

Transcript – Our Words Matter

Alrighty, Shabbat shalom. And shabbat shalom to all those who are watching with us now. I have a message called, *Our Words Matter*. Not *do* words matter, but *Our Words Matter*.

And in **Proverbs 23 and verse 7**, it talks about *as a man thinks so he is ... as a man thinks so he is*. We know that pretty much our thoughts, we know this from the book of Jacob. Thoughts become action; action becomes sin, sin becomes death. Where thought becomes action, action becomes righteousness and righteousness becomes eternal life. So, as we think we are, and that's why it's important that we want to make sure that the things on our mind, the things we are thinking are proper thoughts.

If we go to Matthew 12, because our words go into actions ... our words go into actions. It's kind of scary now that part of AI and all the things that they are doing with AI is actually they say to prevent crimes that literally they can read people's minds. So, if they were reading somebody's mind and somebody was thinking of a crime or thinking of murdering or something like that ... and this has actually happened. This isn't just a theory.

They've arrested people and said, "No, we know what you were thinking and what you think." I was like, wow, if they start arresting people on what you're thinking without even doing it, you're probably going to have about 90% of the world in prison somewhere. They're going to have to come up with a lot more prisons because all of us are probably happy that because you always have a bad thought somewhere that your thoughts aren't being read and vocalized somewhere.

But Matthew 12:36 and 37 says,

Matthew 12:36-37 *But I say to you, that every vain word, whatever men may **speak**, ... or we could even say that we're living in now **type**, because it's typing also on the internet ... they shall give an account of it in Judgment Day. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.*

So, our words can literally give life. They can give encouragement, give life to people; or our words can kill, as we're going to see.

And the interesting part is in the world we're living in today, and this is one of the reasons why I never got on social media is I saw in the very beginning of this, number one, I saw it's useless anyway. I saw with human nature it's really useless because when Church of God was first falling apart and one of the big things was the Sabbath was no longer a day of rest and this. And I was on a couple of forums as a leader in the local congregation and like someone would come and say, the Sabbath's done away. And whatever, I don't know exactly how they worded it, but I remember going and taking four to six hours studying, putting everything together with the perfect biblical answer. And almost before it could even go out, I'm getting an answer back.

It's like sometimes it happens with a text message, I wonder. You send a text message in like three seconds, you got something back. It's like, how did they even, never mind get it, how did they read it? How did they send it back to me? But this is what would happen. And I realized they're not reading anything I said. I just took 46 hours and it's not even being looked at.

And this is only, when I mean, really first started. There was no Facebook or none of that kind of stuff. There was just like AOL and some of those things and forums, so to speak. This was back in the 90s. So, I realized this is going to be a big waste of time.

But when it says *by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned*. As time went on, I really saw how people that before basically had no avenue toward their heresy because there were no things like today. The Laodicean era was just starting. People were basically only part of churches or whatnot. Nobody was really out there doing home groups and that kind of thing. And if there was somebody there that was just evil and bad, no church would ever give that person the opportunity to go up there.

And that's where when the internet started, now I would ask somebody when they came up with some of these crazy theories at the start of the whatever, "Oh, who is this?" "Oh, I don't know somebody who saw names." "So, you were a Sabbath keeper 25 years and now you're keeping this Sabbath on Tuesday or maybe not keeping it at all. You don't even know the person that you're reading this from?"

And I tell the story that's actually true because I used to say, yeah, they're in their basement in their underwear eating potato chips, writing all this stuff up. And I actually said that. And I was in a sacred name group speaking one time. There were a lot of people, there were hundreds of people. And this one guy was looking at me like he wanted to kill me. He had tattoos all over him.

But I'm wondering, do I know this guy? And he comes up to me and he goes, "You know who I am?" I'm trying to think because he really looked like he was a prisoner. I'm thinking it was, we get hundreds of prisoners. See somebody in prison that wrote me. He goes, "I'm the guy you were talking about in the sermon." I said, "What are you talking about?" And literally he was in his basement in his underwear eating potato chips typing. I didn't know that. I wasn't talking about him. I just kind of said it off the cuff.

Again, our words matter. I offended that man over that. And just by that example. But the point of it is though, the internet can do so much more damage than humans could have ever done. And I've seen it. I've seen it with myself. I've seen people that were just evil, evil bad people that I know that they were alcoholics. They were beating their wife and their kids. I know the kids ran away from them and left them.

And several people like that that would go in the internet saying bad things about me that didn't even know me. I might have met them once in my life. And then people are judging me by false information. And to me, I always say, in the end, the truth is going to come out. And Yahweh will say what's true and what's not.

But for all of us, we have to be careful ... we have to be careful. Whether we're speaking it or whether we're typing it, it doesn't make a difference. We want to make sure because this is a true scripture *by our words we will be justified, and by our words we will be condemned*.

Like I said, we have something nobody else in the world has. We have the truth. That is so powerful and that is so convicting. And we could bring that to every single person we meet. **We have the words of life.** And that's what's said. Yahshua had the words of eternal life. But sometimes we want to make sure we're not using those words toward eternal death.

Yahweh said, *I put before you life and death, choose life*. [Matthew] verse 34 and 35 says,

Matthew 12:34 *Generation of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*

Comment: So that's another thing we have to think about that when we are speaking, it's really showing what's in our heart. *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*

Matthew 12:35 *The good man out of the good treasure of the heart puts forth good things. And the evil man out of the evil treasure puts forth evil things.*

So again, are we giving life in our words or are we taking life? 2nd Timothy 3, verse 2 to 4.

