

Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold is a wise reprover to a listening ear.

**Proverbs 25:12**

## Seasoned With Salt

Edwin Crozier

### Store In My Heart

#### Jonah 1:1-2

Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me."

We all know this story. Jonah ran, God punished him, Jonah repented and obeyed, Nineveh repented, God spared them.

But that is not all. Jonah did what God commanded, but he still did not think it was good. He thought Nineveh should be punished because they were enemies and they would go wrong again. God was merciful toward Nineveh, wanting them to return and be saved from destruction. Jonah was not interested in mercy. He wanted punishment for Nineveh.

There is a lesson for us. God is merciful even to the wicked. He offers redemption to everyone, do I exhibit such mercy? We need to show mercy if we are to imitate the Father.

The people with whom we come in contact will not know God loves them if they do not see His love in us. Yes, they should know about the great sacrifice Jesus offered. Yes, they ought to be able to recognize what that means about His love. However, in general, they don't. Legions of people, including many Christians, are convinced the story of Jesus can't be for them. They know the story. Part of them believes it. However, they have struggled with sin so long they are convinced God's love isn't for them. Some of them keep plugging away trying to keep up appearances. Others quit trying. Both suffer from the same problem. They feel they cannot reach out to their brethren for help. Sadly, many of us will say, "It's their own fault. It's just their perception. We're here for them if they will just come tell us." Perhaps in some ways it is a matter of perception. However, that is usually a person's perception because...they have perceived something that led them there.

Paul said, "*Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person*" (**Colossians 4:6**). We use this verse to talk about conducting a Bible study. Yet, there is more to it than making sure we speak properly when in an actual spiritual discussion. It says our speech must always be gracious. Not sometimes -- always! Through our gracious speech, others will see the love of God.

Far too often, others do not feel they can share their struggles because we have told them they can't. We don't remember doing it, but we did. Consider one example.

That Sleazy Governor!: -- How many of us have berated New York's ex-governor Eliot Spitzer? As we talk to our brethren we call this man names, talk about how awful he is and how we just can't believe anyone would do anything like that. Worse yet, we belittle his wife for standing by him, questioning how anyone could forgive a man who has behaved like he did.



## Contact Us

We want opportunities to speak with others about the Lord's Kingdom.

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## For Our Information

Ruben Keisler had a procedure on his leg. He has not been slowed down by it.

Brenda Keisler is doing some better after getting shots.

The spot removed from JoBeth's arm was benign.

Joyce Venable had a fall this past week. She still has dizzy spells and difficulty getting around.

Tonight we start in 1Samuel 22:6.

Wednesday at 7 pm in Ephesians 2:17

Pray for safety, courage & healing.

Little do we know, however, that we may be talking to a brother who has been struggling with sexual sin. He doesn't want to keep sinning, but he has come under sins' control (**Romans 6:16; 7:14; 2Timothy 2:26**). He wants to reach out to us for the help necessary to overcome, but he has just been told, "You must never admit your sin to me. I won't forgive you. I won't love you. I won't stand by you. No one should stand by you."

I know we would stand by our brother if he confessed his sin. I know we would love him anyway. And I know if we knew he had committed his sin, we would monitor our comments better. The problem is everyone we talk to has committed one sin or another. The way we talk about those sins and the people who commit them lets our friends and brethren know what we will think of them if they come clean like they need to in order to survive spiritually. Are we showing the worldly and our brethren the love God had for them even in their sins? He loved them so much, He sent His Son to die for them while they were yet in their sins (**Romans 5:6-8**). When they confess sin and apologize, He will stand by them. Sadly, however, because we have told them we won't stand by them, they don't believe God will either. They spend another day locked in their sin, isolated from the very people God has given to help, shriveling and dying on the inside because our speech was not packed and preserved with the salt of graciousness.

Don't Misunderstand: -- Please don't misunderstand -- sin is sin. Sin is a choice. If someone is committing sin, they will not be justified before God just because we weren't nice to them about it. Impenitent sinners need to be rebuked. Sin will have consequences even when they repent. However, we will be judged for our unseasoned speech (**Matthew 12:36-37**). It is better for us to have a millstone hung about our neck and cast into the deep than for our words to cause someone to stumble (**Matthew 18:6**).

The next time we are about to mock the drunk, berate the pervert, belittle the homosexual, castigate the drug addict or speak ill of sinners, let us pretend the person to whom we are speaking struggles with that sin, wants our help, but is afraid to tell us. The person may be screaming out on the inside for the strength to let someone know what he or she is dealing with and they need to hear something from us that says God loves them and we love them.

Even if the person is a Christian, a Bible class teacher, a preacher, a deacon or an elder, let our speech always be gracious. Let them see God's love in us. We never know how badly they actually need to see that from us right now.

(Though written more than a decade ago, this article is needed today. Our society is filled with those who mock and berate others. As Christians we should be very careful how we talk with others. DLH)



We seek only to serve God according to His Will!