

SERIES: RELATIONSHIPS

SERMON: HEART TO MOUTH

10-15-17

By Pastor Rhonda Howard

OPENER:

For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. Matthew 12:34

To connect with people in strong, healthy relationships you are going to have to connect with your heart. Now, to connect with your heart means you are going to have to communicate what is in your heart.

Communication: “a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, speech, signs or behavior”

The real-life definition would probably be more like this: “a process by which information is confused by individuals through a conflicting system of emotions, behaviors, backgrounds, and desires.”

Some of us frequently have the connection of “Foot and Mouth.” I know I suffer from that from time to time.

Story about miscommunication:

A rather old fashioned lady, was planning a couple of weeks vacation in Florida. She also was quite delicate and elegant with her language. She wrote a letter to a particular campground and asked for reservations. She wanted to make sure the campground was fully equipped but didn't know quite how to ask about the “toilet” facilities. She just couldn't bring herself to write the word “toilet” in her letter. After much deliberation, she finally came up with the old fashioned term “Bathroom Commode,” but when she wrote that down, she still thought she was being too forward. So she started all over again; rewrote the entire letter and referred to the “Bathroom Commode” simply as the “B.C.”. Does the campground have its own “B.C.?” is what she actually wrote.

Well, the campground owner wasn't old fashioned at all, and when he got the letter, he couldn't figure out what the lady was talking about. That “B.C.” really stumped him. After worrying about it for several days, he showed the letter to other campers, but they couldn't figure out what the lady meant either. The campground owner finally came to the conclusion that the lady was and must be asking about the location of the local Baptist Church.

So he sat down and wrote the following reply:

“Dear Madam: I regret very much the delay in answering your letter, but I now take pleasure of informing in that the “B.C.” is located nine miles north of the camp site and is capable of seating 250 people at one time. I admit it is quite a distance away if you are in the habit of going regularly but no doubt you will be pleased to know that a great number of people take their lunches along, and make a day of it..... They usually arrive early and stay late. The last time my wife and I went was six years ago, and it was so crowded we had to stand up the whole time we were there. It may interest you to know that right now, there is a supper planned to raise money to buy more seats.....They plan to hold the supper in the middle of the “B.C.”, so everyone can watch and talk about this great event.....I would like to say it pains me very much, not to be able to go more regularly, but it is surely not for lack of desire on my part....As we grow older, it seems to be more and more of an effort, particularly in cold weather..... If you decide to come down to the campground, perhaps I could go with you the first time you go...sit with you...and introduce you to all the other folks..... This is really a very friendly community....

WHY IS COMMUNICATION SO IMPORTANT TO RELATIONSHIPS?

ALL RELATIONSHIPS ARE FUELED BY COMMUNICATION.

ILLUSTRATION:

Just as a car will never reach its destination without fuel, our relationships are guaranteed to go nowhere without communication. Lack of communication has kept some relationships stuck in the garage for decades; others find that they get off to a great start but then run out of gas a short way down the road. It takes good communication to keep a relationship moving ahead for a lifetime. Just as your car needs the right kind of fuel to make it down the road, your relationships need the right kind of communication to make it through life. What would happen to your car if you put water in the gas tank – or battery acid? It’s even more vital to make sure we put the right kind of communication into our relationships.

James 3:7-12 People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, ⁸ but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹ Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. ¹⁰ And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right! ¹¹ Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? ¹² Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can’t draw fresh water from a salty spring.

- We live in a nation where 50% of wives say husbands don’t communicate.
- 86% of those divorced say that it was because of deficient communication.
- 25% of young people indicate they have never had one meaningful conversation with their father.

We need help! When you get right down to it, communication is not a science, it is an art. It's not black and white. It's not always logical, and you certainly cannot reduce successful communication to a simple equation.

OUR WORDS HAVE THE POWER TO TAKE OUR RELATIONSHIPS TO A NEW LEVEL OF IMPACT AND INTIMACY.

Example:

Story in Mark 5:22-43 Jesus was on his way to heal Jairus's daughter. He and those with them press through the crowd that had gathered at the house. They are greeted by the sound of weeping. The community has already gathered to weep with this family, because the little girl has died. Before Jairus can plead with Jesus, "Why didn't you get here more quickly? Why did you have to stop on the way? Now, it's too late." ...Jesus says to Jairus, "She's not dead, she's asleep." The people there that have gathered laugh at Jesus. In that society many mourners would be there with the family, even though they weren't close to the family. Jesus walks past their sarcastic smiles to the room where the little girl is lying. He takes her by the hand, bends down and whispers two simple words into her ear: "Little girl, little girl, get up". And so the little girl stands up and Jesus asks her parents to get her something to eat. Two words, and then a miracle!

