

Sunday, Oct 4, 2020 at 9:30 AM

Broadcasting from Ballantyne Campus – Charlotte, NC USA

Elevation – eFam – All sites participating on-line due to COVID-19 Pandemic

Pastor: Holly Furtick

Sermon Title: “Shut Up and Shine - Be Quick to hear and Slow to Speak – Complaining just makes things worse - Learn how to be a part of the solution - Questions create access but accusations close hearts - The light that we shine will always speak louder than our voice ever can.

Scripture for this week:

- **Phil 2: 14 – 18:** “Do all things without grumbling or disputing; 15 so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain. 17 But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. 18 You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.”
- **Phil 1: 12 to 18:** Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, 13 so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, 14 and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear. 15 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; 16 the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; 17 the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. 18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice.
- **Col 4:6:** “5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. 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.”
- **Dan 12:3:** “Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”
- **1 John 3:18:** 18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. 19 We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him 20 in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. 21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.
- **James 1:19:** “This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger.”

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- Please consider joining an eGroup (small group) so you don't have to walk this walk alone? – See www.elevationchurch.cc.
- Interested in leading an eGroup? www.elevationchurch.cc.
- New Bible Study for some eGroups – “The Art of Contentment” – A study of Philippians.
- Recall Holly's example of thinking about how wives can win over husbands without using words – and some of the examples she shared when she spoke too quickly without thinking. Also recall the story Holly shared about initially remarking about the font size of her husband's first new book – and not saying anything complementary.
- **I'm thoroughly intrigued with the ability to win someone over without using words.**
- Because I love words and I'm a very talkative person – and I have been this way my whole life.
- Don't ask me about this weekend unless you want to learn about the sleepover that I had with teenage boys and all of the details.
- Even my elementary school report cards stated that I talked too much.
- In normal settings I really had to work hard and trying to reign this in.
- One thing I've learned is that I don't have to say everything that I think.
- And, this is really hard for me.
- I talk too much – I talk when I'm excited – I talk when I'm nervous – sometimes I talk just because I'm bored – I don't like silence.
- My entire life I've been trying to train myself to shut my mouth and think before I talk.
- **I know that no one likes to be around anyone that dominates a space with their voice.**
- The Bible has a lot to say about talkers.
- See: 1 John 3:18: 18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. 19 We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him 20 in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. 21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.
- **See: James 1:19: “This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger.”**
- See Psalm 18:21: The power of life and death is in the tongue.
- We need to understand the power of our words – and can deeply hurt someone unintentionally.
- And we can also hurt those that we love with what we do not say – or the ways that we don't encourage others.
- Words hold weight on what you choose to say and what you choose not to say – and this is why we have to pay attention to everything that comes out of our mouths.
- **We live in a time where people do not consider the weight of their words.**
- Some of us might be conservative in our speech however what about our thumbs and what we text? Our thumbs in some cases cause more damage than our tongues.
- Had the Psalmist lived in the year 2020, he would've probably said the power of life and death is with our thumbs and not our tongues.
- There's so much noise going on in the world today.
- And it's hard to separate the truth from fiction.