2 Timothy 3:2-4 *For men will be lovers of them-selves, lovers of money, braggarts, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, wicked, without natural feeling, addicted to lust, slanderers, without self-control, savage, haters of good, traitors, ... or disloyal ... hasty, boasters, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of Elohim.*

We know this since we're living in a time, the worst time the world has ever had, we can't allow this to be normal in our life. The fact that people are truce-breakers. But if we give somebody our word for the simplest thing, if I say, "So and so I'm going to come here this Sunday and I'm going to help you whatever in your backyard."

Of course, things could happen, you can get sick, something can come up. So, there are times you have to break your word for that. But if it's just that I wake up and I don't feel like doing it, then I fit into this category. So, we don't want to allow the times we're living in to let the normalcy bias come in.

And there's an expression in olden days, *my word is my bond*, because what is the bond? The bond is what you put up to get a loan for something. So, the word is the bond and literally banks would loan to people, local people by their word literally, by their word today. You don't really have local banks any more, they've all been taken over and it doesn't matter. But I love that expression, my word is my bond. So, we have to be able to keep our word in all things.

And I tell this because there's something in Africa that they call 'African time' and they joke about it. But I say really, to be honest, it's not really a joke because there are times, like I said, you could be stuck in traffic, something can happen. You can have a car accident. It happened to me not that long ago.

But for the most part, for me, if I tell you I'm going to be at your place a certain time, I feel like my reputation is on that and I'm not talking about 30 seconds. *Oh, he was 30 seconds ... Oh, he broke his word.* I'm talking about really being later, even not showing up at all. So, when we give our word that we're going to be somewhere at a time, that's our reputation. So, we want to make sure that we're keeping our word in **all things**, no matter what it is.

Numbers chapter 30 and verse 2 says,

Numbers 30:2 *When a man vows a vow to YAHWEH, or has sworn an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word; he shall do all that has gone out of his mouth.*

So even more, when we're making a vow to Yahweh for something. And I tell this story, I'll never forget one time at a meeting in the States where this man, never met him in my life, came up to me and said, "Oh, I want to donate." And it was, I forget what kind of car was, but it was a real expensive car like Mercedes or something like that. And I said, "Don't say it. Don't say it. If you're going to do it, do it. And if you're not, you're not. But once you say it, you're bound to do it." And he didn't give the car in the end.

So really what you're doing is, not to man, to Yahweh. When you make a vow to Yahweh, like He says, He doesn't take pleasure in fools. So, we better be careful when we say we're going to make our word, especially when we're doing it to Yahweh, because if not we're liable to Yahweh in that regard.

Going back to Matthew, Matthew 5 in verse 33 to 37 says,

Matthew 5:33-35 *Again, you have heard that it was said to the ancients "You shall not lie in your oaths, but shall give your oaths to YAHWEH." But I say to you, Do not swear at all, neither by Heaven, because it is the throne of Elohim; nor by the earth, because it is the footstool of His feet; nor by Jerusalem, because it is the city of the great King.*

Matthew 5:36-37 *Nor shall you swear by your head, because you are not able to make one hair white or black. But let your word be Yes, yes; No, no. Anything more than these is from evil.*

Now, people that don't understand what was going on in this day, they might not understand what Yahshua is trying to say here. Actually, at this time what was happening is, if somebody made a vow in the name of Yahweh, then they would keep that vow. It's almost like if you hear people, "I swear, I did this" or "I swear by whomever." Now He's saying you don't have to swear at all. Your word should be yes, and your no should be no. So, when they didn't swear by the name of Yahweh, they didn't feel they had to keep their word, and that's what would happen.

So Yahshua is saying here, number one, you shouldn't be swearing by Yahweh's name anyway. But your word should be yes, and your no should be no. That's us, that's our character. Whatever we say, whatever we're giving, it doesn't matter who we're swearing by, we should be able to keep our word.

And that's why, like whenever I've had meetings, whether it's with brethren or whether it's with elders or whatever, and we're going over, I've never had somebody to come out and say that. If it's a situation where somebody is ... did you do this or did you say this? And they say that they did or they didn't. They never say, "No, I swear by my children" because they don't have to do that. They don't have to do that, because your yes is yes, and your no is no.

And we have to be truthful in everything we say. So, it's the same way where if I came up to somebody and I said, "Was so and so here last week?" And he said, "No, no, no, so and so wasn't here." And I said, hmm. Then all of a sudden I go out and I'm talking to somebody else that's in the meeting. And I said, "Oh, yeah, so and so was in that meeting yesterday." I said, "Hmm. I was talking to someone and he said they weren't here."

So, I go back to the first person. "I asked you if so and so." "Oh, no, I said so and so wasn't **here**. I thought you meant **here** right in front of me. No, he was in the other room." So is that really telling the truth? If somebody's

asking was so and so here, we're not using *here* as meaning in the very space that I'm saying. We're using here as meaning **here** *in this place*.

We do have to be with authorities sometimes, *wise as serpents, gentle as doves*. During the Holocaust people tried to be truthful and they didn't want to give information that could get somebody killed. But at the same rate, particularly with each other as brothers and sisters, we have to make sure that we're not giving half answers that aren't true because it's a lie. Unless something is true, it's a lie. And every lie is of the devil.