GOD CAN WORK A MIRACLE THROUGH THE POWER OF YOUR WORDS!

OUR WORDS CAN HEAL THE SICK, HEAL A RELATIONSHIP, HEAL SOMEONE'S FAITH, HEAL A BROKEN HEART AND HEAL SHATTERED HOPE!

Proverbs 12:18 Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

YOUR WORDS HAVE POWER TO HURT OR TO HEAL.

I.LESSONS IN COMMUNICATION FROM JESUS

HOW DID JESUS COMMUNICATE?

There are Three Lessons about communication that we can learn from Jesus:

- 1. THE FOUNDATION OF COMMUNICATION IS TRUST**
- 2. OUR TONGUE IS TIED TO OUR HEART**
- 3. COMMUNICATION THAT MAKES AN IMPACT IS HONEST**

Lesson No. 1: THE FOUNDATION OF COMMUNICATION IS TRUST

Matthew 5:27 (amp) Let your Yes be simply Yes, and your No be simply No; anything more than that comes from the evil one.

Jesus tells us that we must say what we mean and mean what we say.

How many lies does it take to stop trusting someone? One is all that is needed. Introduce one lie into a relationship and the relationship is eroded.

TRUST IS CENTERED ON TWO TINY WORDS – YES AND NO.

STORY:

A 6 year old son runs to his father when he gets home and says, “Can we go to the park tonight, Daddy?” When Dad says, “Sure, son,” The little boy hears “Yes” loud and clear. And if that yes is later changed to a “No”, no matter how good the reason, trust suffers a blow and communication is hurt.

Jesus is giving us a simple formula for using your words to build trust:

Be careful how you use the words Yes and No.

WE CAN ERODE TRUST IN ONE OF THESE FOUR WAYS:

1. Broken Promises

2. Lies

Lies are always told in the absence of trust.

They say the average person tells about 13 lies per week.

One of the best lessons we can learn from Jesus is to be honest.

The spiritual damage it does to you and to others is huge.

3. Flattery

Flattery is just a positive lie to increase your standing in another person’s eyes, because flattery uses others’ need for acceptance against them. It is a heartlessly manipulative lie. We’re not talking about looking for the best in others and trying to find a way to encourage them – that’s not flattery. Flattery is a flat out lie about someone’s skills or actions for the purpose of personal gain.

What is so wrong about flattery? Flattery invites someone to believe something about himself that isn’t true and if they do believe it, they can easily be sent spinning their life in the wrong direction.

Proverbs 26:28 A lying tongue hates its victims, and flattering words cause ruin.

4. Silence

Whenever we stay silent, we leave the other person wondering what we are thinking which does not build trust.

What if the trust is no longer there? How do you build trust after telling a lie? How do you rebuild trust after you've told a lie, chosen to use flattering words, broken a promise or hidden behind a veil of silence.

ILLUSTRATION:

Trust is the foundation of communication. If you have lost trust in a relationship it is like those houses out on the edge of the cliffs in San Francisco that are just hanging there.

**TRUST IS A COMBINATION OF TRUTH PLUS TIME.
YOU CANNOT SEPARATE THE TWO.**

I hope you will commit to rebuilding trust with a friend, a son or a daughter, or a mother or a father, a husband or a wife. It will not be easy. It will take time. Even though it will be difficult one you've rebuilt and set your relationship down on a foundation of trust it will have been worth it all. The relationship is worth saving.

Remember, the power of your words is immeasurable.

Words like:

- Yes, I love you.
- No, I wasn't listening.
- Yes, I respect you.
- No, I never realized how much I hurt you.
- Yes, I'll keep my promise to take you to the park.
- No, throwing that tantrum won't make me give into you.
- Yes, I enjoy being with you.
- No, I can't accept what you are doing.
- Yes, I'll go through this with you.

LESSON NO. 2: YOUR TONGUE IS TIED TO YOUR HEART

Matthew 12:34 Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.

