June 2020 No. 328

**THOUGHTS FROM JEREMY**

**Playing with Fire**

Let us imagine a “hypothetical” situation that may or may not have happened. A child is in the bathroom and sees a candle burning. That child then decides to light a piece of toilet paper on fire. As the toilet paper burns faster than expected, they throw it into the trashcan full of more toilet paper. You can imagine the result! The child then yells for help as they realize that things are quickly getting out of control. In case you were concerned, we did get the fire out before things got dangerous.

After the events of that day, we had to have a serious talk about the dangers of playing with fire. I was reminded of a similar discussion James has on the dangers of playing with fire. The fire of the tongue! James 3:6 reminds us, *“And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.”* We all have, unfortunately, seen the negative impact words can have. Like fire in a trashcan full of toilet paper, hurtful words can get out of control quickly. Therefore, sins such as gossip and slander are included in lists that result in eternal death.

As Christians, we need to take special care of how we speak to others. Instead of choosing hurtful words we need to take the advice of Paul in Colossians 4:6*, “Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”* As well as Ephesians 4:29 which tells us, *“**Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.”* Let us all be challenged to speak and respond to others differently than the world. May we all do better at how we choose our words.

**\**

Blessings,

Jeremy

**Elder’s Corner**

Be Still

**In Psalm 46, it is thought that Israel was in a time of war and under great stress. During this time of challenge and trial, God spoke directly to the Israelites. In Psalm 46:10, God speaks and says, *“Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”* When God told Israel to *“Be still,”* He was not telling Israel to just ignore the situation around them, or to relax, or rest. Instead, He was telling them to stop fighting (or to cease striving) to face the challenge in front of them on their own. They needed to remember who He is, that He was on their side, and that He has a plan.**

**In our times of trial and challenge, we should also remember this. God is the same God now, that He was then. In times like the ones we are experiencing today, we need to remember that God is our refuge and strength and that we need to let God do His job in accordance with His plan. Probably one of the most important, yet difficult, aspects of this process is that we must remain patient. We want to see the challenges and trials we are experiencing today resolved quickly. However, we know that God does not operate on our schedule and we know that God, at times, does things that we do not understand. We must remember that God’s actions are always just and always righteous and work in concert, ultimately, to fulfill His plan.**

**Your brother in Christ,**

**Richard Jay**

***From a Woman’s Point of Vie******w***

By now, most of us are tired of hearing the word Pandemic. As a nurse, the constant changes in the medical field to promote patient and personal safety have become overwhelming. Add on a spouse in retail management working overtime, ten children of which six suddenly needed to be homeschooled, life as we know it has been tough.

In times like this, we might forget our focus on Christ. Satan wants us to focus on what is going on around us and not on increasing our knowledge of God and what we have in Christ.

Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:3 that God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. In Philippians it tells us our *“citizenship is in heaven*.*”* Paul’s prayer for us, found in Colossians 1 says, *“that we may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding and increasing in the knowledge of God*.*”* I encourage each of you to not focus on the world’s situation but to focus on Christ.

Cindy Phillips



TEEN NEWS

**Hello family,**

**We have had a great couple of weeks back together at worship! It has been really encouraging to see and talk to everyone! Our teens have been having Manna (lunch & Bible study) on Tuesdays. We are studying the book of Revelation. On Wednesday evening, we have had our online summer series called, “Save Your Wednesday.” We have been studying the “I Am” statements of Jesus. We have studied the Bread of Life, the Way the Truth and the Life, the Light of the World, and the Good Shepherd. I am so excited for the things we have coming up in the future.**

**If your child is planning to go to camp, July 26-31, please be sure to register them at gulfcoastbiblecamp.com.**

Your Partner in Ministry,

Paul Wisdom