

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

“For Your Sake”

By Jason Hardin

I’ve never seen Jesus with my own eyes. I wasn’t there to hear him preach his Sermon on the Mount. I live many thousands of miles away from where he grew up. I never witnessed him heal the blind, the leper, or the paralyzed. I wasn’t in the room when he said to the twelve-year-old daughter of Jairus who had died, *“Little girl, I say to you, arise.”* I wasn’t standing beside Martha and Mary when Jesus cried out with a loud voice, *“Lazarus, come out.”* I live a couple thousand years after Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, *“This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”* I wasn’t in Gethsemane when Judas betrayed him with a kiss. I wasn’t able to eavesdrop on Jesus’ sham of a trial. I wasn’t a part of the great multitude of people who followed him on the death march to Golgotha. I didn’t have to avert my eyes as nails were driven through his hands and feet. I never heard the thud of his cross as it was brought upright, suspending Jesus between heaven and earth. I didn’t hear him say, *“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”* I wasn’t there when the sun’s light failed, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, and Jesus breathed his last.

I missed a lot of things. I live far away from where they took place and a really long time after they happened.

But do you know who else missed a whole lot of things? The people who received and first read The Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

They weren’t there as Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea, went to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body. They didn’t watch as the massive stone was rolled in place to seal his tomb. They lived many hundreds of miles away from the great earthquake that shook Jerusalem toward the dawn of a first day of the week. They never saw the angel whose appearance was like lightning with clothing white as snow. They weren’t standing beside Mary Magdalene and another Mary to hear the angel say, *“Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen.”* They weren’t personal recipients of the awesome invitation, *“Come, see the place where he lay.”* They didn’t race Peter and John to the tomb. They never held the linen burial cloths in their own hands. They weren’t on the road to Emmaus when the risen Jesus walked with Cleopas and his downcast friend. They didn’t have the opportunity to hear Jesus begin with Moses and all the Prophets, interpreting in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. So many things happened during the forty days wherein Jesus presented himself alive to hundreds of people, speaking about the kingdom of God, eventually being lifted up and taken out of sight.

The men and women who lived in first-century Corinth missed a lot of things. They lived far away from Jerusalem. A few decades had already passed by the time they received Paul’s second letter.

But do you know what the apostle wrote to them in 2 Corinthians 8:9?

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.”

“For your sake.” You never saw him with your own eyes, never heard him with your own ears, never touched him with your own hands, but space and time are no disqualification or disadvantage when it comes to the Lamb of God. He did this *“for your sake.”* You can know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And do you know what that means for me and for you? He accomplished it all for our sake. We never saw him with our own eyes, never heard him with our own ears, never touched him with our own hands, but when we’re dealing with the death-conquering King of kings, time and space are no obstacles. We can know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ just as surely as anyone.

“Though he was rich, yet for my sake he became poor, so that I by his poverty might become rich.”

For my sake. I can know grace. Thanks be to God. – ***Daily Bible Reading Reflections***, October 28, 2021. ■

IS GOSSIP GOOD FOR YOU?

By David Dann

Concerning the temptations that may befall younger widows under certain circumstances, the apostle Paul writes, ***“And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not”*** (1 Tim. 5:13, NKJV). While the inspired apostle casts this sort of behavior in a negative light, some view it differently. For example, a recent news report titled, ***“Spread the word! Gossip can actually be good for you, Dartmouth researchers say”*** includes the following:

“In case you didn’t hear, researchers at Dartmouth College have a secret to share with you. Despite its negative reputation, a new study finds gossip can actually be a good thing for people to spread. Study authors say gossip isn’t just about passing on rumors and saying bad things about others. In fact, their report reveals it also serves to create social connections and even helps people learn new things about the world they haven’t experienced for themselves. ‘Gossip is a complex form of communication that is often misunderstood, ‘says post-doctoral researcher Eshin Jolly in a media release. ‘It can be a means of social and substantive connection beyond its typical negative connotation’” ([Chris Melore, Studyfinds.org](http://ChrisMelore.Studyfinds.org)).

Gossip is generally defined as: *“idle talk or rumor, especially about the personal or private affairs of others”* (Dictionary.com) and *“conversation or reports about other people’s private lives that might be unkind, disapproving, or not true”* (Cambridge Dictionary). The Bible refers to those who engage in this kind of talk as ***“talebearers”*** (Prov. 11:13), ***“gossips”*** (1 Tim. 5:13), and ***“whisperers”*** (Rom. 1:29). Is gossip actually a helpful and beneficial form of communication? What does the Bible say?

1. It destroys the speaker. The inspired wise man writes, ***“A fool’s mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul. The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body”*** (Prov. 18:7-8). Also, ***“Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles”*** (21:23). When it comes to idle talk, including gossip, Jesus said, ***“But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned”*** (Matt. 12:36-37). The gossip will not go unpunished.

2. It destroys the lives of others. Paul instructed the Christians in Thessalonica to ***“aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you”*** (1 Thess. 4:11). The truth is that lives and reputations are destroyed by those who intrude into the personal business of others, making public that which should be kept private. Jesus said, ***“Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets”*** (Matt. 7:12). Those who would not want to be gossiped about should be careful to not gossip about others.

3. It destroys relationships. The Bible says, ***“A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends”*** (Prov. 16:28). Strife, discord, and division result from the spread of gossip. ***“Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases”*** (26:20). Friendships, family relationships, and even local churches are often destroyed by the spread of gossip.

Conclusion

The solution to the problem of gossip is as follows: ***“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers”*** (Eph. 4:29). From the Garden forward the devil has sought to repackage sin in order to present it as something that is good and beneficial to mankind. Do not be deceived: gossip is not good for you! ■

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

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