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# **[Week 10] War of Words – On the King’s Mission Manuscript**

**Introduction.**

* Recap or Testimony.
  + Testimony – who amongst us tried using the ENCOURAGE model in a confrontation that they had this week?
  + Question – who would like to remind us of what we learned about - last week?
  + We learnt
    - That we’re citizens in need of help and that that help comes through others confronting us in our sins and vice versa.
    - And that we should not run away from confrontation but instead learn how to do it so that we are able to help one another against the deceitfulness of sin.
    - We also learnt about the ENCOURAGE model is one good way/tool of confronting each other.
* Today, we will learn about the King’s Mission and the role we play in it.
* And so, we will begin our class today with a story of Frank, Ellen and Ryan.
* This story is found in Paul Tripp’s book: *The War of Words*
* But maybe before we read the story it might be helpful for you to note down the roles that the characters of the story have.
  + Frank – *the husband*
  + Ellen – *the wife*
  + Ryan – *the son*
* Now let’s hear the story.
* [**Read the story from the book**].
* Indeed, we all need a redemptive perspective on our relationships.
* Before we speak, we need to ask ourselves what the Redeemer wants to accomplish in the situation at hand, and we need to be committed to be part of it.
* We are meant to be on God’s mission just like Frank.
* It is in the workings of everyday life that God builds faithful, godly, and mature children, and we are the tools he uses.
* When Frank and Ellen got hold of this perspective, it completely transformed the way they dealt with their son’s sin.
* But what is God’s mission. Well, we will see that God’s mission is to redeem a people for Himself who will worship Him and enjoy Him.

**It’s Been His Mission from The Beginning**

* Now redemption has been God’s mission from the beginning.
* Please turn to Genesis 3:14-15.
* **[Ask someone to read** **Genesis 3:14-15].**
* In that portion of text, God says that he will bring a redeemer through the woman, the woman’s seed, who will crush the serpent.
* Though the redeemer God alludes to would be stricken by the serpent, he would succeed in crushing the serpent.
* In this portion of scripture, we see God introducing a plan that would unfold throughout the rest of scripture.
* A plan about God’s work to redeem a people for Himself. A people that would live for His glory.
* But we are called not just to be recipients in God’s plan but to be part of advancing his redemptive plan.
* Which means, we must think about the events and the people in our lives through a redemptive lense.
* The right way to approach events and people is to approach them redemptively.
* Let’s us now turn to **Genesis 12:1-3**. [**Ask someone to read**]
* We see, here, God making Abram a part of His redemptive mission.
  + God promises to make Abram into a great nation.
  + God promises to make His name great.
  + And through Abram, God would bless many.
* And we know from the rest of scripture that these blessings were primarily redemptive in nature.
* And so, God centres His redemptive purposes to the nations in Abram.
* Now, the words we’ve just read are both a *comfort* and a *call*.
  + The words are of great comfort to Abram seeing that He is chosen as the object of God’s blessings.
  + But Abram is not just an object of blessing, he was also to serve as a *conduit* of God’s blessings to others.
  + Through Abram, all nations on earth would be blessed.
* And so, from the beginning, Abram was called to be part of what God was going to do not only in Him and for Him, but also through Him.
* What is clear in this passage, is that God is committed to redeem/bless a people to Himself. And that He has called His people to be committed to the same mission.
* And so, we must think of ourselves not just as objects of His covenantal love. We are also conduits of that love to others.
* Please remember that redemption is not just for our benefit or for our good. It has always been according to God’s purpose and for his glory.
* We, therefore, cannot treat salvation as a party where we are the honoured guests. The party is God’s, who is the king, and we are graciously invited to celebrate Him.
* And we demonstrate our thanks to the king by helping others come to know, serve, and celebrate Him as king. It is His party. And He is the guest of honour.

**The Mission in Sharper Focus**

* So, we’ve seen the mission of God in and through Abram’s story.
* We’ve seen how Abram was both an object and a conduit of God’s mission.
* But we will now get a sharper focus of God’s mission from the commands He gave to the Israelites in the O.T.
* The children of Israel too were called to a radical involvement in each other’s lives.
* They were called to speak in a way that promoted the work God was doing in the lives of others.
* For example, turn with me to **Leviticus 19:15-18**. [**Ask someone to read**].
* This passage bears a sad reality. It shows us the reality of sin. It shows us that it’s impossible for us to live as if sin doesn’t exist.
* These commands are given because of the sins of partiality, slander, hate, and taking vengeance.
* Because we’re sinners and live in relationships with other sinners, sin will always be an issue. It is the inescapable reality of human life.
* The question is whether we’re dealing with sin in God’s way (redemptively) or according to the desires and purposes of our own sinful hearts.

