

On The Frontier

“For the glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel”

Speak No Evil

by Linus A. Mathis III

From a child I remember with whimsy the monkey trio of "See No Evil, Speak No Evil and Hear No Evil." A modern proverb to be sure. Where they came from I cannot say. But the ideals they represent are noble ones. I, for one, was cautioned upon every remembrance. Perhaps I thought my eyes, lips and ears would be permanently fused should I insult these paragon portraying primates. Well, maybe not. But it sounds good, doesn't it? Something like getting caught making a face and fearing the danger of forever remaining in such a state. Of course we adults know better. Don't we? Frankly, I've always thought there was an underlying message of sarcasm in the aforementioned simians. A case of the sophisticated poking fun at the "uninitiated." The former mocking and taunting the latter. "You live in denial!" They say; "You're just like the ostrich who sticks its head in the sand hoping it will not be seen and everything will go away! Why not just join in on the fun? It's your life, live it as you see fit. After all, your right to choose is at stake." It sounds so appealing yet how can evil be fun? If you're thinking this has a familiar ring to it you're correct. Consider the following words and their source:

GOD:

Genesis 2:16,17

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

The Devil:

Genesis 3:4b, 5

... Ye shall not surely die:

For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Adam and Eve already knew good, the Devil could only offer evil. What a bargain (sic)! Today this is convoluted, as one must strive to know good. Evil is promoted and easily known while good is suppressed and ridiculed. The devilish lie continues. That is, you will be better off and less fettered by knowing evil. Relax and don't let the restraints of morality or Christian ethic hold you back. After all, you owe it to yourself. Don't you? Spread your wings and fly, explore who you are and indulge yourself in all the world has to offer. Self indulgence is their "mantra."

II Peter 2:17-22

These are wells without water [they look good but are powerless to quench your thirst], clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.

For when they speak great swelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, *through much* wantonness,

those that were clean escaped from them who live in error [tempting the saved to give themselves over to evil].

While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

The greatest of lies! Sin is so deceitful that you think you will be freed when in fact you are bound. We are told at every turn to think and act however we choose. After all, it's your life and your business how you live it. You don't want to be tied by anything as stuffy as honesty, loyalty, purity, integrity or holiness, do you? The truth is, sin brings us back into bondage.

Verses 20-22:

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

That's vivid enough, no commentary required!!!

Romans 6:16-23

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death.

But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

These are simple truths that speak forcibly and clearly to our hearts.

We need to remain vigilant so as to continue our acknowledgment of them. If we are not watchful we will be deceived, for sin is deceitful and evil.

Mark 14:38

Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak.

Let's not forget to include God in our watchfulness, rather be diligent to seek His help in these matters. Even though He has given us the wherewithal to escape sin and evil, it's folly to think we can remain free without His help.

II Peter 1:2-5a

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption [getting worse all the time, like a decomposing corpse] that is in the world through lust.

God has given us His Word and the promise of His spirit. These are the means by which we have escaped the corruption that is in the world. A word of caution however, we must be diligent lest we get drawn back in by lust. The choice to remain free is ours to exercise. Those who take their freedom for granted are candidates for slavery and bondage.

Verse 5a:

And beside this, giving all diligence...

God has done His part now we must do ours. It's up to us to live holy lives in accordance with the dictates of His Word.

Ephesians 5:14-17

Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

See then that ye walk circumspectly [with exacting accuracy], not as fools, but as wise,

Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*.

The days are evil and would overwhelm us if possible. Consequently, to think that we can live without seeing or hearing evil is not realistic. As delightful as the prospect introduced by the monkey trio might be, our eyes and ears are assaulted daily.

II Peter 2:4-9

For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

This is in reference to the fallen angels who brought about the degradation that led the heart of man to evil imaginations. The continual evil in man's heart was antecedent to the great flood.

Verses 5-8:

And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

And delivered just Lot, vexed [harassed, grieved, tormented] with the filthy conversation [conduct, manner of life] of the wicked:

(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds;)

Obviously, Lot both saw and heard the evil which was all about him. He, like we today, found it distressing. Thank God for His grace, mercy, love, forgiveness and righteousness! Else, we would be overwhelmed and drawn in by evil.

Verse 9:

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

Like it or not, we cannot help but see and hear evil as we are encompassed by it. However, we need not add to this dilemma by bringing evil into our homes by way of television, radio, the Internet or any one of a myriad of printed media. We would all agree not to entertain evil yet we are entertained by it. Consider the concepts and visuals of what many

deem to be "entertaining." We pay out hard earned cash to add vexation to our souls and build the coffers of the wicked. Maybe we should stop doing this? Perhaps the exploits of a serial killer may not be the best choice in video rental? If we stopped and thought about this momentarily, we would agree that bringing additional evil before our eyes and ears isn't entertaining at all. Regardless of what might be said by the various "artists" in these genres, most of them have no redeeming social value. Rather, they are debilitating to us adding nothing worthwhile to our hearts and lives. Remember, it's your heart that determines what's in your life.

Proverbs 4:23-27

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life.

We admit to being harassed by the evil of the world yet we pay good money to enhance the same. It just doesn't make good sense. Does it? Nevertheless, this is an individual decision and none of us can legislate matters of the heart. We must individually make up our minds to enthrone God and His Word in our heart or not. If we are spiritually minded we will not only enthrone Him but also do our best to keep His "throne room" clean. As we do, we shall see the direct impact this has on the one doable ideal our monkey friends espouse. That is, speak no evil. This is not whimsical, God commands it.

Verses 24-27:

Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.

Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight

before thee.

Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

No doubt most of us are familiar with Proverbs 4:23 but how many have considered the context in which it is set?