Jesus says that there is a direct link between our HEART AND MOUTH.

ILLUSTRATION:

- your foot pushes the accelerator on the car and the speed increases – a direct connection.
- Your finger pokes the "up" button outside the elevator and the doors swish open – a direct connection.
- Your heart is feeling bitter and your words are sarcastic and negative – a direct connection.

We can't avoid this. It will happen no matter how hard you try not to let it. So, our solution is to build a bigger dam, so nothing will overflow. We dam up our emotions, our fears and our hearts. Eventually, the dam bursts and out comes a destructive flood of pent up words.

**THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE HEART AND MOUTH
IS ACTUALLY A TWO-WAY CONNECTION.**

**MY HEART AFFECTS THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH
AND THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH AFFECT MY HEART.**

The anger in our heart spills out in biting words that magnify the anger inside and wound our soul. Then our soul reacts by striking out with more angry words.

How do you break this cycle? The answer isn't found in trying to break the connection between heart and what you say. You realize that it is a battle that is fought on two fronts- the heart and the mouth.

Since words are an overflow of the heart, start taking your heart more seriously. Instead of pretending that your words meant nothing. Ask yourself why you said what you said. And since our souls are harmed by what we say, start taking your words more seriously.

You must change the focus of your heart. Jesus showed us that the kingdom of God is the key to heart change.

Jesus said...Matthew 4:17 "Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near."

Repent = change your heart, the way you think and act

The truth of God's kingdom is at the core of dealing with our selfish hearts.

God's kingdom is where God is recognized as King. Jesus taught us to pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done." So, God's kingdom is where His will is done.

ILLUSTRATION:

In any conversation someone is wearing a crown. It could be you trying desperately to get your way, or it could be the other person. The truth is it's often both who are striving to gain control. The only way to change your heart is to take off the fake crown you have fashioned for yourself. Your heart changes whenever and wherever you recognize that God is the only rightful wearer of the crown. He is the only King!! Visualize yourself taking the crown off and praying, "God you are the only one wearing a crown in this conversation.

LESSON NO. 3: COMMUNICATION THAT MAKES AN IMPACT IS HONEST

Most of us value honesty in relationships. We want honesty. But when it comes right down to it, it is a lot easier to be dishonest than honest. Whether it's a little white lie or an all out blatant lie, we'd rather not give the conversation the time or the energy it would take to be honest.

Honesty is a lot more work. It is the work of thinking through the right way to say something, of making sure my motives are pure, of talking through a difficult subject. It is the reality of facing my own anxieties – a beating heart, sweaty palms- when I take the risk to be honest.

But if I want your relationships to grow, honesty is a must.

Ephesians 4:15 Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.

Truth without love doesn't work. It takes truth wrapped in love.

If we are going to talk about honest communication, we must talk about the dishonest practice of gossip.....

Gossip=easy, fluent trivial talk, talk about people behind their backs. It is repeating information about another person's private affairs.

How do you know if you are gossiping? Here are two questions to ask yourself:

1. If you have to look around to make sure that no one can hear what you are saying, you are probably gossiping.
2. If you would not say something in front of that person you are talking about, then you're probably gossiping.

People who gossip are dishonest. They stand in front of you and act like your best friend, when behind your back they tear you down.

Proverbs 26:20 Fire goes out without wood, and quarrels disappear when gossip stops.

2 Thessalonians 3:11 Some of you are living idle lives, refusing to work and wasting time meddling in other people's business.

Story:

One day a woman felt overwhelmed with guilt over her years of malicious gossip. She went to the local pastor and confessed her sin. The pastor was all too aware of her wagging tongue and had experienced the sting of her words first hand... or rather second hand.

"What can I do to rectify all the damage I have caused with my gossip? She asked.

"Gather a bag of feathers," he began. "Then go around to each house and place a feather at their door.

That seemed a simple enough request, so the woman did just as the pastor had instructed. After the task was complete, she returned. "I have done what you requested," she said, "Now what am I to do?"

“Now go back and retrieve each of the feathers, he replied.

“That is impossible, the woman argued. “The wind will have blown them all around the town by now.”

“Exactly, replied the wise pastor. “Once you have spoken an ill word, it drifts through the air on wings of gossip, never to be retrieved. God has forgiven you, but you cannot remove the consequences of your hurtful words or gather them from the places they have landed.”