THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

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SEASONED WITH SALT

Jay Graham

I am certain you have observed, no doubt, that the discourse in our modern society is horrible. The words people use toward others reflect the wickedness in our culture. This seems to be especially true in the political sphere, as well as the moral wickedness of this generation. Unfortunately, it does have an effect on the Lord's people in His Body. We are tempted to mirror the words and the spirits of people when we disagree with one another. And it is the reaction from our brothers and sisters that is concerning. And to be fair, I have heard and observed it on both sides of the issues, especially among those in the same Body. The extreme things we are hearing and seeing are affecting the Lord's Christians on both sides.

We as Christians have an obligation, and yes, a responsibility to not allow our own words and spirits to reflect those of the world. As the apostle Paul writes in **Colossians 4:5-6**, we should "*walk in wisdom toward outsiders.*" We should let our "*speech always be gracious*," and we should let our words be "*seasoned with salt so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.*" This is a perfect description that should encourage the Lord's people not to allow themselves to be like those in the world.

How can we do this? We can start by loving our neighbors as ourselves. This will certainly help us speak softer words. We can remember the words of Jesus, for He taught us to love and pray for our enemies in Matthew 5. For example, when I have the opportunity to counsel a young couple who are desiring to join in marriage, I urge them to learn to pray for each other. I have learned it is very difficult to hate someone I am praying for! Stephen prayed for those killing him, including the Pharisee named Saul. I would not be surprised to learn that Stephen's words were heard by that same Saul, and perhaps his words were the "goads" that Saul was kicking against. And those same words may have had a positive effect on Saul's obedience to the Lord in **Acts 9**. Those same words also protected Stephen from hating those who were killing him!

I like how Jesus answered His disciples as they were arguing among themselves as to who was the greatest in the Lord's kingdom in **Matthew 20**. He told them, rather than arguing who was the greatest, serve one another! This coincides with what Paul teaches in **Galatians 5:13**. Rather than arguing with others with vile words, we should endeavor to serve one another.

What important rights can man take from us? Can he keep us from worshipping the Lord? Can he keep us from offering to the Lord our "Living Sacrifice?" Can man keep us from praying? The Lord has granted to us the important rights in this life. What rights God gives us man cannot take away!

We can also consider the passage in **Romans 12:9-21** as to how we should treat those we disagree with. We should be *"kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love,"* especially those who are our brothers and sisters. Now it is easy to be kind and affectionate toward those we agree with, but this principle also

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applies (especially applies) to those we may disagree with. *"In honor giving preference to one another."* How about *"distributing to the needs of the saints?"* Can you imagine the effect this might have if we acted thus to someone we disagree politically or otherwise?

Paul says to *"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse."* And of course, there is a godly principle of *"Do not be wise in your own opinion.*" Yes, these particular passages have a lot to help us speak with gentle and kind words and spirits.

Think about it. Is politics what our life is centered upon? It should not be. Our lives should be about honoring Christ, and Him crucified. Our priorities should be about showing the world a godly example in both our words and deeds. We should prioritize reflecting the "Light of the world" to a lost world. It is easy to prioritize the wrong things.

When Christians are dealing with someone we may disagree with politically, we should treat them in a manner that will encourage them to desire to follow the Lord. When we speak harshly to them or when we call them derogatory names (which has become a common practice today), we are not showing them the "Light of the world," and they are not encouraged to follow our God.

One final thing to consider. Many of these types of arguments are centered on "rights" we fear the world is trying to take away from us. What important rights can man take from us? Can he keep us from worshipping the Lord? Can he keep us from offering to the Lord our "Living Sacrifice?" Can man keep us from praying? The Lord has granted to us the important rights in this life. What rights God gives us man cannot take away!

We all should work hard so that our words and spirits are seasoned with salt.

Colossians 4:5-6 *Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.*

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LIVING WATERS

Zach Crane

This past June, I was enjoying the refreshing waters of the Jacks Fork River as I waited for the lazy current to deliver a couple of knobby-kneed, giggly, 6-year-old girls downstream. As I did so, my mind flashed back to a hauntingly familiar scene. Just a few short years before, I had stood in nearly that identical spot, in that very same river, splashing and playing with another pair of innocent and carefree little girls. Those "girls", also in my field of view at the time, were now young ladies; fully preoccupied with the matters of adolescence. As I observed this spectacle, it struck me that these cherished days and experiences were rushing by as swiftly and certainly as the water slipping through my outstretched fingers. No matter how tightly or earnestly I grasped, there was nothing I could do to capture and preserve the moment. Standing there, I knew that, if God is willing, these little girls floating toward me in puddle-jumpers could all-too-soon be full-grown women walking the aisle beside me in wedding dresses. As these thoughts raced through my mind, so did the words of the ancient Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, who said: "No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man."