**Loving Your Neighbour as Yourself**

* And this passage can teach us how we can deal with sin in God’s way.
* One of the most fundamental things to notice in this passage – is that the command to handle the sins of others, in God’s way, is directly connected to the command to love neighbour – see the last line of verse 18.
* One of the ways we love our neighbour as ourselves is by dealing with their sin in a disciplined and Biblical way.
* And in so doing, we partner with God in what he is doing in our neighbour’s lives.
* We’re not free to handle difficulties whatever way seems best to us.
* When we’re wronged, the thing of highest importance is not that we feel satisfied or avenged, but that we respond according to God’s plan and for His glory.
* As we recognize this calling, we do not give in to the many heart and tongue sins detailed in the Leviticus.
* And though the heart and tongue sins are such a temptation when we have been sinned against, we shouldn’t yield to them.
* Remember we are dealing with the sins of others all the time. And because we are to love our neighbour as ourselves, then we deal with sin not simply as a victim but as a servant of the One who redeems.
* Let’s face it: it is hard for us to love our neighbour as ourselves even when we haven’t been sinned against. We are all prone to self-centeredness, to want our will done our way, and to live for our own satisfaction and comfort.
* We are easily irritated and impatient when in some way, our will is not done.
* If someone doesn’t please us, we usually have trouble loving them.
* We struggle to communicate in a godly way – in the little events of life, even when we’re not being sinned against.
* We lash out with angry, unkind words when
  + the **bathroom** is occupied,
  + or when the **car** is being used,
  + or when someone else **beats us** to the race for something,
  + or when my things are not **where I left** them in the morning,
  + or when someone is making us **late**, or when we don’t get the **appreciation**, we think we deserve,
  + or when someone **forgets** to put **fuel** in the car, or when someone stays **too long** on the phone … the list is endless.
* This is where we live. And if we respond selfishly to such, how will we ever respond redemptively in the face of real sin?
* If we are not loving – to our neighbour – through the normal course of things, how will we ever do it when the stakes are much higher?
* No, but let’s remember our great calling and the demands it makes on our daily talk. Remember 1 Peter 1:3-4 – that God has given us all we need to do what he has called us to do.

**How Do we Deal with Sin then?**

* Since we are affected by one another’s sin in some way, and since we are all sinners – then that means we’re dealing with sin daily.
* But the issue before us is – are we dealing with it, God’s way or our way?
* Leviticus lays out for us the ways we can respond to sin around us.
* And at the centre of dealing with the reality of sin in others is the middle way of love.
* This middle way of love is the path God has called us to journey even as we deal with the sins of others.
* Now on either side of the path of love are the valleys of hatred both in passive and active forms.
* So, what is hatred in passive and in active forms.
  + Well, hatred in passive forms from our passage includes inner attitudes of favouritism and partiality, carrying hatred in our hearts, bearing a grudge, and harbouring desires of vengeance. And so passive hatred involves the inner sinful dealings and tendencies of our hearts. And none of these attitudes are consistent with God’s call to love others. Each reflect heart responses of self-love and anger against those who haven’t pleased us.
  + Second, what are the active forms of hatred? Now, this one includes things like treating people unfairly or with partiality or judging others unfairly or spreading slander or seeking revenge. So, these are the outward workings of sin in us to others.
* God does not want us to fall off the pathway of love on either side.
  + He doesn’t want us to desire to see someone hurt the way we have. Such a desire is an offense against His calling
  + God doesn’t want us keeping a record of wrongs. That is sinful.
  + So is gossiping about someone’s sin and acting out revenge.
* All these are an offense against our calling.
* Yet when we examine our lives, we will find many of these responses present.
  + For instance, in the spouse who gives “**silent treatment**” when they have been wronged/sinned against. When that spouse does that, they are responding in revenge and thus forsaking their redemptive calling.
  + A Christian brother who shares a juicy piece of gossip in the guise of a prayer request has fallen off the middle road of love and has forsaken their calling.
  + The husband who goes to work angry because his family made him late and who fantasizes how much easier life would be without them, has offended God’s call.
* And how easy it is to fall off the path on either side.
* How high and hard is God’s call to love.
* Let us admit the many ways we have fallen of the pathway God has called us to walk.
* Let us seek for forgiveness from God and to each other.
* Let us commit ourselves to specific acts of repentance.