So, we want to be honest with each other and to be honest, it doesn't mean you have to give all information out if it's something that's private or something you don't want to share, that simply say that. That's what I would say. I would say, "Well, to be honest, I really, it's something that's private or something I can't say," but not to give half an answer that is going to make it sound like it's one thing when it really is not because that's also a lie. A half a truth is a lie. And I've had people say that to me sometimes. I say, "Are you telling the truth?" And they're like, "Well, it's half the truth." There's no half-truth. Either something is true or something is not true. And we have to make sure everything we're doing is true.

But our vows are important. And we're living in a time, like I was just reading here of truce-breakers, where, like I said, the normalcy bias is, unless it's something really, really big, it's not that important. And we have to make sure that we're not looking at life that way. Then in our life, it's **anything we say** we want to make sure that's true; and particularly if we're making a vow, because technically you can't go back on vows. And I want to give you one example here in Judges 11, where somebody made a really rash vow that was a very costly vow. And changed his life and his family's life forever.

Judges 11 and verse 30. And it's with Jephthah, Jephthah the warrior. And Jephthah, Judges 11 verse 30, and Jephthah about the vow to Yahweh and say,

Judges 11:30-32 *And Jephthah vowed a vow to YAHWEH, and said, If You will indeed give the sons of Ammon into my hand, then it shall be that the thing which comes out from the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the sons of Ammon, it shall belong to YAHWEH; and I will offer it a burnt offering. And Jephthah passed over to the sons of Ammon to fight against them. And YAHWEH delivered them into his hand.*

Judges 11:33-35 *And he struck them from Aroer ... where we've been before up in Jordan ... until you come to Minnith, even twenty cities, and to the Meadow of the Vineyard, a very great destruction. And the sons of Ammon were humbled before the sons of Israel. And Jephthah came to Mizpeh to his house. And, behold his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels, and with choruses. And she only, she alone; there was no other son or daughter to him. And it happened when he saw her, he tore his garments, and said, Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low, and you have made me bow. And surely I have opened my mouth to YAHWEH, and I am not able to take it back.*

Judges 11:36-38 *And she said to him, My father, you have opened your mouth to YAHWEH. Do to me whatever has gone out of your mouth, since YAHWEH has executed vengeance for you on your enemies, on the sons of Ammon. And she said to her father, Let this thing be done to me. Leave me alone two months, and let me go and descend on the mountains. And I will weep for my virginity, my friends and I. And he said, Go. And he sent her away two months. And she went, she and her friends. And she wept for her virginity on the mountains.*

Judges 11:39-40 *And it happened at the end of two months, she returned to her father. And he did to her his vow which he had vowed. And she never knew a man. And it is a fixed custom in Israel, from days to days, the daughters of Israel go to tell again of the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite, four days in a year.*

So, number one, it's pretty clear what went on here. I've seen people try to whitewash it and say he only kept her as a virgin her whole life. What was the vow? The vow was I will make a **burnt offering**. A burnt offering is something **you kill**. That's what a burnt offering is.

And verse 39, *he did to her his vow*. You could look up at that time **Ezekiel 16** is one chapter that shows it that human sacrifice was being done during the time of the judges and literally he killed her. So, the first thing we learned from this is don't make a rash vow. He didn't want to do it. The second thing you learn is vows are ... once you make that vow you have to keep the vow. If you don't keep the vow then it's like you're useless to Yahweh. If you can't keep a vow, don't make them.

So, this is one of the reasons why Yahshua is saying don't make vows, let your yes be yes, and no be no and think about what you're saying. There's nothing wrong with saying, "You know what? I can't do it. I'm sorry, maybe another time." Don't feel like you have to commit to every single thing. Think about the vows you're making. If you are making a commitment, you're doing it.

To me, I don't know a more sobering story in Scripture than this, that here's a man that actually Yahweh blessed and why on earth would he ever make a vow like that? The first thing that comes out of my door, what do you think is coming out of the door? Like he says, he doesn't have servants. He only has a daughter. He doesn't have other people. He thinks an animal is going to come out of the door? Maybe? Maybe a sheep would come running up first, but you're going to take that risk? He did. He sorely paid for it and wound up sacrificing his daughter because of that.

We want to make sure, like I said, we are fully 100% committed to Yahweh to keep our word, but that's why we don't want to make rash vows. We want to make sure if we're giving our word, it's something that we can do. That's why we always say *Yahweh willing*, because you could be totally committed to something and you could die. You can get hurt. You can be something where it's not even you that's not doing it. It's the situation holds you. So that's why we always say *Yahweh willing*. Yahweh willing ... Yahweh willing, I'll do this. Yahweh willing, I'll do that to make sure that it's like that.

Going back to Matthew 5 now, because words do matter. Our words do matter. In this case, that changed the life of Jephthah and his family forever because of that. Our words do matter.

Matthew 5 and verse 21, 22 says,

Matthew 5:21-22 *You have heard that it was said to the ancients "Do not commit murder!" And, whoever commits murder shall be condemned to the Judgment. But I say to you that anyone who provokes to anger his brother without cause, is condemned to judgment and anyone who should say to his brother, I spit on you is condemned to the assembly, and anyone who should say, you are a coward, is condemned to the Gehenna of fire.*

So, we see here, are we murdering with our words? So that's why I say, the Bible says, the Ten Commandments, Thou shall not murder. But what does Yahshua say? He says if you even *think* murder, you've already done it. So are we murdering with our words?

