

Ministers:
the congregation

Kenny Chumbley
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Sunday:
8:00 AM: WGCY
9:00 AM: Worship

Wednesday:
6:30 PM: Bible Study

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This Past Week:
Worship-26
Wednesday-7

**For meditation:
Ecclesiastes 10.1**

How can a single moral stain or indiscretion destroy and/or otherwise ruin a good man's reputation?

Radio program:
WGCY FM, 106.3
Sundays at 8 AM

The great satan

Wonderful sights were to be seen. Some of our men cut off the heads of their enemies; others shot them with arrows, so that they fell from the towers; others tortured them longer by casting them into the flames. Piles of heads, hands, and feet were to be seen in the streets of the city... It was a just and splendid judgement of God that this place should be filled with the blood of the unbelievers, since it had suffered so long from their blasphemies.

This quote came from Raymond of Aquilers, a chaplain on the First Crusade, who described the horrific slaughter of Muslim men, women, and children by knights of the First Crusade on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, July 15, 1099.

Triggered by Pope Urban II, the Crusades were a hellish blasphemy. The Muslims of the time had a long list of crimes, but the Crusades were "unholy wars" promising heaven to men who perpetrated atrocities "for the cause of Christ." Some of the most horrific deeds of Muslim terrorism to this day were learned from Crusaders (e.g., public beheadings of captured enemy soldiers, as occurred at Nicea).

"Christian" *holy wars* paved the way for Muslim *jihads*. Military actions authorized by a "pope" set a precedent for Muslim attacks ordered by an "ayatollah" (a Muslim spiritual leader). It's moral obscenities that *crusade* comes from the Lat. word for cross, and that knights sewed cloth in the shape of a cross on their clothes. Is it any wonder that the Arabs regards the West as "the great Satan"?

To put faith in a religious leader, or a church, or an ethnic culture, or military might (Ps. 20.7), etc. is pure idolatry that leads to hate and inhumanity against one's fellows. Listen to the devil and murder ensues (Jn. 8.44).

We in the West have long glorified inhumanities that cause the name of God to be blasphemed among the Gentiles (Rom. 2.24).

What are we thinking?

Kenny

(Thanks, Ralph, for mentioning *Bullies & Saints*.)

Gibson City church of Christ

Highway 47 South, Gibson City, IL

Is there a gate for me?

Imagine a heavenly, holy city set on higher ground, having eight gates (Matt. 5.3-12). It's so clearly a place of blessedness and beauty that when men see it, they want to enter in.

Picture a man wanting to enter. The first gate he approaches has a small line in front of it. Thinking he can get in quickly here, he joins the queue but then notices a sign above the gate saying, "For the poor in spirit." Realizing he carried too much pride (any pride is too much) to qualify as "poor in spirit," he leaves the line and goes to the next one.

At the next gate the line is also short, but as he nears the entrance he sees a sign that reads, "For those who mourn." He knew he couldn't get in through this gate, for most of the sins in his life never bothered him all that much.

At the next few gates, he's discouraged by signs such as, "For the merciful," "For the pure in heart," "For the persecuted." At every gate, a strong sense of unworthiness and shame causes him to drop out of line.

But then he came to a gate before which was a long line and a sign that read, "For those who hunger and thirst after righteousness." Might he be able to enter here? Though his heart condemned him in many ways (1 Jn. 3.20), the truth is that he longed to be good. Just as there is sin in wanting to sin, so there is grace in wanting to be good (2 Chron. 6.8).

When the man reached the front of this line, by God's grace, the gate opened wide.

kenny

Sermon: Matthew 5.7

"The quality of mercy"

12 April 2026

A great text from Amos

Let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. Amos 5.24

There are probably people who think Martin Luther King coined the phrase, “Let judgment run down as waters . . .” in his 1963 “I Have a Dream” speech. Dr. King, however, wasn’t coining, he was quoting the Prophet Amos.

By all accounts, Amos 5.24 is one of the finest utterances in the Hebrew Bible. It sings in laying out responsibilities implicit in the great command, “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22.39).

A MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

What is meant by *judgment* and *righteousness*? I think Amos uses these terms with their commonly understood meanings. Judgment means *justice*—dealing with men fairly, even-handedly, impartially. Righteousness here refers to our duty in the area of social responsibility/morality involving the weak, the vulnerable, the oppressed, the poor, the outcast (see vv 10–13). We stray from a balanced understanding when we only see “worship” as certain activities (e.g., singing, praying, eating the Lord’s supper, etc.) done at a certain time in a public assembly. Before you raise your eyebrows at this, be sure to read what Amos says in 5.21–23.

A MIGHTY STREAM

A tender regard for the poor; a hatred of dehumanizing conditions (squalor, crushing poverty, etc.); a readiness to alleviate suffering without avarice, selfishness, or cruelty is the mighty stream that is to flow perpetually. The reason for this isn’t to be found in any convention of human wisdom; rather, the reason comes from the eternal constitution of this world by God. Justice/righteousness reflect the truth that all are created in the image of God and are members of one human family. As stated by Malachi, “Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously with one another?” (2.10). A nation is strong only to the degree that social righteousness is maintained. Where injustice, oppression, corruption, and deceit with impunity are found, decline will follow.

There is a place for ceremony, but it is mainly on God’s moral requirements that what we know as *civilization* is maintained.

kenny

Sins of the tongue

James 3.1–12

In all of literature there is no passage more terse and truthful in describing the power of the tongue—human speech—than James 3. Here we see what the tongue is, can be (for good or bad), and ought to be.

One of the metaphors James employs compares the power of the tongue to a fire (3.6) that “can set a person’s entire life on fire with flames that come from hell itself” (CEV). There are several sins of the tongue that the Bible especially singles out for mention; here are four of them.

Tattling (1 Tim. 5.13). *Tattling* is what *busybodies*—people who make it their business to stick their nose in other people’s business—call conversation. Tattlers feel compelled to speak even when they have nothing to say. They rattle on, saying anything, no matter how inane or foolish, that comes to mind.

Slander (2 Tim. 3.3). Twice in his writings, Paul speaks of *false accusers*, using the term *diaboloï*, meaning slanderous, libelous, injurious. The Eng. word “slander” comes from the Lat. word for scandal; slander is the attempt to impair someone’s reputation by attaching disgrace or dishonor to another, imputing false motives to their actions, etc. *Diaboloï* is commonly translated *devil*, which tells you all you need to know about slander. Classic Biblical cases would be Ahab, Jezebel, and Naboth, or what Korah did to Moses.

Falsehood (Eph. 4.25). Every departure from truth—directly or indirectly, blatantly or by implication, in seriousness or in jest—is a sin against God, our fellow, and our own soul. Lying may be the most common sin of the tongue. It’s so bad and invasive that to accept at face value anything we hear from the media or read on the internet is to take a huge risk.

Evil speaking (Eph. 4.31). Blasphemies, profanities, and sarcasm are all sins of the tongue. Sarcasm—insults accompanied by contempt—can cut deeper into the heart than any knife. Remember Job’s friends. Profanity, taking the Lord’s name in vain, is not just bad taste, it’s evidence of an empty mind and limited vocabulary.

Wrote David, “I said, ‘I will guard my ways, lest I sin with my tongue’” (Ps. 39.1). Can we all “Amen” this?

kenny