- **We have a digital feed that keeps coming to us and now we know that the feed only consists of what we want to be fed – and it's hard to have a voice when you feel like everyone is just shouting at one another – and not listening at all.**
- **I want to learn how to be a part of the solution of all the things that are going on around me. Not Just another person that is merely adding to the noise.**
- See Phil 2: 14 – 18
- Today's prayer: "Lord speak to me because I am listening today."
- Today's sermon title is: "Shut up and Shine."
- On the surface Paul is giving us an impossible command – to do everything without grumbling and arguing – Paul is teaching us that the things that we do not say have just as much power as the things that you do say.
- Paul is giving us two things not to do and two things that we should do.
- The first thing that Paul tells us is to do everything without grumbling and arguing.
- If you are like me, you probably read this and said – "yeah, that's not going to happen."
- When we understand the context, Paul's words take on a better meaning.
- Paul was writing a letter to the people of Philippi – a church that he planted.
- Paul's writings suggest that the church at Philippi was one of Paul's favorites.
- While Paul is in a Roman prison, the people of Philippi sent Paul a love offering – and Paul is responding to them with a letter – and Paul is living out what he is saying in a prison cell.
- And Paul is warning them – we should not complain when confronted with a difficult circumstance.
- The way to have lasting arguments is not to argue.
- **Arguing and complaining are default responses - however they are extremely counterproductive. Complaining rarely improves our circumstances. Here's a good rule of thumb: never complain about a situation to a person that is powerless to change it. The kind of complaining that Paul is talking about keeps us stuck – blaming something that is outside of our control.**
- There are times when you have to make a rightful complaint – one example of the benefits of renting is we don't have to make repairs to the property – we just submit our complaints to the landlord.
- Recall the example that Holly provides in her Mr. & Mrs. better half series where she instructs people to alternate the location of a wristband each time they complain – as a means to catch ourselves complaining.
- Sometimes I dress up my complaints and they sound really cute.
- Sometimes I take my complaints and focus them onto another person.
- **Complaining just makes things worse – and will spiral out of control so fast. Complaining transitions to statements of facts - which just makes matters worse. Negativity slows down our progress – and we have become professional yelpers and complainers. Complaining diverts our attention and prevents us from impacting things that we can actually control in our lives – like our attitude – we can control our attitudes.**
- Watch how Paul not only gives us a command but he also gives us good rules to follow.
- See Phil 1:12.
- It blows my mind that nowhere in this letter does Paul complain about his prison conditions.
- Nowhere in this letter does Paul say he's cold or he's hungry.
- He does not even ask the Philippians to pray for his release.

- Paul says: I must be in chains for Christ because revival is breaking out in the prison.
- And revival can break out wherever you are if we change our perspective.
- **Paul gives us the antidote for complaining – he tells us to rejoice – 16 times Paul weaves the word “rejoice” or “joy” into his letter to the Philippians. And if Paul can look for an opportunity to rejoice in a jail cell - so can we. We have to look for opportunities to flip it. And we all have to find something to rejoice about. I we need to call ourselves back to Joy over and over again. Stop saying “it is what it is.”**
- Israelites spent so much time complaining about the wilderness and their desire to go back to Egypt that they missed out on the promise that was right in front of them.
- We have to consider two things: complaining and arguing. Complaining and arguing keeps us from experiencing true connection with those that we love.
- Are you the only person in the room that needs to have the last word?
- On one hand I am a total people pleaser – and will go to great lengths to avoid conflict – but there are a few topics and a few people that make me want to put on my boxing gloves – we all have this one particular trigger – certain topics or people that we just cannot engage with.
- **When we want to have the last word in an argument – we compromise the relationship somehow. So here’s what I’m learning – if my goal is to purely to win – then I lose – because I have no concern as to how the other person feels – and in the process of winning I’ve lost a small piece of the relationship – and with each event I chip away at the opportunity to have a great relationship with another person.**
- When you assume an attack position, you automatically put the other person into a defensive position – and when the other person is defending, they are most likely not hearing a word that you say – because they are in defense mode.
- See James 1:19: “This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger.”
- **Seek to understand versus airing out your own opinions.**
- And when we do speak, do not use words that are abrasive or accusing.
- **See Col 4:6: “5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. 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.” This verse is about how to defend the gospel against people that don’t know it. We absolutely have to know the gospel as believers – and be passionate about this – however if you come out of the gate accusing and demeaning – and you come across as “the enlightened one” – you will never win over people for Christ. Put a little salt on those words.**
- Let the other person know that you hear them and that you love them.
- Recall that message from last week – “Just the Two of Us” – Kev note: See: <http://www.1peter315notes.com/files/135011125.pdf>.
- Recall that Pastor Furtick told us that everything begins with a question.
- **Questions create access but accusations close hearts.**
- If we are going to be quick to listen slow to speak, we must learn how to ask questions – and we have to ask good questions – for instance – what were you thinking? This is not a good question – you might as well attach the word idiot to this question – what were you thinking you idiot?