And that's why I said in the beginning of this that we have such an opportunity that no other person on the planet has. We have the truth. And anyone you meet, whether it's somebody in an airport, whether it's the guy at the deli counter in the store, or it's a family member, anybody, and you have the opportunity to give life from this Word.

And there are times we do have to chasten somebody. There are times that you have to warn somebody or even, we never condemn a person, but you condemn an act if somebody is doing an act of sin because that's showing love, by sharing with somebody that their actions are bringing death. So, I'm not talking about that. We don't want to blind yourself like the Christians do, and never be able to think we can't share with somebody the truth of a matter. But I'm saying with our words in general, are our words murdering? Or are our words giving life? We'd have to think about that.

Jacob 3, turn to Jacob chapter 3. To me, this is one of the most sobering scriptures in all of the Bible because it's so true of everybody. And I don't know, I know when I read this, I get a big gulp in my throat, because I'm 61 going on 62 years old next month. And I look at this and I realize it because all of us, somewhere in our life, have said words that we wish we could take back.

And unfortunately, that's the problem. Once they come out of your mouth, I compare it to the internet, like the black hole that things go out, because once you type something on the internet, even now, I've had people come to me like stuff that was on our website 20 years ago, and they're asking me about it. Where on earth did you find that?

Because anything that was on the internet, it doesn't get erased. You could erase it from where people just can't find it easy, but if someone knows where to look for it, it's there. So that's why, like contacts we had in America from 20 years ago, in a certain state, it's out there in cyber eternity or whatever they call it, but that's the same with our words. So we want to make sure, because once that comes out of your mouth, it can never come back - that we think before we say it.

But this is like I said, this is really a really hard chapter. I love that it's there because it helps me look at myself harder. It says ... verse 2,

Jacob 3:2-4 *For we all stumble in many ways. If any one does not stumble in word, this one is a mature man, also able to subdue the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the mouths of the horses, for them to obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold, the ships also, being so great, and being driven by violent winds, they are directed by a very small rudder, wherever the one steering wishes.*

Jacob 3:5-6 *So also the tongue is a little member, and boasts great things. Behold, how a little fire sets ablaze large forests! Now the tongue is a fire, and the world of sin is like a forest. And this very tongue, while it is among our members, can defile our entire body; and rolls down like a wheel and set on fire the course of our entire life; and in the end it is consumed by fire ...* almost like the story we were just talking about with Jephthah.

Jacob 3:7-9 *For every species of beasts, both indeed of birds, of creeping things, and of sea animals, is tamed, and has been tamed by the will of man; but no one of men is able to tame the tongue; it is an unrestrainable evil, full of death-dealing poison. By this we bless YAHWEH, even the Father; and by this we curse men having come into being according to the image of Elohim.*

Jacob 3:10-11 *Out of the same mouth comes forth blessing and cursing. My brothers, it is not fitting for these things to be so. Does the fountain out of the same hole send forth the sweet and the bitter?*

So, when I read this, I also think about, I know that everything is inspired by Yahweh, it's all part of the Word of Yahweh, it even says that in Timothy. But I wonder what did Jacob just go through that he wrote this? I'm sure he just didn't come up with this from nowhere. I'm sure something had happened. It happened to him personally or happened in the congregation that he's writing this because it's really, really heavy, but it is profound.

In chapter 4, next page, verse 11 and 12, he says,

Jacob 4:11-12 *Do not speak against one another, brothers. He that speaks against a brother, and is judging a brother, he speaks against the Torah, and judges the Torah. But if you judge the Torah, you are not a doer of the Torah but a judge. For there is One Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you who judges your neighbor?*

So, we know gossip can be addictive like drugs. We want to make sure it's not part of our life. And like I said, at the same rate, we want to make sure we don't go to the other side where we don't judge anything. We see things that maybe even be sin in the congregation.

I've had this happen many times where I find out later, sometimes even years later. And I'm like, "You knew that? You didn't say nothing." "Well, I didn't want to judge." No, that's not doing that. That's judging wrongly when you know, because there's a whole process in Scripture and it's a very simple process. If your brother is sinning, go to your brother and share it with him. And if he repents, great, you won your brother. And if he doesn't, then you bring the witnesses and you share with the leadership and you take it from there.

This is talking about hard gossip, just gossiping about people, making things up that aren't there. But in situations where there's real problems, we shouldn't be afraid. We shouldn't be afraid to have to deal with them. I know that's the last thing in my life I like to deal with. If that was the whole part of this job, I don't think I'd be sitting in this chair because that's the hardest part of the job. I hate dealing with it.

But I have learned when you do have things that come up, the best way to do it is deal with it. Quickly, discreetly, I tell the elders that and respectfully. It was something I've been telling the elders about for years, when something comes up - discreetly, respectfully, and as quick as possible. Because it's part of the job, it's part of life. So, but I'm talking ... I'm not really talking about that here.

