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STOP SPEAKING EVIL ABOUT ONE ANOTHER

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF JAMES
NUMBER 34
JAMES 4:11-13

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JAMES 4:11-13 "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another? Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:"

As we begin this study we might first think for a moment about Hebrews 3:13. "But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

Now what that verse really says is this--"Keep on encouraging self and others on each successive day. As long as in whatever place you are located it is called this day (this is an idiom for making each day count). That not one from among you become hardened by delusion of the sin." If you encourage each other to study you will not become hardened by the sins that crowd in upon you. The daily intake of the Word of God is not only prevention from reversionism but it is the only way of fulfilling your priesthood and of living the super grace life.

JAMES 4:11 "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge." Here is another manifestation of reversionism. The words "speak not evil" come from "katalaleo" and is a present, active, imperative. "Kata" is "down" and "laleo" is "communicate" and this came to mean to speak down, to slander, to malign, to gossip about a fellow believer. It is the using of your voice to cut down others. These people were doing something in their talk to hurt others and this verse says "stop it." So this says "Stop slandering one of another." The word is "allos" and it means one of the same kind in other words, another believer. This means this--"Stop slandering one another of the same kind, members of the family of God." Now this is a sign of reversionism and it can also be the sign of being a spiritual moron. Both the reversionist and the spiritual moron are negative toward doctrine and negative toward rebound. This passage deals with people who once walked close to the Lord, but they are now in reversionism. One of the signs of their reversionism is slander.

What actually happens in the life of this reversionist?

First, there is negative volition toward doctrine. This produces scar tissue on the soul. This then opens up a vacuum and false doctrine now flows in. This leads to a blackout in the soul and then comes an inner emotional revolt. Now this is the process that is always followed in the soul of the person in reversionism. When people begin to slander other believers, it is always reversionism.

So James is here saying that believers must stop slandering other believers. This is not only a sin of the tongue but it becomes a sin of the total life of the believer.

The principle behind slander

Here we pick up the principle upon which slander is based. "He that speaketh evil" is a present, active, participle of "katalaleo" and it means to keep on slandering as a principle of your life. This actually is "The one slandering" and this always leads to reversionism and to mental attitude sins. Some people are never happy unless they are down grading, bad-rapping, and ridiculing others around them. This is the way they have of playing spiritual king of the mountain. By bad-rapping others, they think they can build up their own image. The word "adelphos" translated "brother" refers to a believer who is in the family of God. It is an objective genitive and this makes it real personal. This means to slander believers you know very well. "Judging" is a present, active, participle of "krino." This means judging others instead of leaving judging to God. He has all the facts and he can do a perfect job of judging.

All are mental attitude sins

So thus far in this verse we have had "katalaleo" meaning to slander and "krino" meaning to judge and both originate from mental attitude sins. Bitterness, hatred, jealousy, implacability always lead to slandering and judging.

Slandering and judging is actually against God.

This passage is now going to introduce the idea that when one slanders a believing brother, he actually slanders The Word of God. The word for "law" is "nomos" and it has no definite article here and this means special attention is called to the quality of the Word of God. Look at this important point of interpretation we always follow in the Bible. You come to know the meaning of a word by its use in context, and the word "Nomos" is a noun and without the definite article it is like lifting a little flag to warn us that something of high quality is being discussed.

Get several points on this idea.

1. The lack of the definite article tells us the law is of perfect quality.
2. The meaning of a word is determined by its use in context and often the first time it is used in context we can establish its meaning. This then takes us back to James 1:25 when "Nomos" was first used by James, and then to James 2:12 when it was used again. In both of those passages the word "nomos" was called "The law of freedom" and this means Bible Doctrine operating in the soul and providing freedom in the soul.
3. Freedom in the soul is always the function of super grace.
4. Therefore, slandering and judging here is actually slandering and judging the super grace life. People are to have freedom to love God, serve God, and advance his cause, and that is what is actually being slandered and maligned here.
5. In James 1:25 "Nomos" is called "The perfect law of liberty." This is Bible Doctrine working in your life.
6. The sins of the tongue are an attack on the super grace life. Now the one you criticize may be everything you say about them and then some, but you have no right to malign and criticize them. If you do judge and malign them then God will judge you. So not only is maligning and slandering your brother a sin, it is an attack on the super grace life and it is killing the goose that lays the golden egg.

You always get back worse than you give.

Every time you run down others you hurt yourself far more than you do the ones you criticize. In this act you have taken a big kick at the super grace life. This means you are sinful, stupid, and reversionistic. This kind of thing is not only resentful and offensive to God but cuts away at God's entire plan.

