

Murmuring Against One Another

by Alan Martin

The sermon emphasizes the importance of controlling our words and learning meekness in order to live a life that honors God and builds others up.

Scripture: Numbers 14:1-2, Numbers 14:27, Psalm 78:40, Isaiah 63:10, James 1:19-20, James 1:26

Topics: "Murmuring"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of controlling one's tongue and being slow to anger. He encourages listeners to be quick to hear and slow to speak, showing restraint and wisdom. The speaker acknowledges the struggle with anger and urges listeners to repent and despise themselves when they realize their own sinfulness. He reminds them of God's steadfast love and mercy, highlighting the need to extend the same grace to others and not hold their sins against them. The sermon emphasizes the ministry of reconciliation and the importance of not keeping a record of wrongs.

Transcript

Father, we trust that your heart is always to be known. You long for us to know you far beyond where we are in our awareness of that. Your heart is perfectly consistent.

Your righteousness has been brought near. You have already made everything available that we have needed for life and godliness. And yet still, Father, through the foolishness of preaching, through Lord, the grace that you work in me or in others, in the sharing, Father, you have said that your grace can continue to be imparted to others.

According to your will, Father, may there be a grace, the grace of Christ imparted to strengthen the hearts of your sons and daughters. May your word produce faith. May that faith result in you being pleased in overcoming the world, Lord.

May the one who has the most here today already leave with more. And may in your mercy, may even he who has little be increased today. For your own namesake, Father, grant us an atmosphere of hearing.

Pour out on us the spirit of wisdom and revelation. Open your word to us. Guide us into all truth.

Breathe life through your word. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

What is on my heart this morning has come from just seeing several of the saints here struggle, wrestle with a beast from the inside. And many of us may still yet struggle with this now, presently. As I share more about that, you'll understand what that is.

If you will open your Bibles to James chapter 1. James chapter 1. Alright, James chapter 1. Find verses 19 and 20. So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be, I'm going to get this thing crazy in a minute. Okay, let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak.

In the Greek it's actually slow to begin speaking. And when you understand how deadly your tongue is, you never want to let it have very much reign. You never give it very much room to operate.

Because a loose tongue is more deadly than any other weapon on the earth today. More death in it than we can possibly imagine. Slow to even begin speaking and slow to ever come to anger.

That would be the way it would be in the Greek. That's the intent. Quick to hear.

Get there quickly. Let the wise listen and add to their learning. Let the discerning get guidance.

Slow to begin speaking. And slow to ever come to anger. For the anger of man doth not produce the righteousness of God.

Doth not produce comes from the Greek word for work with a negative ergon. It is not profitable. The anger of man is not profitable for God's righteousness.

The same word is used in Matthew chapter 12 verse 36. Matthew 12 verse 36. I'll start in verse 35.

The good man bringeth forth good out of the good treasure stored up in him. The evil man bringeth forth evil out of the evil stored up within him. But I say to you that every unprofitable word that may be spoken in the name of the Lord spoken by men, they will render an account for it in the day of judgment.

It's interesting that it does not say every unprofitable thought. God knows your thoughts as well. But it says that every unprofitable word is what we're going to be judged for.

For it is by, not aside by our thoughts we shall be acquitted or by our thoughts we shall be condemned, but it's by our words we're acquitted. It's by our words that we're going to be condemned. Now the stress on this in the New Testament, you can begin to see it.

Look in Colossians chapter 3. Colossians chapter 3 verse 8. Colossians 3 verse 8. But now you yourselves are to put off all these. Now follow. Anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, and filthy language.

Where? Out of your mouth. All of these things want to come out of your mouth. None of these things should be coming out of a believer's mouth.

None of them. Not anger, not wrath, not malice, not blasphemy, not filthy language. None of them should come out of our mouth.

None of these things proceeding forth from our mouth will produce righteousness in ourselves or in others. They're unprofitable. Turn with me to Ephesians 4. 29.

It's very similar. Most of you know these things. I'm not speaking to these things to you because you have not heard them.

