

*Thanks to our Speaker
Joe Griffin*

Careful in Speaking

“Your speech must always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.” Colossians 4:6

“Let no unwholesome word come out of your mouth, but if there is any good word for edification according to the need of the moment, say that, so that it will give grace to those who hear.” Ephesians 4:29

Careful in Listening

“You know this, my beloved brothers and sisters. Now everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak...” James 1:19

“A wise person will hear and increase in learning, And a person of understanding will acquire wise counsel”. Proverbs 1:5

May Birthdays

2 Peggy Woodruff

15 Kena Brown

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Sunday.....6:00 p.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Temporary Meeting Times

Sunday.....10:00 a.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Preacher:
(Vacant)

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How Well do we Listen?

By Mike Johnson

How well do we listen? We would not remember some of the most famous statements ever made if someone had not listened carefully to what was said. Listening and listening correctly is very important to learning. One person put it like this: “Talk, and you say what you already know, but listen, and you learn something new.” A speaker needs to prepare his speech well and then to present it clearly. However, a good speaker must have a listening audience to be effective.

Jesus often challenged people by saying, “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” On one occasion, in Matthew 15:10, he said to a multitude He had called together, “...Hear, and understand.” In the Parable of the Sower, the seed which fell on the good soil is described by one who hears the word and receives it and brings forth much fruit (Mk. 4:20).

The importance of an audience being willing to listen, and listen objectively, can be illustrated with the people of Acts 2 and Acts 7. In Acts 2 (on the day of Pentecost), Peter was the speaker, while in Acts 7 (before the Jewish council), Stephen was the one who spoke. A close study of these two sermons will reveal that their basic message was the same. With both, the speaker tried to convince the people that they had rejected and crucified God’s son, and they needed to repent and become Christians. Consider the reaction to Peter’s sermon in verse 37, which says, “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” They were told they needed to repent and be baptized (v. 38), and verse 41 shows their response as it says, “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”

Stephen, on the other hand, got a very negative reaction to his preaching. Instead of repenting, verse 54 says, “When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, they gnashed on him with

their teeth.” The verses which follow point out the people then stoned Stephen to death.

What was the difference? Both Peter and Stephen preached basically the same message. The difference was the audience. One group was willing to objectively listen with a receptive heart while the other audience closed its ears.

Jesus often had very unreceptive audiences. He described the people of his day when he said of them, “...*Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.*” (Mt. 13:14-15). Both Isaiah and Paul applied this description to the people of their day in Isaiah 6:9-10, and in Acts 28:26-27. This same concept applies to many in our time also.

What are the lessons for us? First, we must make sure that we are always receptive to God’s Word. We need to have a willingness to listen and to obey. It is surprising how many Christians are very closed-minded on many Bible subjects. We need to be like those of Berea, who the writer describes as nobler than those of Thessalonica as they received the word with readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily to see if what Paul taught was true. Secondly, we must realize all who we teach will not obey. We should always try to improve our knowledge of the Bible and work on our presentation of God’s Word. However, we must keep in mind that although some will obey, others will not. Some will be like those who are compared to the good ground in the Parable of the Sower (Mt. 13:8, 23). They will receive the word and bear fruit, while others will be like those compared to the wayside (Mt. 13:4,19) as they will be unreceptive. Therefore, we must not get discouraged when our efforts to teach others are unsuccessful. We will probably have some success in our effort to teach God’s Word, but we will most likely have a lot of rejection. We must keep in mind there are different kinds of soils and not get discouraged.

In conclusion, how do we listen to God’s Word? James 1:21 tells us how we are supposed to hear as the writer said, “*Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*”

He Missed the Target and Ricocheted All Over the Assembly By Guthrie Dean

The preacher took his text from James 3:6-9. “*And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. . . Therewith bless we God and therewith curse we men.*” He poured it on the whisperers, the backbiters, the inventors of evil things, and the sowers of discord, the murmurers, the gossipers, and the talebearers.

After the service was over a cloud of smoke hung from the ceiling of the church auditorium. (There was a long-tongued loudmouth in the church that he had tried to convert but to no avail; thus, the preacher had decided to give him a public exposure in hopes that he would repent.)

One sister came out trembling and said to the preacher, “I didn’t think you would get so personal with me about what I have been saying.”

And an elderly gentleman then came to the preacher and was heard to say, “I’ll not be back!”

Another came and shook the preacher’s hand and replied: “I didn’t know you heard what I said at the job last Friday. You must have been eavesdropping.”

Then a red-faced member came out and said with a sharp voice: “I have never been so humiliated in my life. I came here to worship God. But you have made me feel like a heel.”

Then the real culprit came out. He let out a big laugh and grabbed the preacher with one hand and slapped his back with the other and commented: Preacher, you deserve a raise. They really needed that one!”

On his way home, the preacher shook his head and was heard to mutter: “I missed the target and ricocheted all over the assembly.” (Edited)