What about you?

Now, I suppose all of you here have at some time used your tongue to malign, slander, to "katalaleo," to bad-rap someone. And here you are tonight listening to Bible Doctrine being taught and you want to reach the super grace life, but you will never make it unless you stop slandering and maligning others. Slandering and judging the "nomos" means you are actually slandering the very "Word of God" that is able to deliver you from all kinds of sin and lead you on to super grace.

Summary

1. In the three categories of sin, namely sins of the tongue, mental attitude sins, and overt sins, the first two categories are the worst (with the exception of one overt sin which is murder).
2. When one begins to slip spiritually, one of the first things he begins to do is to slander, malign, and gossip. Sins of the tongue always reveal a spiritual slip.
3. To malign other believers is to set yourself upon a pedestal of sand. The one doing the slander or gossip thinks he makes himself a celebrity but he only whittles away at his own foundation of sand.

So the word "nomos" refers to the "Law of Liberty" explained back in James 1:25 and 2:12.

Next we have the words "But is" and this comes from "eide." The "ei" means this is a first class condition and the statement is true, you do judge the law. The word for judge is a present, active, indicative of "krino" and it pictures you here as judging the very Word of God. You are pictured here as maligning doctrine. It doesn't mean he actually goes around saying, "I hate doctrine." It simply means he is slandering and bad-rapping other people and this is equal to slandering The Word of God. Then we have "You are not a doer of the law" and this is the present, active, indicative of "eimi" plus the strongest negative "ouk." The words "a doer of law" comes from "poietes nomou." The "doer of the law" is one living the super grace life. Then it says "but a judge" and the word for judge is "krites."

Look at a literal translation of this verse.

"Stop slandering one of the same kind, a member of the family of God. The one slandering, a member of the family of God, or judging his brother really slanders the Word of God, and judges the Word of God. But if you slander the Word of God, you are not a doer of God's work but a judge (a reversionistic maligning believer)." There is a golden egg waiting for you, but with slander and maligning you are wringing the neck of the goose that lays the golden egg. And you are doing it with your mouth.

JAMES 4:12 "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. who art thou that judgest another?" The words "there is" is the present, active, indicative of "eimi" and should be translated "There

keeps on being." Next we have the word "heis" and this means one, and only one. The word translated lawgiver is "nomothetes" and it means law designer. There is one law designer, one is a law maker and a judge. Next we have "who" and this refers to the one and only God. Then we have the present, active, indicative of "Dunamai" and it means "he keeps on being able." It now says God can do two things, he can deliver you, and this is the aorist, active, indicative of "sozo" and he can destroy, and this is the aorist, active, indicative of "apollumi." God can deliver and save, or he can deliver you into the sin unto death is what this passage is saying. If you keep on slandering and maligning others you will not only fall off your little mound of sand, but you will be dead at the bottom of your little mound. This is the sin unto death.

Look at King Saul as an illustration.

King Saul just couldn't stand for anyone to be more popular than he was. And when he heard that song, "Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands," which became No. 1 on the hit tunes of that day, Saul just fell apart with envy and jealousy. It just drove Saul right up the wall. Eventually he became so enraged he tried to kill David. He just couldn't stand competition and as a result, he went the way of the sin unto death. King Saul actually died many years before he normally should have died. He became so much of a problem to God that God just had to wipe him off the stage.

God Can Deliver Or Destroy

Here are two alternatives facing us all. God is able to deliver us all from sin and reversionism and lead us into the super grace life. I marvel every day how God does so many things to each of us to lead us into his amazing storehouse of grace blessings. But if we fail his warnings in the Word of God and if we insist on going our own way, then all God can do is to finally wipe us out.

Next we have a phrase "Who art thou" but it really says, "But you, who are you judging someone else?" This is used to wake us up and to get us to realize that we need to be judging ourselves rather than others. It really means that when we judge ourselves we will be so busy working on ourselves we won't have any time left to judge others. And it really means that when we judge others we are really taking their freedom from them. The word here for another is "placion" and it means neighbor, friend, brother believer. So this verse says, "One is lawgiver and judge, who is able to deliver or destroy. (The one referred to here is quite obvious, meaning God.) But you, who are you, judging a believer friend?" This is, therefore, one of the worst social sins we have to face.

I was tempted to go on and look at verse 13, but since it refers to money and since from these next verses we get the doctrine of money and the proper use of money, I have decided to leave it until the next lesson. Also we are coming up to our time for emphasis on underwriting our 1978 budget and it will be in keeping with this important emphasis.