I speak unto you even though you know them and probably are firmly established in the truth you now have. Ephesians chapter 4 beginning with verse 29. Let no corrupt word proceed forth out of your mouth but only what is good for necessary edification that it may impart grace to the hearer.

Now the word for corrupt comes from the Greek word sapos. Well what does sapos sound like to you? What's the first part of that word? Sap. When does a sap begin to run in the trees? When it gets warm.

When does a sap begin to run in you? When does your sap start running? But the word is not a solid thing. It's a corrupting thing. Building others up and imparting grace is profitable words.

It's profitable to God's kingdom and His righteousness. But look in verse 30 and 31. And why would it be after this verse? Let no unwholesome talk proceed forth out of your mouth but only what is good for building others up according to their needs and that ministers grace to the hearer.

And grieve not the Spirit of God by whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption and let all, here again, all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice. See we need to understand the correlation between the things that we allow to come out of our mouth and the grief we bring to the Holy Spirit of God when we do so. Grieving the Holy Spirit is far more than just simply disappointing Him.

When it grieved God that He had made mankind, He destroyed everything with breath on it save Noah's family who was a perfect and upright man in his generation and a remnant of all the animal life. When God was grieved the first time, everything on the earth except Noah's family and a remnant of animal life was wiped out. When it grieved the Lord that He made Saul king, He removed him from his office and He found another man to be king after his own heart.

And when He grieved, when Israel grieved Him in the wilderness, they provoked God's anger to the extent that He swore an oath in His wrath that none of the generation twenty years or older would inherit the land of milk and honey that they themselves had been promised and that God delivered them from out of Egypt to bring them into. But they did not obtain the promises. There's two references to Israel's grieving the Lord.

Isaiah 63.10 and Psalm 78.40. You can turn there, but I just want to tell you in both of these passages it is stated, two words are stated together, and they rebelled and grieved Him. And they rebelled and grieved Him. Now we need to understand what that rebellion looked like.

What did the rebellion look like? Turn to Numbers chapter 14. Let's see if we can see it. Very beginning of the chapter.

What did the rebellion look like? Someone read quite loudly if you would verses 1 and 2. If you wouldn't mind project that. So what did their rebellion look like? They lifted up their voice. They let words come out of their mouth that were unprofitable to God's righteousness.

They lifted up their voice and they cried out. How many of you speak so calmly and peaceably when you're mad? How about those gentle words that proceed forth out of our mouth when the sap is running? All they did, they lifted up their voice and they cried out and they spoke, what? Against. You know it says, he who speaks against his brother speaks against the law and judges the law.

And it says in James, brothers murmur not against one another, the judge is at the door. And the judge is going to be judging you based upon how profitable you've been to his kingdom. And grievous words that come out when you're lifting your voice grieve his spirit.

And if you will, brother Andy would you mind reading verse 27 of that same chapter. Numbers 14 verse 27. And so he goes on to say, as surely as I live the Lord I will do to you, what? The very things I heard you say.

So what does their rebellion look like? It looked like words coming out of their mouth. Do you understand that? Their rebellion simply looked like words coming out of their mouth spoken in their passion. And they died in the wilderness because of it.

Short and outside the promises of God. Turn to James 1.26 and see if this doesn't make sense. James chapter 1. James 1.26. If anyone among you thinks he's religious, performing some spiritual service to God, and does not bridle or keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.

Why a bridle? What does a bridle do? It prevents a very powerful animal from giving in to its own impulses. A horse wants to go somewhere and you pull back in that bridle and you're shoving a piece of metal up under the plate right there. You know brother Sid, we need a piece of spiritual metal shoved right there.

Right there when you're hot and you're angered. You need something in the roof of your mouth that will keep it quiet and stop some kind of grievous grumbling word from coming out against someone. It's a little more serious than just disappointing someone.