I'm talking about more just gossiping in general. Ecclesiastes 5 and verse 3 says,

Ecclesiastes 5:3 *For the dream comes through the greatness of the task; and the voice of the fool is known by the many words.*

We want to make sure, there's a reason why we have two ears and one mouth. We should be listening twice as much as we speak. I'm still learning that lesson, that valuable lesson. But we really do need to learn it.

Proverbs 10 and verse 19. But one thing is for sure, whenever I'm in the position that I'm in, in making a decision, I never make a decision without hearing out the matter. You have to hear the matter out before making a decision.

Proverbs 10 and verse 19 says,

Proverbs 10:19 *In the abundance of words sin does not cease, but one restraining his lips is prudent.*

So, the more, laws of odds and probability, the more words that come out of your mouth, the more chance you have of saying something that you wish you didn't. There's the old saying, *sticks and stones will break my bones, but names will never hurt me*. I remember as a kid saying that. But I'll tell you, it's not true. It really isn't true. And words do hurt. And words a lot of times hurt more than physical ailments. You break an arm, so what, so be it, it heals, it does whatever. But sometimes words really do hurt and they don't heal so easily.

Psalms 15. Beautiful Psalm. Psalm of David, he says,

Psalms 15:1-4 *O YAHWEH, who shall sojourn in Your tabernacle? Who shall settle on Your holy mountain? He who walks uprightly and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart. He does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his friend, nor lifts up a reproach against his neighbor. In his eyes, the reprobate has been despised, but he honors those who fear YAHWEH: He has sworn to his hurt, and he will not change it.*

Right? So that's the point. You don't only keep your word when it's convenient, but he swore to his own hurt. And I know in my life, there's been times, even simple stuff like just the feast, you want to help everybody, you want people to come. And a lot of times, I'll look toward the end and I'm like, what did I do? Oh, oh, I made too many commitments. I can't do this. I don't have the money to pay. But I've never once ever went back and said, I'm sorry that I invited you. I cannot invite you now.

You swear to your own hurt. There's a way you do it. And if I got it, there have been times I had to take a whole year to pay off something, but so be it, for me, having the people there outrides anything of little green pieces of paper with dignitaries. But we have to think that way. It's, that when you make your word, it doesn't have to be money. Sometimes it's this time or something else or inconvenience, but you have to make sure, like it says here, that you keep it to your own hurt. *He has sworn to his own hurt. And he doesn't change it.* So whatever words come out of our mouth, we have to make sure that we are going to keep it.

Proverbs 18 and verse 8 [should be verse 18] ... Proverbs 18 and verse 8 says,

Proverbs 18:18 *The lot causes arguments to cease, and divides between the mighty.*

So sometimes, there is in situations where they did cast lots to make sure that who would get whatever, but sometimes, it could be simple things like that. Just when there's a situation where two people maybe want the same thing, you don't want to make a decision of nepotism, *eeny meeny miney mo*. Like some way that's just fair that nobody's going to get offended at the end of it. But it works.

Proverbs 16:28 says, *A perverse man causes strife, and a talebearer separates close friends.*

And I've seen it through the years and it's the saddest thing in the world sometimes, where people have a friend for years over gossip can wind up not being friends anymore. People lose friends. I've seen it, not just in the congregation, outside the congregation, but it's really a bad thing. So, we've got to think about that. Like I said, our words do matter and sometimes it can even harm long friendships.

Proverbs 17 and verse 9 says,

Proverbs 17:9 *He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates friends.*

So, it's the same way. Sometimes as a person who may be an intermediary, you may know something, you can actually go to both sides and see if you can calm a situation. So that friendships aren't lost over something that could have been very, very little. And again, discussions. That's why whenever I'm in an area I always ask when there's a community, how often do you meet with the community together? And sometimes I'm shocked, just when I hear they don't really have community meetings. And when there's a community, some of them meet every week, some of them meet once a month, for nothing else just to discuss small issues.

That's the point. Not a meeting where we're having a meeting to discuss, we're going to start storing food or we're going to start doing this or prepare for Passover. Just a general meeting where anybody can share anything they want to or something that might be bothering them because what I've learned in life is where I've seen big problems in communities, it wasn't over doctrines. Hardly ever if I can even think once that it was over doctrines, it's over tiny issues that get big. And that's why by meeting together, by talking things out, a lot of times that can help.

Proverbs 20 and verse 19. It says,

Proverbs 20:19 *A revealer of secrets walks about as a gossip, so do not meddle with him who opens his lips wide.*

So, you don't want to get the reputation of being a gossip. And if somebody is, there are people that out there that do have their reputation, stay far away. *Bad communications ruin good habits.* And that's the whole reason why in a community, when there's people that are there, it doesn't matter, there could be 20 people, there could be 100 people. When a new person is coming, I think it's great that in order to have a new person come in a community that everybody has to white ball that person.

I've heard people even some elders come up to me and say, this isn't biblical. I say, it's 100% biblical. Because if you have ... and I've seen it, if you have 25 people that are living in an area, they gave up everything, they moved to an area, they're living there for five, six, seven years, gave up everything in their life, even their jobs, and they're living there. And now one person comes from the outside and disrupts everything and destroys it. Is it fair to those people that were living there for seven years and gave up everything? Of course not. Of course it's not fair. So why shouldn't it be that way? It should be that when a new person comes in, everybody should be able to have that.

