

Daily Devotional, July 14, 2020

'Developing Thick Skin', (Ecclesiastes 7:21-22)

“Also do not take to heart everything people say, Lest you hear your servant cursing you, For many times, also, your own heart has known That even you have cursed others.” (Ecclesiastes 7:21-22, NKJV)

Back in the days when I was growing up, which were really not that long ago, it was common to say that “sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me.” Most people were not much offended by everything that other people said. Today, we have people running around complaining to be offended by everything that everyone else says. If you are of that mind, then I will probably offend you by the end of this short devotional. No apologies, for you have your fair warning.

In our text, Solomon addresses the issue of offenses taken by the speech of another. We should *“not take to heart everything people say.”* People are going to say all manner of things about us and against us. It is best to take what is said as either constructive criticism or foolish talk. One or the other. Respond with grace if that is truly necessary (it is often not necessary), and don't poison your heart with bitterness and hate by reading offense into everything. Isn't it interesting that those who decry “hate speech” the loudest seem to be the angriest and peaceless people? If something does rub you the wrong way, always leave room for mercy, for neither you nor I are guiltless of speech sins. Solomon puts it very well. *“For many times, also, your own heart has known that even you have cursed others.”*

Jesus showed up in Nazareth with *“wisdom and these mighty works”* (Matthew 13:54). *“So they were offended at Him”* (Matthew 13:57). Here was the God-Man who spoke perfect truth, and He offended people. I guess this proves you can't win. God's Word offends people either to hell or to faith and repentance. God prefers the latter.

Our final take-aways are two. Let's not be of a mind to be offended by the speech of others. Instead, let's develop thick skin. And let's take heed not to be cursing others, by confessing the sin immediately to God when a mind to speak negatively arises in us from our hearts.