- However when you say things like - Can you please help me understand? This communicates care and concern – and suggests that you care about what the other person has to say.
- **Do you care more about the relationship than merely trying to make a point? And Paul models this in chapter 1. See Phil 1:17. Paul does not go after those that profess “selfish gains” to try to insult them – Christ is still preached – so what does it matter? This is a good question we should ask ourselves: What does it matter? Is making your point with destroying the relationship – and do we have the humility to let it go?**
- We have to think about this.
- **And what does Paul do? He calls himself back to joy – by focusing on those things that really do matter – what matters is that Christ is being preached. The world does not need another opinion – and the world does need some better examples. If we do with Paul tells us to, we will shine like stars in the sky. Here Paul is quoting a prophecy from the book of Daniel. See Dan 12:3: “Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”**
- Recall that Daniel was among people that did not worship God – and the life that he led impacted an entire people.
- **Crooked means bent in the wrong direction – and the way to redirect someone is not to shout – the best way to redirect someone is to shine. The light that we shine will always speak louder than our voice ever can.**
- Have you ever watched someone absolutely shine under the most difficult of circumstances?
- Recall the story of a friend of Holly that lost her job and then was afflicted with breast cancer – yet she always allowed God to show her a way out of the situation so that she could shine.
- **How do we shine? First refuse to dwell on the negative. Then we need to let go of the need to be right. And then hold firm to the word of life. The best way to impact people around you is to change within yourself – understand that at the end of the day the only person that you can change is yourself. It’s not fun to change yourself because it’s easier to try to change others – and hope that our lives will improve when other people change. When we focus on all of the change required of others, we become someone that we do not want to be – we become nagging and manipulative – and even stubborn and withdrawn – and then we wonder why we are never making any progress in our relationships with others – and we will never experience true change in our own lives.**
- Recall the funny story about her children packing lunch for school – you pack your own lunch and focus on yourself – initiate the apology even if you’re only 10% wrong – be the first one to say I am sorry – what does it matter? Figure out a way to bow out of a conversation if it turns ugly – be generous with your time & money – expecting nothing in return. If you spend all of your time complaining about others and how they all need a change - you might find that you don’t have any lunch.
- **Sometimes the greatest impact on the people in your life will not be the words you say - but rather the life that you live. Can we all collectively decide to stop shouting at each other? And just start shining brighter?**
- See 1 John 3:18. 1 John 3:18: “18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. 19 We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him 20 in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.”

- **Let us not love with words and speech but with action and love.**
- Recall the sermon from last week. The Shunammite Woman is a classic example of someone that knew how to keep her mouth shut – and go to the only one who could fix her son – The prophet Elisha. She went to where she needed to be and poured out her soul to him and let him fix what she could not fix – and hold firm to what we knew – she knew to go to the one that could speak life to her. When you go to the source, you are never alone. And sometimes we need to stay outside of a closed door so that God can fix our problems.
- **Closing Prayer: We have had enough times in our lives where I’ve had to sit outside the closed door (Similar to the Shunammite Woman in 2 King 4) – and let God handle our situations and fix things – let the light shine in the darkness – we can cling to the promise that He will never leave us nor forsake us – cling to the same holy spirit that lives inside of you – that also lives inside of the people that you love – and He is working on them just like He is working on you – He sees every tear that you cry and every prayer that you pray – Cling to this promise that God does turn everything into Good – He really does change graves into gardens – and yes - the grave part is not fun – Let God shine in your life so that you can shine for others – Lord, we open up our hands to you today – God, whisper to all that feel alone today – pray for the person that’s been praying for their child for years – God, we cling to you today – reveal to us those things that we need to let go of – remind us of the promises that you have spoken over our lives – your promises are good and precious – your promises are yes and amen – in Jesus name we pray amen.**

This week’s Charles Spurgeon Moment commenting on Phil 2

“On our rocks and sandbanks a lighthouse is sure to be erected. Christians should know that there are many false lights everywhere in the world, and therefore the right light is needed. The wreckers of Satan are always abroad, tempting the ungodly to sin under the name of pleasure as they hoist the wrong light. It is our responsibility to set the true light upon every and tell what it leads to, so that we may be clear of the blood of all men, shining as lights in the world. Lights also have a very cheering influence, and so have Christians. A Christian ought to be a comforter, with kind words on his lips and sympathy in his heart; he should carry sunshine wherever he goes and diffuse happiness around him.”