It could cost you heaven. It's serious. Is it any wonder why if you're still in James chapter 3 verse 1 and 2 it says, let not many of you become teachers knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

For we all stumble in many things, but if anyone does not stumble in word, he's a perfect man able to bridle, what? The whole body. You know men who are able to deal with the powerful impulses of passion and anger without allowing unprofitable, unwholesome speech to come out of their mouth are pretty rare upon the earth nowadays. Listen to what Proverbs 16 verse 32 says, He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty and that he that ruleth his spirit more excellent than he that taketh a city.

It takes more power to keep your mouth closed than it does for a warrior to take a city. The opposite of this is stated this way in Proverbs 25, 28. Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.

What it's saying is a man who does not have an ability to keep his mouth shut when the sap is rising is like a city with a gaping hole in it. His soul has a gaping hole in it and the enemy of his soul, of your and my soul can exploit that opening whenever he wants to and as often as he wants to. You're a sitting duck.

He doesn't need you stirred up all the time. Just enough for him to accomplish his destructive power. It says one sinner destroys much good.

It says a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor. You see it says in Proverbs 29, 11, a fool uttereth all his mind. Whose mind does a fool utter? Don't feel too bad, you're only saying what you think.

A fool uttereth all his mind. The Bible says even a fool is thoughtwise if he keeps quiet. When they utter all their mind their folly is presently known.

A fool uttereth all his mind but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards. A wise man keepeth his thoughts inside until the sap stops running and his spirit cools and he's weighed the words and said they're not profitable. I shall not speak them.

It says that he that is soon angry, the Hebrew word there would mean indicate who's quickly goaded to anger. A person that can be quickly goaded into anger dealeth foolishly. The last part of that dealeth foolishly in the Septuagint would say he goes about without any counsel.

You know who his counsel is when he's going about in anger? It's rage. His own stupidity is presently known. Doesn't sound like someone walking in the Holy Spirit does it? Doesn't sound like someone under control of the advocate, the parakletos who comes along side and personally whispers I wouldn't say that.

Everything you say can and will be held against you. It says in Proverbs 14, 29, he that is slow to wrath is of great understanding but he that is hasty of spirit exalts his folly and a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor. He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding.

The other way it says it in the Septuagint is that he that is hasty of spirit, instead of saying hasty of spirit it says he that is little sold. He that just is a little man, no self-control, no power, completely blown to and fro by his own passions that man exalts folly. Perhaps nothing is more prone to goad us into speaking unwholesome words or grievous words than anger or wrath.

Both anger and wrath in the Hebrew and the Greek are pretty similar. In the Hebrew, the root word for anger, believe it or not, is the snout. Have you noticed that? What happens when your adrenaline, when the sap starts running? Those nostrils begin to flare, your respiration gets hot, you begin to breathe.

The Greek word is very similar. The word for anger in the Greek is thuo, to rush, to breathe hard, to blow. And often times anger is described as a passion being stirred up to a fervent heat that ends up boiling over.

Perhaps nothing is more destructive or difficult to deal with than passions that have been stirred up. The Scripture says anger is cruel, fury is overwhelming. Like heated air building up pressure, tension and frustration seek an outlet to vent their storm.

And like most tornadoes and hurricanes where the air has been supercharged, our anger and wrath often leave relationships devastated in their wake. Reckless words do what? They pierce like a sword. But the tongue of the wise commendeth healing.

This verse sums it up. I'd like you to turn there, Proverbs 17, 27. And I'd like someone with the King James to read it, nice and clearly again if you would, projected.

Proverbs 17, 27. He that hath knowledge, spareth his words. The Hebrew word there is restrains them.

He restrains his words and that he that hath understanding is of an excellent spirit. The NIV says he is even tempered. You know we'd say it in modern language, he's cool headed.

What do we call someone who blows up all the time? Hothead. That's what we call them. The New Testament echoes this same truth.

Look in James chapter 3, again if you will. James chapter 3, go to verse 13. James 3 verse 13.

