

TIME OF REFLECTION

“We spend our evenings and weekends...staring at our little screens.... [W]e keep our doors locked tight, and we feel all safe and sound. But we’ve completely cut ourselves off from people outside our little self-protective world. We may feel comfortable and safe and independent and entertained. But also, we feel completely sad.”

~Jenny Allen in her new book *Finding Your People: Building Deep Community in a Lonely World*

“Words: So innocent and powerless as they are, as standing in a dictionary, how potent for good and evil they become in the hands of one who knows how to combine them.”

~Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864), novelist and short story writer

“Speech has power. Words do not fade. What starts out as a sound, ends in a deed.”

~Abraham Joshua Herschel (1907-1972), rabbi and one of the leading Jewish theologians of the 20th century

“Sins of the tongue—such as gossip, sarcasm, and other unkind words to or about another person—cannot thrive in awareness that God hears every word we speak.... We don’t think of living every moment of our lives in the presence of an all-seeing, all-hearing God.”

~Jerry Bridges (1929-2016), author and teacher

“Be sure to taste your words before you spit them out.”

~Anonymous

“There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”

~Proverbs 12:18 (NASB95)

“It were a good [contest] amongst Christians, one to labor to give no offence, and the other to labor to take none. The best men are severe to themselves, tender over others.”

~Richard Sibbes (1577-1635), English theologian

“God cannot be Word-less, for the Word is God.... Since God cannot be without this Word, he simply could not ever be reclusive.”

~Michael Reeves, president of Union School of Theology (Oxford)

Worship through the Word

SERMON – “Walking with God...in Good Communication” – *Pastor Don Willeman*

SERMON PASSAGE – *Ephesians 4:11-16, 25-32 (NIV)*

Ephesians 4

¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.

¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

²⁵ Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸ He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he

may have something to share with those in need.

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 5

¹ Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

1 Corinthians 13

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸ Love never fails.