**The Middle Way of Love**

* So, the middle way of love is active, and God wants us to be his agents of rescue when we see another’s sin.
* We are to judge our neighbour fairly and rebuke each other in a way that is frank and clear.
* But we are not to be self-righteously judgemental or to act like we’re hunting for all the sin we can uncover in other people’s lives.
* We are not called to be verbally abusive or to colour confrontation with name-calling and other unkind characterizations.
* Rather God is saying that when he chooses to expose another’s sin to us, we are to respond with self-sacrificing, redemptive love.
* We go to our neighbour and honestly and clearly confront their sin – not so they would submit to our judgments, but so that they would submit to God’s mercy and grace.
* We are called to warn others to seek the protective, rescuing care of the Redeemer.
* Frank and Ellen didn’t miss their calling. They entered Ryan’s room, and their rebuke came as a loving warning that the Lord used to turn Ryan’s heart.
* Everything they said flowed out of a heartfelt desire to be part of what God was doing. And before God worked in Ryan, he had to first work in Frank and Ellen.
* Lastly, notice from Leviticus, the phrase, “I am the LORD”.
* This phrase appears twice. God is basically saying, “***This is the king speaking, and this is my will for you. I am the LORD, and I am calling you to love one another this way. Now go and be my instruments of warning and rescue to those I have placed near you***.”

**The Great Commission**

* So, we’ve seen the mission of God from the beginning.
* We’ve also seen His mission in Abram and in the Israelites.
* Now we will fast forward to the New Testament – more precisely, after the resurrection of Christ.
* Well, after the resurrection of Christ, Jesus gave the disciples a commission, which many are familiar to – yet I wonder if we think of this commission as applicable to our everyday life.
* Do we live every moment of our lives as though we are those who have been commissioned by Christ?
* I wonder if we see its application to our daily relationships.
* We will now consider Christ’s great mission call to His disciples and His church.
* And as we do so, let us ask ourselves the following questions.
  + *What is this ministry?*
  + *What impact does it have on our daily conversations?*
  + *What demands does it make on the world of talk?*
* **I’ll repeat.**
* Now let us turn to ***Matthew 28:16-20****.* [**Ask someone to read**]
* Here Christ stands before His disciples as a conquering king.
* Having completed His mission, He lays claim of His authority and calls His followers to take His message to all nations.
* But please note that this passage is not just about missions. If we interpret it that way, as just for missionaries, then we leave most of the church of Christ without a commission!
* Certainly, this passage includes an application to missionaries, but it goes beyond that.
* Jesus calls us to go and make disciples, yes.
* And beyond that, He calls us to teach His disciples what it means to live lives that are obedient to His commands.
* This is a call to exhort, encourage and teach so that we would be progressively freed from old patterns of sin and conformed to Christ’s image.
* The great commission is not only a call to bring people into the kingdom i.e., making disciples – it is also a call to teach them to live as children of light once they’re there.
* So, make disciples, baptise them, yes. But we are to also teach them. That’s the call.
* We are to teach those who’ve been made disciples.
* And when we lose sight of this second half of the great commission – i.e., to teach his disciples – we lose sight of its claim on our everyday talk.