Who is wise and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show it out of a good conversation, his works, done in the meekness of wisdom. Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it out of his good conversation by his works done in the meekness of wisdom. Now what does that mean? What's the meekness of wisdom? See humility would not be the best translation there.

The word for meekness is very similar to Proverbs 17, 27. Sparing or restraining. The word for meek in the Greek is prautes.

It comes from the, they use the first word with the Greek war horse, was called a praus horse. And it is the picture of power completely subdued, completely under control. You see, let him show it that all his passion is under control.

Completely, show it that way. Don't show it by your doctrine, show it by your restraint. Now, I'm going to do something that I have rarely done, very few times.

I'm just going to read something to begin to pour out of my heart. I just pray that he that has ears to hear will let him hear. You see, as I began to study, as I began to study and try to figure out what is the meaning, how to deal with this cruel anger and this overwhelming fury, this passion of men when the sap begins to run, when you're stirred up, when you're provoked and how you deal with it.

Because I know many of you hate it. You hate it. You want to be delivered from it.

You're tired of saying sorry afterward. How long are we going to say I'm sorry after we do this? When are we going to stop the word from coming out of our mouth? And struggling to labor to understand this and looking at the scripture in the Old Testament and trying to, Lord what is this? I began to see what the scripture said, how these people dealt with it. It said they dealt with it by wisdom.

It says the wise men defereth anger. The wise in heart defereth his anger. It says the fool shows his annoyance at once, but the prudent man keeps himself under control.

And I began to see wise men and men of understanding and prudent men and men with discretion, they had the victory over this. So I began to ask, what do they know? What is it they know? What have they learned that we need to learn if we are being overcome in this area? What did they know? What have they learned? And this is what began to, pondering this question, this is what began to pour out of my heart. Where can we learn this meekness? Where can we learn this powerful restraint that keeps words unwholesome, unproductive, unprofitable words from coming out of our mouth when the sap is rising? Where do we learn this meekness? That's right.

Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek, meek and lowly of heart. Those who have really learned Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, are the ones who receive power to become God's true sons.

These are spiritual men, not carnal, not mere babes in Christ any longer. They have received the Spirit of God, the Spirit of knowledge and of wisdom and of counsel and power, and they have begun to understand every good thing God has prepared for those who love Him, as the Spirit makes all these things known to them. And as spiritual men, they are able to judge things more clearly, because they've

received the understanding that they are not to know anyone any longer after the flesh.

They've stopped judging merely by what they see with their eyes and hear with their ears. They have learned not to lean upon their own understanding, but to always seek to know the mind of Christ in every matter, realizing that all judgment has been committed to Him, and that they in themselves and of themselves are not worthy, nor able to know, nor able to discern, nor able to communicate, nor able to act with the same purity, clarity and power of Christ. They consider themselves merely to be unworthy servants, chosen not because of anything of worth in their own life.

They've come to understand grace and mercy. They know and rely on the love God has for them through their redemption from slavery to sin. They have come to know Him who is from the beginning, that He is love.

He is the compassionate, gracious God, slow to anger, and abounding in loving kindness, forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin, maintaining love to thousands of generations of those who fear Him and keep His commandments. They've come to understand that He is kind to both the wicked and the ungrateful, that He causes both His sun to shine and His rain to fall upon the just and unjust alike. They've come to understand that God demonstrated His love for them, and that while they were yet sinners and without strength, Christ died for them.

They remember that when the kindness and love of God for mankind appeared, He saved them not on the basis of righteous deeds which they had done, but according to His mercy. They've come to know that the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, that His mercies never come to an end. And you know what most of us know that for? Ourselves.

When are we going to learn that for others? When is the steadfast love of the Lord never going to cease for your brother, for your wife, for your husband, for your children? When are we going to learn that His mercies never come to an end for them? They've come to understand that the Lord takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but He delights to show mercy. They've come to a deep understanding that God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. They realize that when Christ was in the world, God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting men's sins against them.