In Proverbs 6 verse 16, one of the strongest scriptures here of what Yahweh hates, Proverbs 6:16,

Proverbs 6:16-19 *These six things YAHWEH hates; yea, seven are hateful to his soul; High eyes, ... pride ... a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that plots evil plans, feet running to run to mischief, a false witness who breathes lies, and he sending out strife among brothers.*

So, like I said, if you look through your Bible, the word Yahweh and the word hate, you won't find too many times there. So, these are things we want to make sure that we're not coming anywhere near because it's the things that Yahweh hates.

How do you stop it? How do you stop gossip? I'm going to go through here three very simple things. **The first thing is repentance.** It's the 9th commandment. It is a commandment. It's not just a nice saying, but the 9th commandment is *you shall not bear false witness, right? You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.* So, the first thing is repentance when it's done. And like I said, it's happened to all of us that at one time or another we said something we wish we could bring back and you just make it right. You just apologize, you repent and you move on.

Number two, know the source ... know the source. A lot of times gossip is innocent enough. It's not on purpose. It's just that it was a wrong source. And like I said, at the times we're living in now, particularly with internet and now AI, many times people send me things and I appreciate that brethren send me links and news articles. I have certain brethren that that's actually a job that they do for me every week because I don't have the time to be looking at it.

And so, I appreciate people sending it to me, but sometimes some of the stuff people send me, I'm wondering where on earth are they getting this from? Where they'll say, you've got to look at this link and I'm on that thing for about two seconds and I'm clicking off of it. Because it's a false Christian pastor or something else. So we want to make sure that we know the source. Remember, **Ephesians 2:2**, *Satan is the prince of the power of the airwaves.*

So, we've got to make sure that we just can't say, "Well, I saw it on the internet" because a lot of stuff on the internet is not true. So, it is gossip, even if we don't mean it that way, if we're sharing information that is not true. We want to make sure that, and again, sometimes when you're talking about world news, you can't know everything for sure. So, you might just be reporting what's in the news and telling people there's nothing wrong with that. But I'm talking about some of these really crazy conspiracy theories that come up.

Revelation 12 and verse 10 says,

Revelation 12:10 *And I heard a great voice in heaven, which said: Now is come the salvation, and the power and the kingdom of our Elohim, and the dominion of his Messiah: because the Accuser of our brethren is cast out, the one who accuses them day and night before our Elohim.*

So, we know that Satan is the accuser of the brethren and we have to think about that, that if we are working in gossip, there are only two spirits, the Spirit of Yahweh and the spirit of Satan and we basically are going on his payroll, if we're promoting gossip and things that aren't true. And remember that Satan used gossip to turn a third of the cherubs against Yahweh. That still boggles my mind. It's past my pay grade. I can't imagine because they were at the throne of Yahweh, they were up there, but that scares me to death to think that. So, we want to make sure that we are not. Gossip is building the character of Satan, not the character of Yahweh.

And we want to make sure, like I said, many times we assume something that simply isn't true. So, if we're thinking something, go to the source ... go to the source, but we want to make sure that whatever is coming out of our mouth is true.

Titus 1 in verse 15 says:

Titus 1:15 *Unto the pure, all things are pure. But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure but even their mind and conscience is defiled.*

So, we want to make sure we're not getting this mindset of what this scripture is saying. We want to have a pure mindset. We want to give the benefit of the doubt. Sometimes I've done this to a fault. I've had people come up to me and sometimes it's been more than one witness or two witnesses and they'll tell me something about somebody, it could even be an elder. And if I don't see hardcore proof, I'd be like, "Hey, you're just assuming this, there's no proof here, don't say it."

But yet there is circumstantial evidence and when there's circumstantial evidence, you do have to follow the road, but you want to make sure before you would come out and publicly say something that you have hard proof. So, it doesn't mean that sometimes when you're seeing things that aren't right, you can investigate it, but it means you shouldn't be publicly saying it unless you have proof that it is true, if you're saying it.

So again, a great scripture that I love - *Unto the pure, all things are pure. But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure but even their mind and conscience is defiled.* So we want to make sure that especially in the world of AI, that the things that we're seeing that they are real.

And number three ... so the **first is** how to stop gossip - **repent. Number two is know the source and number three is don't listen.** You know, don't listen, there's something it's like that human nature that they call it rubbernecking, when there's an accident and traffic is stopped all the way back. And then all of a sudden when you get to the front, you're like, "Oh, that's the traffic it's on the other side. Why is our side stopped?"

Because rubbernecking, the people that are turning toward it, that's what they call it, rubbernecking, its human nature that people want to see it. I would think if it's a bloody accident, you'd be trying to look the other way. Who wants to see that? And yet that's what people want to see. They want to see. They want to see gore. They want to see blood.

And unfortunately, a lot of times people, especially in the world they like gossip. Most of you probably know in the workplace, I hardly in my life have heard people give good reports of their workplace and their bosses, especially people in the world. That's all they do is complain and say bad things about it. And you've probably heard of some workers you worked with too.

So, the third thing is simple don't listen. 2nd John 10 and 11. It says,

2nd John 1:10-11 *If anyone comes to you and does not bear this doctrine, do not receive him into the house, and do not speak a greeting to him. For the one speaking a greeting shares in his evil works.*

So, there's nothing wrong that if someone is saying something to you that just doesn't feel right or seems to be gossip to just say, "To be honest, maybe you shouldn't be saying that to me" or "Have you checked this out? Maybe you should check it out more before you say something." But just not listening is another way.

