



Sermon Series: Watch Your Mouth Part 3

Sermon Title: The Rumor Mill

Speaker/ Date: Armin Sommer, August 30, 2020

rumor: A story or report of uncertain truth that is in circulation.

Rumors nearly always cause division, even among brothers & sisters committed to the cause of Christ. Like in John 21, when Jesus tells Peter about the kind of death Peter will die as a disciple (**John 21:22**). The result of John's dissatisfaction was a rumor. **John 21:23**

Rumors begin easily, and are difficult to dispel. What, then, are we to do with rumors when they grind their way through the mill to our ears?

Big Idea: When you hear a rumor (and you certainly will), don't repeat it.

And there are 2 raw materials that supply the rumor mill:

Raw Material #1: Gossip

Another term for gossip is "idle chatter." Though the *intent* of gossip may not be malicious, the *effect* is always damaging. The Hebrew idea of gossip means, "*to go about from one to another and whispering.*" The New Testament likewise carries the idea of sharing a secret.

a) Gossips can't be trusted; they often betray confidences.
Proverbs 11:13, Proverbs 25:9-10

Someone who "*betrays another person's secret*" will gain the reputation as a person unworthy of trust. That will be hard to overcome. Be a "lock-box" for the confidential info that others share with you.

b) Avoid people who gossip.
Proverbs 20:19

c) Gossip fuels conflict.
Proverbs 26:20

d) Gossip destroys friendships.
Proverbs 16:28

When we listen to gossip, we accept seeds of negative thinking that germinate and grow. Why do we gossip? Simple. Because we find it interesting and it requires little effort.

Raw Material #2: Slander

A. What slander is

Slander is *a false statement or report that mars another's reputation.*

James 4:11 The New Testament word rendered as slander also means “to speak degradingly.”

B. What slander does.

First, It damages our fellowship with God and hinders our worship.

Psalms 15:1–3

Second, slander places us in opposition to God and His purposes. It destroys with our mouths those whom God loves and is seeking to conform to His image.

Third, slander damages the reputation of the slanderer. **Proverbs 30:10**
The offering of slander leaves us open to be criticized as a slanderer.

C. Busting Some Slander Myths

Myth 1. *“If the information is true, it’s appropriate to say it.”*

The question is not “Is it *true*?” but is it *uplifting*? **Romans 14:19, Eph 4:29**

Myth 2. *“It’s appropriate to share so that we can ‘pray more intelligently.’”*

It is not appropriate to share destructive communication with another for the purpose of prayer.

Myth 3. *“Sharing a rumor will deepen my relationship with the person with whom I’m sharing it.”*

Again, not true. Rumor doesn’t foster healthy relationships. **Proverbs 16:28**

Myth 4. *“The person with whom I share this rumor will keep it in confidence.”*

If I didn’t hold it in confidence, why should they?

What should we do with potentially damaging or slanderous information?

Option 1. Take it to God in prayer and leave the matter with Him **1 Peter 5:7**

Option 2. If appropriate... Go directly to the person about whom we have heard a potentially bad report.

Option 3. Defend the victim of the slander. **Ecclesiastes 4:12**

The simplest way to stop a rumor or slander may be a simple refusal to receive it. Ask: “Have you gone to the other person with this allegation?”

Several action challenges:

First, determine for the next week that the only person you will talk about with another person is either yourself or the other person you’re with.

Second, before you open a social media or news app, first open a Bible app and read a chapter from Proverbs.

Third, fast from all social media for 3 days (except for Grace Church, to watch the service). Then ask yourself what you missed over the previous 3 days, and take note of the difference in your mood and your walk with God.

Discussion Questions:

- What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?
- Have you ever been the victim of a rumor? What did it cost you?
- Have you ever participated in gossip or slander of another person? Do you regret doing that? What would it look like if you approached that person for forgiveness?
- Do you have any sort of discontentment when you participate in gossip?
- What are some examples where you have seen a rumor destroy someone's life
- What are some practical things to say or do to stop a person who is perpetually trying to bring you gossip?
- What are some practical things you can do to prevent yourself from listening to gossip or slander?
- Is reading tabloids and listening to news reports considered gossip or slander? Explain. Should we participate?