And like Him, they have received the same ministry of reconciliation, that is, not counting other men's sins against them by keeping a record of wrongs. Love keeps no record of wrongs. They have received the spirit of the fear of the Lord and have learned to keep a tight rein upon their tongue, realizing that they will have to give an account on the Day of Judgment for every unprofitable word they have spoken, and especially those words spoken in the unmerciful, unforgiving spirit manifested during the heat of anger.

They have come to know that reckless words pierce like a sword, and that a carnal human wrath does not produce God's righteousness. They have begun to know and walk in the peaceable fruit of righteousness. These prudent men and women are soberly aware that the tongue has the power of life and death, a power so destructive that it's called a world of evil, a world of evil that the prudent see from afar and hide themselves from.

They understand that the tongue is set on fire by hell, and that it's capable of setting the whole course of their own life and the life of others on fire. Men who have learned Christ in this way are conscious of the tremendous debt that they have been freely forgiven. And with understanding, with this understanding,

they have stopped laying their unclean hands on the throats of a brother.

Get your unclean hands off your brother's throat before you're handed to the tormentor, before all your debts are reinstated before God. And you never get out until you pay the last farthing. The fear of God in them produced by knowing that if the Lord marked iniquity, how many of us could stand? None.

Causes them to tremble at the thought of being given over to the tormentors for such ungrateful contempt at the riches of God's kindness, tolerance, and patience, and the very mercy that led them to repentance. A man, he whom I have forgiven much, loves much. How much have you been forgiven when you're venting your vile anger on a brother? How much consciousness are you showing when your hands are on his throat for that minor debt he owes you compared to your eternal judgment that you've been forgiven for? These are serious matters.

The knowledge of Christ has taught these men meekness. They are restrained. What did Paul say? What constrained him? The love of Christ constrained me.

Christ didn't just say, learn of me that I am meek. What's the other thing? I am meek and those who have really learned Christ, prudent men, wise men, discerning men, spiritual men, also have learned the lowliness. They have a correct view of themselves.

These men have also received wisdom, understanding, and discernment about their own life. Their glimpses of the glory and grace of Christ, high and lifted up, seated on his throne, have caused them to cry out like Isaiah, what? Woe is me, not woe is my brother for I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. They've caused them to cry out like Job, I had heard of you but now I've seen you.

And what did he do? What was the end of his words? I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes. Let me tell you what, let me tell you when you think you're despising a brother you haven't seen yourself. I've been the chiefest of sinners in all this.

You've seen Christ, what do you cry out like Peter? Depart from me Lord, I am a sinful man. See prudent men fully realize that at one time they too were foolish, disobedient, deceived, and deceivers, having lived in malice and envy, hating others and being hated by them, that they themselves were at one time fully controlled by the spirit of disobedience that was at work in them, and every one of them were sons of the evil one. And like everyone else were objects of wrath.

They've not forgotten that they were wretched men, enslaved in a body of death, unable to do many of the good intentions they had, and powerless to stop doing the things that they knew were evil and actually hated but couldn't stop doing anyway. Thus they have received, these prudent men, these wise men, have received wisdom not to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think. But they think of themselves with a sober judgment, and they've stopped comparing themselves among themselves, and they no longer boast in anything or in anyone save Jesus Christ and the measure of faith that God has granted to men by His grace.

No more boasting about men! We're all wretched! Any one of us that might by His grace and power at work in us that are doing well, praise God, bless Jesus! No more of this, I am of this man, I am of this man. None of those men are anything, that's what Paul said. None of them are anything, neither am I! They know that in and of themselves, they are powerless to do anything good.

Because in actuality, no good thing dwells within them. Why are you and I so insulted when someone describes the no good thing that dwells within us? Why do we get so bent out of shape when someone tells us how ugly we are? Is it you don't really believe you are? Is it you really had deceived yourself into thinking you were so much better? I don't think dirt mines being walked on. They understand that Christ is their wisdom, sanctification and redemption, and that they were chosen precisely because He chooses the weak things, the foolish things, the despised things, the things that are not, to nullify the things that are.

