

## Talk the Talk, but do Walk the Walk

All right, let's go ahead and open up our Bibles. My sermon this morning is on James 1, 19-22a. 19-22a.

Basically, it's more about 19, 20, and 22, but I didn't want to leave a verse empty and blank in there. So, James 1, 19-22a. Know this, my beloved brothers, let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.

For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore, put away all filthiness and rapid wickedness, and receive the meekness, the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only.

I wasn't sure about naming my sermon about be doers of the word, not hearers, or do you walk the walk, do you also talk the talk? Do we talk it, do we walk it? We were just out in California. Came back last week. We were out there, and we visited Westminster OPC.

Westminster OPC is a church that came out of Garden Grove OPC. It's where I grew up. I know a few of the churches.

I know a few of the people out there. A man, Dave Winslow, is an elder out there, and he's the one that was working with our presbytery for five, six years. He and the committee and so on.

So I saw Dave. I met another elder. His name's Tim Tierney.

And the name I recognized, but I didn't know really who it was. And he introduced his wife. He said, hey, Susan.

And this lady turned around, and it was a lady that was our, she was my high school youth group leader. I didn't know she was at this church. She and her first husband, Bob, were our group leaders.

She knew Jerry and I when we were dating. I brought Jerry to the Carson OPC church, and that's where they were at. And we got to know Susan.

Susan and Bob were a pretty big impact on us about what a Christian family. He was an elder. He made a big impact on us.

I didn't know she had remarried. I knew that her first husband, Bob, died of a heart attack about 18 years ago or so. So she was as surprised to see us as we were to see her.

And her and Jerry sat there and talked for a little bit. And on the way home from church, he said, Susan was surprised that we were still together. And I said, what do you mean? How could you, why would you be? We were kids.

I mean, in all honesty, I was 18 years old when I got married. Jerry was 18 years old. I didn't exemplify the husband-father at 18-year-old.

Most 18-year-olds don't, right? But I was not the example of what a husband or father should be. I could talk it, but I wasn't necessarily walking it. At the same time, what 18-year-old walks being a husband, walks being a father, those things are learned, usually when you're older.

But the Lord blessed us. Jerry and I are coming up 45 years. So she was glad to see us.

We had just lost contact with each other. Most of us are hearers. We all hear.

But do we talk or do we walk it? Are we doers of the word?

## **Quick to Hear**

My first point, quick to hear. Quick to hear. Know this, my beloved brothers, let every person be quick to hear.

Being quick to hear means less talk, less talking. Proverbs 18.13 says, If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame. If we talk, the more mistakes we're going to make, the more things we're going to say, the more issues we're going to bring up.

I get a kick out of presbytery when they're interviewing men on the floor. The men need to answer the questions and don't say anything more. Like a job interview.

Answer the question, don't say anything more. If you talk too much, you may say something that someone says, I want to talk to you more about that. They're like piranha, a little bit of blood in the water.

They're after it. Same with job interviews. If you say something that's not quite what they're saying, they'll go after it.

Less talk, listen more. Many husbands are good at fixing things. At least they think they are.

If you're like me, I think I can fix a few things, but I can't fix everything, I don't know it all. Some are better than others. On several occasions, I've gotten together with men that are getting ready to get married.

I've been to different bachelor parties. The bachelor party was basically a group meeting at a church. We'd just sit and eat and have a good time together, encourage one another, encourage the new husband.

One time we sat there with the new husband, and there were about 15, 20 of us. The question was, knowing what you know now, being married, what advice would you give this young man? That came to my turn, and I said, listen, listen to your wife. Don't try to solve it.

She's coming to you with whatever her issue, her problem is, and our instinct is to fix it. I'm going to fix this. I know what you should say.

I know exactly how you should act or whatever. Most of the time, our wives are not coming to us. I think we've learned this.

Our wives are not coming to us asking us for our great counsel and great advice. They just need someone to talk to. They need someone to bounce things off of, just like when I come home, I bounce things off my wife.

Sometimes I'm asking for her advice and counsel, sometimes not. But men especially have this idea, I've got to fix it. I'm here to fix everything that's going on in your life.

I have the answer. Husbands can't fix everything. How many husbands say, I don't know? It's one of the things we talk about as elders once in a while.

It's okay to say, I don't know. I'll find out. I'll get back to you.

Proverbs 17.28 says, Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise. When he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent. I said this last Sunday, and I'll say it again.

There's another way of saying that. Better to remain silent and be thought of as a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt. Right? I can be perceived a fool of not saying anything, but as soon as I say something, I've opened myself up.

Who's our example of being quick to hear? Well, we know, Christ. Christ is our example. In John 8.1-8 it says, But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

Now early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to him, Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery in the very act.

Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do you say? This they said, testing him, that they might have something of which to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with his finger, and as this he didn't hear, he didn't say anything.

He just let them talk. So when they continued asking him, he raised his hand up and he said to them, He who is without sin among you, let him throw the stone at her first. What an incredible thing to say.

