of God to criticize and find fault with others. It is not hard to recognize those with a critical, fault finding spirit because they have taken it upon themselves to be God's messengers of correction to the Body of Christ. Not only do they point out the false teachers and prophets, but because they have failed to remove the log out of their own eye, they become accusers of the brethren, spewing out words of bitterness and resentment.

I have been angry before and posted things that made me feel a lot better at the expense of others when I got it off of my chest. But the Holy Spirit has dealt with me when I have done this, and I have learned to not hit the submit button when I am hot with emotion.

"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." (James 3:13-18).

Mike

**Re: , on: 2012/6/9 20:36**

Think this might be a discussion of two separate issues....interpersonal relationships, including a brother falling into sin, versus dealing with false teaching and wolves in the flock.

Here are some scriptures for the first...a brother you are in conflict with or who has fallen into some sin:

Proverbs 25:9 If you argue your case with a neighbor, do not betray another man's confidence,

Luke 17:3 So watch yourselves. "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.

Galatians 6:1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

2 Thessalonians 3:15 Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

Titus 3:10 Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him.

James 5:19 My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back,

But, in the case of false teachers, in Ezekiel, the watchman is commanded to warn the people..and much of Paul's letters included warnings against certain teachings and teachers. Christ never minced words in response to deceivers.

These situations need to be handled with prayerful wisdom.

**Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2012/6/9 21:15**

"But, in the case of false teachers, in Ezekiel, the watchman is commanded to warn the people..and much of Paul's letters included warnings against certain teachings and teachers. Christ never minced words in response to deceivers."

Amen brother! That is why regardless of what the government does, including taking the tax exempt status away from churches or arresting those that are speaking out against same sex marriage, calling it a hate crime, we must always preach the gospel of repentance.

If we are preaching a full gospel then there will be balance of both the negative and the positive.

Mike