No matter how much we ache with nostalgia. No matter how desperately we wish to relive the "good old days". No matter how intently we attempt to soak up the moment. The present becomes past as swiftly and relentlessly as the moving current. There is no going back. There is no recreating history. With every passing moment, the conditions of our environment change – and, in many ways, so do we. These thoughts can trouble us. These sentiments can leave us feeling a little melancholy; maybe even a bit cynical. Feelings that are further aggravated when we look back on those fleeting, precious moments and realize we failed to take advantage of them. We squandered golden opportunities. We made careless and short-sighted decisions that we're now reaping

the harvest of. And we realize there's no going back for a "do over". Our surroundings have changed … and so have we.

As I wrestled with some of these very thoughts that June afternoon, another river scene came to mind. A scene described in the book of Ezekiel. For context, the prophecy of Ezekiel comes at a very dark time in Judah's history. The nation had been exiled to Babylon for refusing to repent of their rebellion against the Lord. Their nobles and wealth had been carried away. Jerusalem and the temple therein had been razed. In short, they were suffering the very consequences that God had warned them of through His prophets for hundreds of years. And now, there was no turning back. Even when the Jews did return to their homeland to rebuild the temple, they would never approach their physical "glory days". Yet, amid these bleak circumstances, in **Ezekiel 47**, the prophet is shown a powerful and comforting vision.

Not only is Ezekiel given a glimpse of the true temple, but he is shown a river flowing out from under its threshold to the east. The man showing Ezekiel these things proceeds to take him a distance of one thousand cubits downstream and measures the water depth – where it is found to be ankle deep. He moves another thousand cubits downstream, where the water is found to be knee deep. He repeats this process two more times and shows Ezekiel that the river has become waist deep and then, finally, too deep to cross. In **47:7-12**, we find the beautiful result: this ever-abounding and increasing river healing the waters that it enters, bringing life wherever it goes, and sustaining fruitful trees along its banks.

As I stood in the Jacks Fork that summer day, enjoying the cool, refreshing water and vibrant ecosystem that the ever-changing river supported and sustained – I looked at the people around me again. This time, instead of seeing the dreaded changes of life passing me by … I saw the beautiful evidence of God's awesome design and bountiful provisions. I saw beloved brethren and members of God's kingdom. A kingdom that had grown and expanded throughout time - just as foretold. An eternal kingdom that we are eternally blessed to be part of. I saw people that, no doubt, had scars and regrets from the past – but had experienced cleansing, refreshing, and healing. I saw people who had submitted their lives to the Lord and leadership of the Holy Spirit and, as a result, were changed … and would never be the same again. Who were in the process of being changed from glory to glory – being transformed into the image of Jesus Christ – the very source of all these blessings. I saw people whose lives bear valuable and nourishing fruit and whose hearts issue forth rivers of living water – to the good of all those around them.

It's true that no man can step in the same river twice. It's simply not possible. But by the grace of God, we can look forward to spending eternity enjoying the pure river of the waters of life that eternally flow from the throne of God as described in **Revelation 22**. This is the Lord's parting invitation to all who thirst.

Revelation 22:17 "*And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely."*

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And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everthing will live wherever the river goes."

Ezekiel 47:9

Glory to God!

There was great rejoicing among the brethren in Putnam City, Oklahoma when **Tyson Carothers** was immersed into Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

The brethren in **Lyons, IN** rejoiced with the angels when **Maddie Settles** confessed Jesus as Lord and was baptized into him on August 9, 2026.

"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving."

Colossians 2:6-7

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Blessed Are the Dead

Sister **Deloris Pauline Van Egdom**, 91, of the **Chariton, IA** congregation went to be with her Lord on April 22, 2026. She was bon on August 4, 1934 in Putnum County, MO, to Otho and Mona (Cowan) Casady. She married the love of her life, Clarence Van Egdom on March 17, 1951, and they were married for 62 years. She was a homemaker, raising four children, Ronald, Garry, Keith, and Carol.

Here and There

Sister **Quinn Owens** invites the women of all ages to save the date of October 24 for a Blooming Believers event at the Prince Road church of Christ.

Plans are well under way for the end of year Youth Rally at **Gregory Boulevard, Raytown, MO** and College Rally at **Lone Jack, MO**. We commend these congregations for once again encouraging the youth as they grow in their faith.

Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; let such as love Your salvation say continually, 'The Lord be Magnified!'

Psalm 40:16

Special Meetings

2026

August 23.....White Oak, MO
September 5-7.....Pleasant Hill, IA
October 2-4.....Fall Campout, Unionville, MO
October 24.....Blooming Believers
November 7-8.....Blue Springs, MO
December 29-31.....Youth Rally, Gregory Blvd, MO
December 29-31.....College Rally, Lone Jack, MO

Additional details for these and other upcoming meetings can be found by visitiong the Gospel Message website. You can use the QR code below to navigate to the relavent page.

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