Ephesians 4:31,32

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you

There are, of course, other aspects of holy living to be considered as set forth in these verses. However, we are concentrating on *not speaking evil*. Thus far it's abundantly clear that this is a command of God.

Titus 3:1,2

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

I Peter 2:1-3

Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

If so be ye have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.

Notice carefully, we are to lay aside ALL malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies and EVIL SPEAKINGS! That's ALL, no exceptions to this rule, not even one. God never gives us the okay to speak evil of our fellow man, if He did He would be in contradiction to His Word. It matters not what they have done or not done. It makes no difference how evil they may be nor how ungodly their acts are, we are to speak evil of no man. They may be well outside His Will with their unrighteous conduct but, if we wish to remain within His Will, we dare not speak evil of anyone at anytime.

Ephesians 4:29

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

II Timothy 2:14-17a

Of these things put *them* in remembrance, charging *them* before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, *but* to the subverting of the hearers.

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

But shun profane *and* vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

And their word will eat as doth a canker ...

Once again we find a familiar verse (II Timothy 2:15) and once again we should take special note of the

context in which it is set. Something else is found in this wonderful 15th verse and that is the action necessary to aid us in ministering grace unto the hearers rather than evil. Study His Word, put it on in your heart and act accordingly.

Jesus said that our mouths speak from that which is abundant in our heart. Each of us must determine what and how much of what we put in our heart. If we put an abundance of worldly things in our heart we can expect to speak of worldly things. On the other hand, if we put an abundance of the Word in our heart we will speak the Word.

Luke 6:45

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

We tend to spend the most time with things we love. Our love for something dictates how involved or engrossed we become with it. Thus, we fill our heart with that which we treasure. This is why a sports enthusiast speaks so knowledgeably about sports. The names of the players, their accomplishments, the games played, what teams were engaged, final scores, records and other various minutia, often dating back to that particular sport's origin, all stored carefully in the treasure house of the heart. I'm often amazed by the ability of a sports fan to recall with infinitesimal accuracy the details and history of their love. They can do this because they have first fed upon the information. Their mouth is filled with these things because their heart is abundant with

the same. It's a principle and will work precisely on any given topic. Why not make the Word keynote?

The world will continue to badger us in an attempt to get us to equivocate on our choice. This is a very subtle thing and one not easily recognized. This is why we must take a firm stand upon God's Word and continually seek His face so as not to falter. If we do not, we will most assuredly find ourselves on a very "slippery slope." For instance, it's quite obvious that our most prominent leaders are at times evil. That being the case, we are tempted into speaking evil of them. We may start out thinking we represent righteousness but we wind up engaging in sarcastic humor and name calling. This is in direct contrast to the revealed written Word of God.

I Peter 2:11-25

Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

If anyone is going to speak evil let it be the unbelievers and not you!

Verses 13,14:

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;

Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the

punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

Every ordinance of man would have to include seat belts and crash helmets. I know, I know, we all have free will and no one has the right to protect us from our selves. Nevertheless, the Word of God commands we obey the ordinance (laws) of man. Here in the great state of Alaska, where I live, we have laws. Some of them are ridiculous, like the hunting and fishing regulations. In fact, I happen to know our local District Attorney and he has trouble understanding them. But God never tells us to agree with these laws, only obey them. The only exception is when and if the ordinance of man prohibits our being obedient to the Word of God. Seat belts, crash helmets and hunting and fishing regulations do not impede our observance of God's law. So, what are we to do? Obey the ordinance of man for in so doing we are keeping the command of God. Why?

Verse 15:

For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

That's why!

Verses 16,17:

As free, and not using *your* liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

Honour all *men*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

We do not have a king but we do have a president. It is incumbent upon us to show him respect and not speak ill of him. Remember, we're not talking about what he should do

but about what we should do. He must give an account of himself to God just as all men must. Yet, it's so easy to repeat that joke you heard on late night television. Isn't it? How about the scurrilous accounts of his private life that have been so aired in public? Surely we are justified in speaking of them? Nope! Not if we love God and want to keep His Word. Speak NO evil! Hear it and see it maybe (as we often have no choice), but never speak it.

Verse 18:

Servants, *be* subject to *your* masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward [crooked, perverse, wicked].

Yes, we are to behave honorably toward all men even the wicked and perverse. Here's why:

Verses 19,20:

For this *is* thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God.

Our Lord is the supreme example as always! Even in his most arduous sufferings he didn't even speak evil of his tormentors.

Verses 21-25:

For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously:

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

What a man!!! We should be humbled to have such a one as the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. Think of him the next time you are tempted to speak evil regarding things political or otherwise. We need to keep our eyes on the goal of the Lord's Appearing and not allow ourselves to get distracted by the moment. His Return will last considerably longer than four years. When you consider the future consider your Hope!

Hebrews 12:1-4

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied

and faint in your minds.

Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

Could this be any more timely?

Here's more of the Word for our time:

I Timothy 2:1-4

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men;

For kings [in our culture, the President], and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet [tranquility from within] and peaceable [tranquility from without] life in all godliness [a true and vital relationship with God] and honesty.

For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

When we look at the turmoil around us we should be reminded to pray. More now than ever our country's leaders need our prayers and even if they didn't, God says to pray for them. That should be enough for any of us!

I think the following passage sums it up nicely:

Philippians 2:14-18

Do all things without murmurings [secretly complaining within yourself] and disputings [openly debating and complaining]:

That ye may be blameless and

harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.

For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.

I trust your heart is as thankful for the approaching season as mine is! May God continue to bless you in your endeavors to walk with and for Him. Agape' dear family, agape'! Which, incidently, thinketh no evil.