**The Great Commission as a Lifestyle**

* But whose ministry is this?
* When and where is it carried out?
* Well, the New Testament is replete that this is the ministry of every believer. And it is to be done wherever and whenever needed.
  + So, the great commission is a call to a ***lifestyle of ministry***.
  + The commission keeps us from divorcing ministry from our normal, everyday lives.
* And where, do we teach and learn to live as obedient children of God? Well, it is not just in the formal programs of the church, but in everyday life experiences – where we wrestle with **temptations** and the **desires of the flesh**.
  + So, the husband-wife relationship becomes an opportunity for the great commission.
  + The parent-child relationship becomes a forum for the great commission.
  + Relationships in the body of the church become chances for the great commission ministry.
* This means that when I want to talk to my wife about difficulties and disappointments in our relationship, I do so with the **“second half of the great commission” mentality** – of teaching and exhorting.
* I acknowledge that the most important goal of the conversation is that our words encourage the work God is doing in both of us.
* And so, as we seek to understand each other and solve problems together, we want to promote the work God is doing. And that work is geared toward helping us live more fully as His children.
* Again, the issue is not about whether we deal with the problems but ***how***.
* A “***life as a ministry***” attitude should govern all the words we speak. We do not step out of life into ministry rather God’s call extends to all of life!
* Our response is to submit to loving our neighbours as ourselves, motivated by more than our own happiness and satisfaction.
* We want to be part of what God is doing in the lives of others.
* But there’s a small observation we need to make with the work God is doing in our lives.
* And that is – sometimes the opportunity to be fashioned unto Christlikeness may not look like something we expect, especially, when these opportunities come during difficult times.
* Now we know that God uses difficulty to advance His work and if we’re His primary instruments, then for sure some of our most prime opportunities for ministry will come in moments we would rather avoid.
* Often in such moments we are caught up in our own **emotions/hurt/fear/disappointment/anger/discouragement**.
* And at times, we’re so caught up in our own desires for a quick solution or the desire to **be right** or the desire to **be appreciated** or **to win** or desires for our **own comfort**.
* And when we get so caught up with our self; our desires and how we’re feeling, we tend to lose sight of the opportunity that God has given us to speak words that promote his redemptive mission.
* **I’d like you to take a moment to reflect and list any unexpected areas in your life/relationships where you believe God could use you—areas that if not for Him, you would have preferred to avoid.**

**[Give the congregation time for this]**

* **Take another moment to note, something about you (i.e., a feeling or a desire) – that would be a hindrance for God using you in that area? And after that, take a moment to silently confess and consider practical steps you can take towards dying to self. Then ask God for strength to be part of His mission.**
* When Frank first read Ryan’s email, he did not think, “*What a wonderful opportunity for ministry! Thank you, Lord!*” No, his heart was filled with a father’s grief, and that is appropriate.
* But that moment of grief was not theirs but God’s. God exposed Ryan’s heart of things he already knew.
* But He called Frank and Ellen to share in Ryan’s suffering so they would share also in the glory of God’s sanctifying words.
* But they needed to get beyond the talk that is driven by racing emotions and fearful desire.
* They needed to go beyond the “*How could you do this to us?*” or the “*We do this and this to you and this is how you repay us?*” or the “*It’s hard to believe that you’re my son.*”
* No, Frank and Ellen needed to get beyond that.
* They had to speak to Ryan out of a redemptive love of God. That love enabled them to reject arrogant, self-righteous words and offer instead humble words of grace.
* They approached Ryan as sinners who had experienced the intervening hand and grace of Christ. And who longed for him to experience the same powerful delivering grace.
* As we conclude, let’s not the following:
  + A rebuke is not condemnation but a call.
  + Words of exhortation are not a judgment, but an encouragement to follow the Lord.
  + We speak God’s words to each other not because we are capable of fixing people. No, we teach, encourage and admonish because God has commissioned us to do so.
  + And this call is not one of the many busy things in our lives. It is itself a lifestyle that we are called to.
  + Ministry will often come wrapped in difficulty. And amid these opportunities, we want our talk to be consistent with God’s call, because we have been called to the king’s mission.

**Q&A**

* Any questions?

**REFLECTIVE SESSION**

We will now take some time for personal reflections. Please take a couple of minutes to read the questions on the 3rd and 4th page of your handout. As you read the questions, please…

* Take a moment to note down a response to any of the 8 questions.
* Afterward, please take some time to seek forgiveness from God in ways you have sinned and also plead with Him for strength and for help.
* After that I will come in and make a concluding prayer.

**PRAYER**

* Thank God for his mission.
* Thank God that he has given us each other that we may minster to one another.
* Ask God to forgive us for the times we have allowed our emotions and our desires to get in the way of his mission to act in love to our neighbours.
* Ask God to give us hearts of sacrificial love to love others. Aks for a heart that loves God. Ask for strength to die to self that we may live for God’s mission.