What godly wisdom. He knew exactly what to say, how to say it, who to say it to. Everybody there heard him.

But he didn't have a quick answer right away. He sat and listened at first. He already knew what he was going to say.

He already knew what their motive was. They were there to trick him. They were there to test him.

He was calm. He was collected. He knew what he was going to say.

Eventually he said, He who is without sin, let him cast the first stone. Christ had a mental state of peace. He had peace about what he did.

He was not excited. He didn't show emotion. Eventually the three men left and the woman was just there.

And he said to a woman, Where are your accusers? Where are those who have condemned you? She said, No one, Lord. And Jesus said, Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.

He could have had a sermon for that situation there. He could have had some awesome sermon, but he didn't. He just had a couple of lines.

He kept it short and sweet and to the point. And everybody got it. All the parties there got it.

Ecclesiastes 5.2 says, Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God. For God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few.

We are not God. Rarely have I had the exact right thing to say. I mean, I might be able to say something good, but is it always the best? Is it always the right thing to say? In Isaiah 53.7, Christ was silent.

We all know these verses. But he was silent for a different reason. But he was still silent.

He was oppressed, he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth, like a lamb that was led to a slaughter, and like sheep that is silent before its shears. He did not open his mouth. That was a different reason to be silent.

Most of us, when we're being accused of something, we're jumping in. I've got something to say. There are times where we do need to react.

Right? My wife constantly says, don't react, respond. If we're reacting, we're reacting to the situation, to the moment, to something that was said exactly then and there, we're probably going to make a mistake. We need to respond.

Think about it. What are we going to say? What are we going to do? Matthew 21 says, When Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves, and he said to them, It is written, My house shall not be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves. He pretty much reacted.

But he did respond, and he responded in an appropriate way. There are times to react. There are times to respond.

We all need to remember to listen, when to respond and when to react, as the situation is warranted. If my wife is in danger, I'm not going to sit there and think, how should I do this? What do I do? I'm probably going to respond, and I'm probably going to respond very quickly, and so on. And I'll worry about judgment after it.

If my wife is in danger to take care of her, my children, my friends, my church, there are times to react, and we react immediately. Listening is hard. Listening builds trust.

It shows that we care. For me to sit and talk to someone as an elder, there are two sides. A couple comes to us, there are two sides to every story.

We need to listen to both sides. But we need to build trust. Most people are not just going to walk up to a stranger on the street and say, I've got a problem.

They walk up to someone that they trust. How do they gain that trust? Time. Talking.

Getting to know us. Getting to know you. My dad would always stop when my mom walked into a study.

He'd stop if he wasn't on the phone. If he wasn't doing something immediate, he'd stop and turn around and see what's going on. I remember that.

I sat there as a child, and I'd see my dad stop what he was doing to listen to my mom. I've tried to portray that with my wife. I want her to see that I care about her.

Sometimes she'll, I mean, almost every day I'm on my phone, she'll walk up and knock on the door, and if I'm free, I'll take my headset off. I take earbuds out of my ear. I set my computer aside.

I want to sit and listen to her. What does she have to say? I want that trust. I want to build that trust.

Listening reduces misunderstandings. How many times do we, in the middle of a conversation, in the middle of an issue, we make a judgment and we start talking? Right in the middle, we interrupt. How can we know the entire situation if we haven't listened to everything that needs to be said? It takes time.

Listening reduces misunderstandings. Listening helps eliminate conflict. If I've only heard one sentence and I jump in, is there a second sentence that maybe I didn't hear or didn't need to understand to help understand that? Listening encourages empathy.

I don't want to show just sympathy. I'd like to show empathy. I want to put myself in their shoes.

Listening improves relationships. Listening improves business relationships. It deepens friendships.

Listening learns new skills. Listening is important. We know that.

We strive. We just have to work on it, all of us. My second point, slow to speak.

## **Slow to Speak**

Know this, my beloved brothers. Let every person be quick to hear and slow to speak. If you're quick to hear, hopefully that means you're a little bit slower to speak.

That's something we all have to learn. Do I need to respond? Do I need to ask questions to make sure I understand? Like I said about my wife coming to me, do I need to respond or do I just need to sit there and listen? Asking questions shows that I've been listening and I'm looking for more information. It shows I care.

Proverbs 12.27 says, he who has knowledge spares his words and a man of understanding is of a calm spirit. Not getting excited in the middle of a conversation. Being calm.

Listening is also hard if you're already thinking about what to say and what to say back to a person when they're talking, if I'm not listening. If anyone's been to a doctor or to appointments where someone is sitting there and they're listening to you but they're taking notes, we can take notes when we're listening to someone so I don't have to try and remember all the 10 different things I wanted to remember while they're talking to us, talking to me. I sit on my computer and I'll be talking to someone.

I'm taking notes on my computer as I talk to people. Some of us are good at remembering things. Some of us are not.

Everybody is different. In James 3, 1 through 12, it says, not many of you should become teachers, my brethren, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For we all stumble in many ways and if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, also able to bridle his whole body.