They realize that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God, neither the sexually immoral, the adulterers, the thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor slanderers, nor swindlers will inherit it, but they fully realize that that is what they were before they were washed, before they were sanctified, before they were justified to the grace and mercy of God in Jesus Christ. Wise, prudent and spiritual men know God. They actually know Him.

And the knowledge of God in them is power. And the powerful knowledge of God in them restrains their passions, shuts their mouth, and keeps a tight rein on their tongue. And those that vent their unprofitable words have only deceived themselves and their religion is worthless, according to the Scripture.

See, foolish men, on the other hand, are nearsighted and blind. And what have they forgotten? They forget that they have been cleansed of their past sins. They usually forget that while they are laying their unclean hands on a brother's throat.

See, not having virtue, knowledge, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love, because they have not been diligent to add these things to their faith so that they would be in them with an ever-increasing measure, they become nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed of their past sins, and not being filled with the grace of Christ in their heart. Instead, their own darkened understanding causes them to speak combative words out of the carnal immaturity stored up in their heart, out of the emptiness. There is no power there, and so when they are provoked, the sap runs without restraint, through neglect of being filled with the Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, meekness, faithfulness, and self-control, through neglect of being filled with the Spirit and all of His fruit, they vent angry, judgmental, unmerciful, ungracious, piercing, aggressive words.

When reviled, they give back, and eye for eye, tooth for tooth, carnally, just measure, according to their standard of law they've fallen into. See, Christ has become to someone in that state of, what? None effect. Same word, by the way, guys.

Christ is not profiting such a person. And therefore, they are powerless to take their own thoughts captive, and slow down the heat wave of passion seeking to burst forth upon whoever is the particular target of their frustration this time. Not knowing Christ fully, nor having His power, they are blown to and fro by their own passions.

And here's the saddest part of it. They have seen many relationships shipwrecked upon the wreaths of their own unrighteous past. This is my concern, and it goes far beyond my concern beyond a mere disappointment to God, or disappointing another brother.

My concern is that there are going to be people standing before Christ on the day of judgment, on the day when they actually get judged for their actions rather than their good intentions, and that their actions have spoken something loud and clear. I never knew you. You never knew my power.

It never got a hold of your tongue. You never started showing mercy. You gave no evidence that you understand how much I forgave you of your sin.

Depart from me. You cursed. Depart into the hell, the lake of fire.

Prepare for the devil and his angels, all of those who go around accusing the brethren. That's my concern. That there are those who do what they do because you do not know God.

You've just deceived yourself, because if you knew Him, how can you not keep a tight rein on your tongue? And don't tell me it's because you are like your father Adam. Which Adam are you like? Adam number one or the last Adam? Who is the life-giving Spirit? Who is the Spirit of counsel and power? Who is the Spirit of love which is long-suffering, which is kind, which is not proud, which does not boast, which is not easily angered, and keeps no record of wrongs? You know, God desires truth in the innermost part. And some of us are going to be faced with a question.

I don't care how old you are and how long you think you've known Christ. If knowing Christ means you are being transformed from glory to glory, when will the reckless words cease? When will they get put to death? When will that be the evidence that Christ is in you? Among the saints there should not even be any mention of fighting and bickering and judgment of such things. Shameful that these things should even be mentioned among the saints.

And when we have these kind of things among us, we are completely defeated already. There is no place for such things among us. Now, I just sense that the mercy of God is calling many of you to repentance.

And you better deal with it honestly. You better deal with it honestly. You better lay the axe at the root.

You better bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance. If God grants you a godly sorrow, it's going to see what a readiness to see all justice done. And it is an unjust thing for you to bear the name of Christ and continue to spill your uncontrolled anger.

I don't know what it's going to take. I just want to be quiet and still. It's late.

But there are people here that need to be delivered. They need to come to know Christ. Yes.

Lord, I repent of the anger that I... Lord, that it must be there because my wife has brought it to my attention. Lord, help me not to be distracted by the world and the world as well and the world as well. Anymore, Lord, that...

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