A gossip detection system, Philippians 4:8, gossip detection system is Philippians 4:8.

Philippians 4:8 *Finally, my brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honest, whatever is just, whatever pure, whatever lovely, whatever of good report, if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think on these things.*

So, this is kind of like the **anti-scripture** to Titus 1:15 where the person that's over there that everything is defiled and unbelieving. This is the other. And it's a great scripture. It's one of my favorite scriptures because *whatever is true, whatever is honest, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is a good report, whatever is a virtue, whatever is a praise, think on these things.*

So, number one, like I said, gossip detection system, is it true? The first thing is it's got to be provable. So, because again, like I said, there are times where something is ... it's not a good situation, but we have to deal with it. Something that someone may be doing, something that is sin, whatever. But the first thing is, is it true? So, until you know 100% something is true, you certainly don't want to be sharing it.

Number two, is it noble? It should not tarnish other people. So, is it noble? Is it just? So, we should not unnecessarily be discussing the sins of others. Sometimes it is necessary. There's a point. Like there's been times where somebody in the congregation had a problem in his background.

It could have been a criminal record with something, maybe with children, and I find out this person is going to be moving in with a family with X amount of children. And I go up to them and I say, "You're going to have to share with them or I'm going to share with them, but you can't move in here without sharing your background." If you're on the police list as a pedophile, it's only right if you're moving in with a family of X amount of kids that you share that with.

Now it could have been years ago, it could have been false, it might not have been true. That's fine. But you need to share it with somebody. It would not be right and it would not be fair for somebody that has that background not to tell somebody. And I've seen it where they did it and they shared and it wasn't a true situation. The person was fine with it. They said, "No, we understand. We believe you. That's good."

But how can I as the pastor when I know that not say something? But I don't go to the person and gossip, I share with the person and say, "You go and talk with them. But if you don't, I will." And I've said that more than once to people because I have a responsibility. Sometimes I have to share information with people if it's pertaining to them. But I'd rather have the person involved do it themselves. So that's only just and that's only right.

So, like I said, but apart from that, apart from that - is it just? We should not unnecessarily be discussing the sins of others. Is it pure, right? Is what we're discussing pure? Is it a good report? A lot of times people are very quickly to go with a bad report, but are they coming the same way with a good report. Must edify with our tongue and use it to give life, not murder, like I was saying. We have the ability of something that few people in this world have that our words can give life or our words can take life.

And the last thing - is it necessary? Like I was just saying. There is a time that is necessary to share negative news. So, we have to make sure we are doing that if it's the right situation. And discussing it most of the time it's according to the **Matthew 18** process, but like I say, if it's a situation where somebody is going to be in contact with somebody else and their background would bring that they need to bring a matter up and they need to do that.

John 7 in verse 24 says,

John 7:24 *Do not judge according to appearance or hypocrisy, ... sight ... but judge righteous judgment.*

So, there are times, especially in the world we live in, that and this is what the news and the government and the internet does all the time. They twist the truth around a little bit to make something ... they'll take 10% of the truth and they'll twist it to harm people, to harm people's reputations and say so.

So, do not judge according to appearance, right? By sight, but judge, righteous judgment. We want to make sure we're doing that. And that's why the Matthew 18 process is there - *in the mouth of two or three witnesses let everything be established*, but not by one witness because that one witness could either be lying or just his judgment could be off, but in the mouth of two or three witnesses. So we want to make sure, like I said, we're judging according to righteous judgment.

Proverbs 25:11, it says,

Proverbs 25:11 *A word rightly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.*

Another one of my favorite scriptures. When I think of apples, and I like apples, golden apples, I wouldn't want to break my teeth, but I can imagine golden apples would probably be worth a lot in these days the way gold is, but *a word rightly spoken is like apples of gold and settings of silver*. Beautiful. That's the point, our words we want to be giving life, encouraging words bring hope and encouraging words bring life.

Proverbs 15 and 23 ... Proverbs 15 and verse 23 says,

Proverbs 15:23 *A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and how good is a word in its right timing!*

A man has joy by the answer of his mouth and how good is a word and it's right timing. So, people need positive words. And I know in my life, there's been times where I might be down because of a situation and I wouldn't say it and you get a nice positive letter from somebody or a positive email and it really, really lifts you up.

So, we do this at the school sometimes. We'll have the students write somebody a positive letter. It really makes a difference. Just think at work if you've ever gotten a good progress report at work or even just your boss came up and said something like, "Hey, I really noticed that you're doing a good job or whatever." It makes you feel good, right? It makes you feel like you're doing something, right? So, people do need positive words. And like I said, everybody needs encouragement and that's what we want to think on.

Like it says there again, is it Philippians 4 and verse 8, *whatever is true, whatever is honest, whatever is just, whatever pure, whatever lovely, whatever of good report, if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think on these things.*

And I know in life I say this when I'm teaching the men on public speaking and we have to evaluate each other that whenever you do an evaluation, no matter what, it could be the worst speech in the world. It could be the first time the person ever spoke, you've got to start with something positive. Like, "Hey, at least you're still alive. I saw your heart palpitating. At least you didn't die out there or at least you made it."