If we put bits into our mouths or horses so they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. Look at the ships also. Though they are so large, they are driven by strong winds and yet guided by very small rudders.

So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things, how great a forest fire in a blaze it sets. Our mouths, if we're talking, we have the chance, chances go up from 0 to 100% that we might cause problems when we're talking. We need to be wise.

We need to think about what we're saying. At the same time, there are times to speak up. If someone is telling us, for instance, that, hey, killing a baby is okay, there's times not to be silent.

No, that baby is for God. It's a blessing. We need to step up and say something.

Being ready to answer a question about God, about church, the Bible. 1 Peter 3.15, But in your hearts, honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to

anyone who asks for a reason for the hope that is in you. Yet do it with gentleness and respect.

Coming back with an answer, being prepared, talking about God, the church, the Bible, about family, whatever. Be respectful. Be gentle.

We can, there might be times to come down and, you know, pounding the podium and things like that. But usually when we're one-on-one or one with a couple, gentleness and respect shows a lot. We'll go a lot further.

## **Slow to Anger**

My third point, slow to anger. Know this, my beloved brothers, let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Anger can be in its own sermon. I bet our pastor could come up with three or four sermons on just that one. Slow to anger.

I'm going through it a little bit quick. Anger is a human emotion. And with all emotions, they need to be controlled.

Anger is not wrong. Anger is not a sin. It's what we do with that anger that makes it sin.

Most anger is bad and is a sin. The Bible tells us this. Ephesians 4, 26-27 says, Be angry and do not sin.

Do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. Wrath is an outcome of anger. Wrath is a sin.

Wrath is sin. It's okay to be angry. It's okay to say, That's wrong.

What they're doing, what our nation might be doing, what they're doing in this country, in that country, it's wrong. But when we can't sleep at night, and a couple of nights, you know, so on, that's wrath. That's wrong.

Do not let sin go down on your anger. We need to deal with it. Usually that's with a person.

Usually that's someone close, like our wives, our children, or something. Don't let the sun go down on our anger with somebody. It doesn't say do not be angry.

It says just don't sin in your anger. Human anger is usually portrayed as sinful in the Scripture, and anger against God is always sin. When we get angry at the outcome of something, we're kind of saying, God, you allowed this to happen.

I'm angry at God for allowing this to happen. God allows things to happen for a purpose. Maybe to teach us about our anger.

Proverbs 16.32 says, Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and whoever rules his spirit than he who takes the city. Ruling that emotion, ruling the anger, controlling it. Colossians 3.8, but now you yourselves are to put off all things, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language, out of your mouth.

Again, what does uncontrolled anger turn into? Wrath, hate, envy, malice. We just heard that, talking about that this morning with a video with R.C. Froehl. Why is anger pretty much negative? Because we're weak.

We're human. We don't control it like we should. Christ got angry.

It's a righteous anger. He had righteous anger, righteous indignation. Uncontrolled anger turns again into resentment, jealousy.

These things are forbidden by God. Matthew 5.21-22 says, You have heard what it was said to those of old, you shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of your judgment. But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of judgment.

And whoever says to his brother, Raka, shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, you fool, shall be in danger of hellfire. Anger starts in the heart.

It's not the outward. Same with adultery. Christ explained this to us.

Adultery is not the physical. It starts in the heart. That's where it became a sin.

Anger starts in our heart. That's the sin. Not when I say it.

Not when I display it. There is righteous indignation. This is something that we should strive for.

But our example of righteous indignation is God. We're not God. That's hard to do.

God hates sin and so should we. But we do not hate the same way that God hates. Proverbs 5, 16-19.

These six things the Lord hates. Yes, seven are abomination to him. A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, fears that are swift and running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.

Most of those we don't see. Most of those are in the heart. Only God sees that.

We see the outcome of it. We are not God. We should hate these things, but only God can change it.

Righteous indignation is something that we should strive for as God did. Correcting wrongs, seeks to destroy evil, seeks justice, guided by mercy, transparent and humble, defends the other person, and it's required by God. God does tell us, hate sin.

Hate it. For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Our anger will not produce the righteousness that we seek.

We are human. We are sinful. But we have to strive to continue to follow God in his word and his example.

While our human anger should be what God tells us to be angry at, it's far too often rooted in our own pride and selfishness. It's what I think. We all say, yes, I hate sin.

I hate that, you know, people sin and so on. But we don't see that. All I have to do is deal with my own sin.

Deal with my own heart. We need to be doers of the word and not hearers only. And that's constant.

That's daily. We need to focus on ourselves and teach our children these things, our grandchildren, those around us, be an example of what God's love and mercy is. We need to be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, but be prepared and ready to give the answer when needed.

May God help us as we achieve his perfect will for our lives. Amen. Let's pray.

Dear Holy Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you, Lord, that you are our example, being slow to speak, slow to hear, quick to hear, slow to anger. Lord, help us as we strive to do this, so we may do your will and seek your righteousness in all that we do.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.