

Safford Church of Christ

3888 S Hwy 191, Safford, AZ 85546

18 October 2015

Topics

A.M. Bible Class:

I am a church member

A.M. Lesson:

How should Christians respond? (Acts 5:17f)

P.M. Lesson:

What must a Christian do to be saved?
(Matthew 7:13-29)

Wednesday:

Faith and works (James 2:20-26)

Pulpit Evangelist

Ken Knowlton: 428-3494

Elders

Greg Briggs: 428-8756

John Cunningham: 428-0895

Sunday Bible Class	10:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship	11:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship	6:30 P.M.
Wednesday Evening Class	6:30 P.M.
Thursday Ladies Bible Class	10:00 A.M.

*Great are the works of the Lord,
studied by all who delight in them. Psalm 111:2
Please silence your cell phones and other electronic devices.*

What does the Bible say about swearing and cursing?

Roger Barrier, crosswalk.com

Swearing is most likely as old as the human race. The Bible is filled with examples of people who swore! Today, cursing and swearing fill the air all around us.

Most of us think of swearing in the context of being angry, frustrated, hurt, abusive, violent, or blasphemous.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul used the strongest swear word in the Greek language to denounce those who were tempting his readers to alter and/or desert the true Gospel of Christ. Paul wrote: "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!" (Galatians 1:8-9).

The term, "eternally condemned" is a nice, sweet

translation compared to a translation of the real word Paul used.

Now, let's go a little deeper.

Much of the swearing in the Bible is connected to the idea of swearing an oath. To swear means to make a solemn declaration, invoking a deity, or a sacred person or thing, to confirm the honesty, truth, and/or the intentionality of the one swearing the oaths to fulfill the declaration.

An example today of swearing an oath occurs in the courtroom when we swear to "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God."

Swearing oaths was a common practice in Jesus' day. He oath swearing took a step further in Matthew 5:33-37: "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord. But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'-- anything beyond this comes from the evil one."

The sensitive and insidious issue behind swearing has to do with the sacredness of God, His name, and

His power.

Look with me to the second of the Ten Commandments: "Thou must not take the Lord's name in vain" (Exodus 20:7). The word "vain" means "empty." "Taking the Lord's name in vain" has nothing to do with cursing. This commandment refers to the sin of emptying the Name of God of power—declaring that God has little or no power to create, judge, be in control or provide the strength we all need for victorious living. In other words, taking the Lord's name in vain is a way of saying that He's not omnipotent. This is a sin.

The Bible also uses the concept of swearing in how we relate to people. This is illustrated by Jesus in His Sermon on the Mount. Jesus declared the consequences of swearing and cursing another person. He said, "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell" (Matthew 5:21-22). "Raca" means "worthless." The Jews used it as a word of contempt. It was derived from a word root meaning, "to spit."

Jesus told us not to use swearing or cursing to demean another person.

Cursing another person may take many forms. It can be as innocuous as talking derogatorily "behind someone's back." It can be verbal and quite hurtful. It can be as demonstrative as using vulgar and unmistakable hand gestures out a car window.

Instead of cursing, Jesus encouraged us in Luke 6:27-28: "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."

Paul also gave us positive advice on how to use our words—not to curse—but to bless others. He wrote in Ephesians 4:29-30: "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to the needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

The meaning of "unwholesome talk" is rather obvious. One of the purposes of our talk is to build others up—according to their needs. This implies that we know what their needs are. They may need comfort, guidance, encouragement, acceptance,

approval or even loving rebukes. Can you imagine what our homes would be like if nothing but wholesome talk came out of our mouths?

When all is said and done the Bible makes it very clear that we should clean up our speech. Why? Because Jesus teaches that unclean words come from a dirty heart. Our light to the world is extinguished and no one sees Jesus in us (Matthew 15:10).

Jesus also says that our unclean words lead us into depravity and sin. Our Christian purity is flushed down the toilet [Matthew 15:17-19].

So what do we do?

We read the Bible often. God's Words are like Ivory soap. They purify your heart and uplift your thoughts.

We filter our mouths and think and say wholesome and positive things.

We follow Paul's advice, and experience peace and blessing.

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you" (Philippians 4:8-9).

News:

Pete and Cindy Waller are out of town this weekend.

Jacey is recovering from back surgery.

Richard Tuey has cancer.

Extended prayer list:

Robin Richards—severe back pain

Tatyana Knowlton—macular degeneration

Ken Cocke—back and shoulder pains. Infection

H.L. Boling—general health and complications from leukemia

Mike Cavasos—chronic pain, foot issues, sinus issues

Sandy Cavasos—degenerative disk disease

Nic and Ani Self—health and personal needs

