

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

GOSSIPTOWN

By Bobby L. Graham

Everybody's been to **Gossiptown** at least once in life. Most people spend much time there, because they enjoy the amusements of the place or the company they meet there. Frequently they meet people much like themselves; and occasionally they become so astonished at what they are like when seeing others doing the same thing, that they wake up and decide to leave the place and never return again.

Gossip and all sorts of activities associated with it occupy the time of the people who live there or visit there. The residents decided to stay many years ago, so they could gossip and keep up the lifestyle of the town, while the visitors come once in a while to check it out, with some of them deciding to move there for good.

Let me show you around **Gossiptown**, because it's the kind of place that attracts many. I do admit, however, that a few have found the place repulsive. The town is divided by a large river flowing through the middle; it is FALSEHOOD RIVER. Many lies of all kinds – black lies, white lies, social lies, half lies – false charges, cheats, deceitful ways have been found in the river. It has been said that those who drink the water from that river find it hard to tell the truth again.

Crossing Falsehood River is BITTERNESS BRIDGE. So many bitter words have been spoken there and hurt feelings have been caused there by the gossip of the town. It is quite common to see people crying, anguishing over what somebody has said, and expressing bitter feelings, thoughts, and words – all because of the falsehoods that have been spread or the disregard of many for the feelings of others.

Down by the river and running next to the bridge is a track, where IDLENESS TRAIN runs on a regular schedule. People who have nothing better to do than gossip ride the train and talk about things they don't understand, pass along what they have heard (especially if it is about an enemy), or speak evil of others. Many reputations have been ruined and many families have been disrupted by riders on the train.

The TUNNEL OF HATE lies along the track of Idleness Train. The tunnel is long and dark, because hate abounds in this town and feeds on the lies that are told. Yes, hate causes many of the lies to begin, and then the lies cause even more hate. Inside the tunnel can be found many angry people, plotting schemes against others, speaking about their suspicions of others, their jealousy and envy. When these angry people have left the Tunnel Of Hate, they have sometimes caused problems with other residents in the town and even with the visitors. Some families have had much turmoil and churches have had big problems because of the people who spent time in the tunnel. Even some of the businesses and other work place in the town have experienced major disruptions from some of these same people. There seems to be something very evil that happens to the riders on Idleness Train who pass through the Tunnel Of Hate.

The town has two main streets, with one intersecting the other at the middle of town. They are THEY SAY AVENUE and I'VE HEARD BOULEVARD. The boulevard is a much larger street than the avenue, because many more people travel it than the other. People have sometimes asked about there not being more than two streets for such a large town with so many people. I also have wondered, but the people there are so busy in their gossiping that they seem to have little time to do anything useful.

Near the intersection of these two streets is a park where many residents spend a considerable part of the day. It is DON'T TELL PARK. When a passerby is near, he can easily hear people there saying, “Shhh...don't you tell now, you hear?” I understand they are doing a lot of talking about what they have picked up from others and don't wish it passed on to certain others, since they are not even sure about its truthfulness. I have noticed, however, a smirking smile on many of their faces because they have told it to somebody and have enjoyed doing so. Many of the people go straight to Don't Tell Park after getting off Idleness Train that travels through the Tunnel Of Hate.

This is **Gossiptown**. What a town! It is probably one of the more wicked places around, not just because of the crimes committed there, but also because of the hate that begins there. It often spreads to surrounding places and causes many towns and states to have their own problems and crimes. Many who have visited the town have decided never to return,

but far too many people have stayed there so long that they wouldn't live anywhere else. ■

Foolish Preaching

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:21, ***“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”*** Paul did not mean that preaching was a foolish act, but, used it accommodatively in reference to the preaching of God's word, the gospel of Christ, whereby salvation is made possible. What the ***“wise”*** of the world considers ***“foolishness,”*** Paul proclaimed would save sinful man. Sadly, many today look upon preaching as ***“foolishness.”*** Most certainly, much of the “preaching” done today is ***“foolishness.”***

Preaching is Foolishness

When the gospel message is perverted. The apostle Paul wrote: ***“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed”*** (Gal. 1:8, 9). Paul marveled that the Galatians had been persuaded to believe ***“another gospel: which is not another.”*** Many “preachers” pervert the pure and simple gospel of Christ by teaching such doctrines as, justification or salvation by faith only, the impossibility of apostasy, Holy Spirit baptism, etc. These doctrines are perversions of the truth and are foolish preaching.

When all the counsel of God is not proclaimed. To omit teaching the truth on a subject because the subject is controversial is wrong. Paul wrote to the Galatians saying, ***“For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ”*** (Gal.1:10). Preachers must ***“preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine”*** (2 Tim. 4:2). Paul taught ***“all the counsel of God”*** (Acts 20:27). Can we preach anything less and be pleasing to God? To preach so that the message is pleasing to men results in a compromise of the truth and this is condemned by the inspired apostle.

When a preacher spends more time telling jokes and stories than he does preaching. Some “preachers” would do well to be comedians instead of preachers. I have heard some “preachers” who spent more time telling jokes and talking about current events than they did preaching a Scripture based sermon. Some seek popularity and will tickle the ears of the hearers with trivial talk, which will not save one soul. Only the gospel has the power to save and it must be preached for souls to be saved (Rom. 1:16, 17). See also 1 Peter 4:11; Titus 2:6-8.

When application to God's truths are not made. Preaching must involve making proper application to the truths taught. For example, some preachers talk long and loud about believing God, but never get around to preaching on what belief involves or making application by using Bible examples and principles of truth. Paul made application in his preaching! He dealt with sin and error and got to the point, In 1 Corinthians 5, he specifically dealt with the problem of the church in Corinth accepting a brother who was guilty of fornication. Paul didn't hold back when sin was in the camp. Likewise, gospel preachers need to make application as Paul did.

When a woman is preaching. Some denominations have women “preachers” in their so-called “clergies.” Where in all of the New Testament do you find an example of this practice? In fact, this is condemned by the Scriptures. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians he said: ***“Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church”*** (1 Cor. 14:34, 35). Women are to learn in silence and not usurp authority over the man (1 Tim. 2:11-15). In Titus 2:3-5 Paul wrote, ***“The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.”*** Women can and should teach in their proper place, but they must keep silence in the church.

Yes, there are many ways to preach foolishly. But, souls are saved by the ***“foolishness of preaching.”*** What kind of preaching do you desire to hear? — ***tgmc*** ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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