



Weekly Newsletter – Sunday, January 16, 2022

Office hours: Mon / Wed / Fri 9:00am-3:00pm.

Contact info: office@greenbankcoc.org or 302-994-3800

Sticks and Stones by Mike Thomas (edited)

"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words shall never hurt me" (Alexander William Kinglake, 1830). I wrestle with the wording of that famous saying. I believe the author was conveying the importance of ignoring insulting comments and how we should not let them cause us to quit, which is a very beneficial thought. Yet at the same time, there has to be a better way of expressing that message without saying *"words shall never hurt me."* From what I know, words are just as painful as physical offenses and can often cause greater injury.

Solomon said it this way, *"Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit"* (Proverbs 18:21). Whether it is a decision in court, or a comment made in personal conversation, words have the ability to alter a person's entire earthly life. Who among us can easily brush off an insulting comment or unjust criticism? Do we not lose sleep over it and wrestle with a spirit of bitterness in response to it? Of course, we do. *"A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit"* (15:4). We live and die emotionally by the things people say to and about us. All of this should remind us of the explosive power of our words and the tremendous ability we have to either build people up or tear them down. Based on what we say and how we say it, we can be the difference-maker in compounding or alleviating someone's burdens. We have that power! *"Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones"* (Proverbs 16:24).

Our words have the remarkable ability to heal and strengthen. All it takes is a sincere compliment, an encouraging note, or a positive affirmation to change a person's entire outlook. This is why I am fond of Barnabas – the name the apostles gave Jesus because of his sincere desire to encourage others (Acts 4:36). He found the right words to offer the struggling souls around him and demonstrated the kindness and humility of Christ in making the world a better place. This was especially true with his brethren. He was selected by the church at Jerusalem to go work with the newly established church at Antioch, with all of its racial diversity and infancy in the knowledge of Christ, to build it up and keep it going. Consequently, he *"encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord"* so that *"a great many people"* were added to the Lord (Acts 12:23-24). One person with a love for God and a genuine desire to serve others can influence an entire congregation for the better.

Do you want to increase your value as a member of God's kingdom? Improve your words and find a way to build up people. Your worth will be greater than gold. And the best way we can enhance our speech is to be patient in our judgments and humble in our opinions. James said it this way, *"So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God"* (James 1:19-20). Has someone insulted you or said something hurtful to someone you love? Be slow to speak, slow to wrath, and pray for the wisdom and humility to respond properly. Life is too short, and already too difficult, to let pride create further conflicts with others. Do as Jesus said and pray for your enemy (Matthew 5:43-48). It will heal all kinds of pain and possibly even open a door for opportunity for you to be at peace with them. If not, at least you have not let the impulses of the devil dominate your spirit. Remember, if Jesus could endure the insults and threats He experienced, you can endure whatever accusatory words are hurled at you. Namely, *"For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 'Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth'; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously"* (1 Peter 2:21-23).

Thus, sticks and stones may break our bones ... but words can do so much more. I am not sure if Mr. Kinglake would appreciate that modification, but it certainly makes me more mindful of the power of words and how I should use them. Or as Solomon observed, *"There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise promotes health"* (Proverbs 12:18). Well said.

Praise & Prayer Requests

Leann (Tucker) Thomas: recovering from surgery on her wrist.

Robin Garvin: out of ICU but still in the hospital.

Strawbridge family: grieving the loss of husband & father, Jim to Covid-19.

Nyah Jones, Mark & Shirl Ellis: all have Covid-19.

Mike Barker, Patty Conway, Mark DaBaldo, Paul & Sharon King, Sherry Kirkland: continue to recover from Covid-19.

Bill Betit Jr: undergoing radiation treatments on his vocal cords.

Greenbank church: Godly guidance for our elders, minister, & deacons as they lead our congregation.

Spanish Ministry: pray for encouragement and growth in this new ministry.

Greenbank missions: Westerholm (Mozambique), Borfay (Liberia), Agbeta (Ghana), Camp Manatawny, Reflect Campus Missions/BHC. Pray for a new mission work that reflects the interest of our members.

Pray for unity in our country and for our leaders to seek God's wisdom and guidance.

If you have an item for prayer or praise, please email it to office@greenbankcoc.org for inclusion in our weekly list. To view previous prayer requests and those on our ongoing lists, please visit the Weekly Bulletins page on our website www.greenbankcoc.org.

Announcements and Events

Annual Meeting – Sunday, January 16

Our annual corporate meeting will be held immediately after our worship service. All members are asked to attend this brief meeting which will be followed by the presentation of the 2022 budget. For those unable to attend in person, we will livestream the meeting and will monitor the chat for comments and questions.

Winterfest

For those making payments, the second one is due today. If you have not filled out your registration form, please do so ASAP. You cannot go on the trip if we don't have your signed form. If you would like to sponsor a student to attend Winterfest, speak with Boyd or Lisa Reed.

Potluck Fellowship Meal - Postponed

The elders have decided to postpone our fellowship meal. We will let you know when it has been rescheduled.

Grief Share

Our Spring session begins March 14 and runs through June 13. Each meeting is held on Zoom from 6:30-8:30pm. To join, register online at www.griefshare.org. If you have questions, contact Judy or Mike Barker.

Small Groups

Resolve to join a small group this year to strengthen your relationship with God and the church. Meeting times and locations for all our groups are posted on the bulletin board near the blue room.

Sunday Meeting Times

In-Person Bible Classes for All Ages @ 9:30 a.m. including a Spanish-speakers class (adults).

In-Person Worship Service – English & Spanish @ 10:30 a.m.

The English service is live streamed with 3 ways to connect:

- 1) **Facebook Live:** <http://www.facebook.com/greenbankchurchofchrist>
- 2) **Greenbank Website:** www.greenbankcoc.org Click on the Facebook Live tab on the menu bar at the top of the page. You do **NOT** need a Facebook account to view the service through our website.
- 3) **Phone In:** (301) 715-8592 Enter Meeting ID 889 4601 8992

BIBLE STUDIES

In Person – Wednesdays @ 7pm – John's Epistles led by George Kirkland.

Online – Wednesdays @ 7pm – Proverbs led by Domingo Reyes. Connect as you would on Sunday.

Spanish (In-Person)– Thursdays @ 6:30 pm – Contact Domingo Reyes for more information.

Ladies – 2nd Saturday each month @ 11am on Zoom – “A Woman Who Doesn't Quit” led by Crystal Reyes.

Men – 3rd Saturday each month @ 10am at Greenbank led by Mark Ray.

3 Ways to Give

We appreciate those who have been able to maintain regular giving.

- 1) **In Person:** You may give your contribution during our Sunday morning worship service, or drop it off at the office on Monday or Wednesday between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.
- 2) **By Mail:** Send your contribution to 511 Greenbank Road, Wilmington, DE 19808.
- 3) **Online:** PayPal has been set up on our website www.greenbankcoc.org. Click on the “Donate” button and follow the instructions. (**Note:** there is a small fee assessed from each donation.)

Last Week: Attendance: 53 Contribution: \$6,634 Weekly Average: \$5,263