Sometimes six, seven minutes when you've never spoken before, it's kind of hard. Like I said, I'm shocked, but public speaking, they say next to dying is the number one fear of people in the world. So, I'll give credit to somebody just for just for getting up there and doing it. It could have been the most horrible speech. They could have broken every role of speaking, public speaking, but they did it. They got up there and they did it. So, let's give you some credit for that.

And then I say also when you're doing your evaluation, especially to a new person, hit on one or two things. Don't be there and just "and the 12th thing you did wrong. And another thing" because there's a point, and even with our children, we know this, that if you're giving too much negative information, the brain just shuts off. So, when we're evaluating, you want to touch on the one or two most important things of the evaluation, and then you leave the rest for the next time. Rome wasn't built in a day, and we're not going to change overnight. So, we want to make sure that we're giving constructive criticism, like we like to say.

So, people do need encouragement, and when it's constructive criticism, I think it's great because as much as we like to hear good things, good things don't really help you to change. So, I like to also hear the part that I did wrong, where I can do something better. So that's where constructive criticism comes in, but we want to make sure, like it says here, *a man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and how good is a word, and it's right timing.*

So, if we can be that person, that word, and I think out of all the gifts in the Bible, they're all great, but the gift of encouragement is one of the best, because it lifts up everybody. And the more we lift, somebody else help them, the more that they can lift somebody else up.

Last scripture here is Colossians 3 and verse 17. Colossians 3 and verse 17 says,

Colossians 3:17 *And everything, whatever you **do in word or in work**, do all things in the name of our Master Yahshua, giving thanks to YAHWEH the Father through Him.*

*And everything, whatever you do in **word or in work**, do all things in the name of our Master Yahshua, giving thanks to YAHWEH the Father through Him.* So like I said, everything starts in the mind, and our thoughts become the words that come out, and the words become actions, and our actions decide whether it's something good or something bad. But I like this scripture here because it says whatever you do **in word or work**.

When I was younger, because I always felt like that's why I was never into self-help books and all those kinds of things when I was really young, because I was like this is for nonsense, the people that do, do; the ones that don't, read these books. And I was wrong because I didn't really need encouragement when I was younger, I just wanted to go out and be a go-getter. But I realized as I got older and particularly as I became a pastor and was searching history and you see that in history the greatest things that happen, whether it's overtakes of countries, of war and all these things, that leaders, the greatest revolutions that **everything starts with words**.

Words are the things that can motivate millions of people. So sure, if it's only words that never go into actions, that doesn't mean much. But actions do start with words. Words are really important. I changed way from the time I was in my early 20s with that 100% opposite, because I see how important it is. And I look at people in my life that I personally knew and just mentors that I learned through reading books and whatnot, and how important it was in my life and doing that.

Like it says here, *whatever you do in word or in work, do all things in the name of our Master Yahshua, giving thanks to YAHWEH the Father through Him*. We have to do everything to the glory of Yahweh. We want to make sure all the words when we get together as the body of Messiah, we should be praying, praising, exhorting, reading scripture, encouraging, but not gossiping.

And I think back when the first congregation that really, really I saw that was coming out of the “quote, unquote” church system when I had left Church in God and we had a home group and it wasn't real big. We probably had about maybe 12 or 15 local people. Sometimes when we would meet on Sabbath, we might have 20 or 30, but we used to meet every single day of the week. And it was awesome.

That's when we decided to get rid of our TVs. That's when we decided the group we had it was just so awesome because every single night we met, we would get together. We'd pray, we'd sing, we'd read Scripture, we'd talk. It was just like everything was just on the Bible. We grew so much when we did that together. It was such an awesome time. And I still think about that.

So that's why I say when we get together, that's the way it should be. Everything should be focused around Yahweh, around praising, around Scripture, encouraging. One of my favorite parts of Sabbath is always testimonies and then praise and worship. And it's beautiful seeing that. But certainly we want to make sure that our words are words of encouragement and not words of gossip.

And I go back to our first tour guide that we had made many, many, many moons ago. I told you he was a really famous man in Israel and he was tour guide of the year and archaeologists, famous archaeologists for things. And he was a jokester though. He was writing a book, a tour guide book on jokes. And he had a lot of really, really good jokes that he used to have. But one was like, because a lot of times when people would come on tours, they'd want to say, because like, what's going on? And they'd want to listen to something. He'd go up and he'd always say, “Hey, can you keep a secret?” And they go, “Yeah, yeah, yeah.” There you go. “I can too.” So, he would have his jokes that way. But we want to have on that mindset. Can you keep a secret? Well, I can too.

Like I was saying in the beginning with some of these scriptures saying, *as a man thinks so he is*. And we want to make sure because it's so easy in the world we live in today, not just the Laodicean era, but like we live in a crazy world. We live in a world where, like I said, so many things are through internet and there's so much fake stuff out there that we want to make sure that we are keeping the bar high as far as this goes, as far as making sure that everything coming out of our mouth is true and that **Philippians 4:8** is something we should put on our refrigerators. It's something we should read every day. And wow, if there's, I don't think there's a better scripture in the Bible to read every day and really say, I want to make sure everything I'm thinking and doing is going to be Philippians 4:8. So I will read it one more time in ending.

Philippians 4:8 *Finally, my brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honest, whatever is just, whatever pure, whatever lovely, whatever of good report, if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think on these things*

Yahweh bless. Shabbat shalom.