

No Slander

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Date: 26 April 2009

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[0:00] Letter of James, chapter 4. We'll read the first 12 verses together. What causes fights and quarrels among you?! Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?

You want something, but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God.

When you ask, you do not receive because you ask with wrong motives that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God?

Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the Spirit He caused to live in us envies intensely, but He gives us more grace?

That is why Scripture says God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves then to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

[1:03] Come near to God, and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn, and wail. Change your laughter to mourning, and your joy to gloom.

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up. Brothers, do not slander one another.

Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it.

When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. There is only one lawgiver and judge, the one who is able to save and destroy.

But you, who are you to judge your neighbor? Well, I just want to thank you for your prayers for us while we were in Omaha, Nebraska.

I feel like that paralyzed man in the gospel who was not able to come himself to Jesus, but had four friends who carried him to Jesus and even lowered him through the roof to bring him to Jesus, that the Lord Jesus might bless him.

[2:15] And I'm sad to say that my expectations in going to the General Assembly this year were not what they should have been, and just my prayers for the Lord's blessing and expectation of what he would do was weak, but I bless God that he's raised you up to bear me up and to bring me before the Savior, that indeed he has met with me and given me the word that I needed to hear this week.

And blessed us as an association. So thank you for your prayers. Well, follow me to the top of a hill. And there's a man there, and he stoops over and he picks up a dandelion.

But it's not a dandelion that's yellow like they are now in our yards. It's a dandelion that's gone to seed. And so it's just a puff of white seeds and they're little parachutes that are attached to them.

And he puts it up to his lips and he blows upon it. And immediately all the seeds just scatter into the sky and gusts of wind coming across the top of that hill just carry them away for miles and miles.

And those little seedlings fall to the ground and germinate and grow and grow another dandelion and they go to seed and the wind carries them off and they're planted somewhere else as well.

[3:45] Well, you are that man on top of the hill. And this is what happens every time you slander another person. When you speak against them, your lips launch damaging information about your brother and off it goes into the winds.

Now, you go back and gather up every single seed that you have scattered by what you said.

Trace them down. Find them. Track them down. You say, I can't do that, John. And that's right. And that shows us the damaging effects of our slander toward other people that for the most part, very often we do damage that we can't fix.

Now, we come to God and we repent of our sin. We confess our sin to him, to the one we slandered perhaps, and to the one we talked to about another brother or sister.

But we cannot very often repair the damage that is done to slander. So remember that the next time you're thinking of speaking words against a brother.

[5:10] You're standing on the hill with the wind at your back and the dandelion in your hand. Well, we come then to the next command of God in James' letter.

Remember, there were 50 of them here in this little letter. And this one is, Brothers, do not slander one another. Right away, we see that James is returning to the topic of the tongue, isn't he?

It's a common topic in this little letter. He's already told us that controlling the tongue is a mark of true religion. That wherever you have true saving religion, you have tongue control.

That wherever you don't have tongue control, whatever they may claim about their religion, you can know this, that they're deceiving themselves and that their religion is worthless.

Chapter 1, 26. If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.

[6:18] And then we saw in chapter 3 that our tongue is like a wild stallion that's restless and just waiting to bust out and run down some forbidden path. So we must always keep a tight rein upon it.

Well, that was some time ago. And now here in James chapter 4, James returns to this theme and he's putting his finger on one specific kind of sin of the tongue.

The sin of slander. Speaking evil of others. And it's important that we see the context in which he now is dealing with our tongue and this sin of slander.

It's the context of fights and quarrels, isn't it? James chapter 4 as it begins. And it's a hint to us that we are especially prone to slander others when we're enmeshed in a quarrel with them.

Some kind of fight or controversy with them. That then it is especially easy for our tongue to break out in speaking evil against them.

[7:32] When we have something against a person, we want to tell somebody else what we have against them. Did you know what she said to me? Do you know what he is doing to me?

And so if you're entangled presently in some conflict, some relationship that is frayed, if you have been hurt by someone, pray for more grace and grab hold of the reins, brother.

Keep a tight rein. Pray for grace and keep a tight rein on your tongue, sister. Or you will be caught up in slander before you even have thought about it.

This sin is so tied to our flesh that unless we've got both hands on the reins, we so easily slip into it. Now let's look first at the sin forbidden and then some considerations that ought to keep us from slander. So the sin forbidden. Brothers, do not slander one another.

[8:38] What exactly does this word slander mean? Kata laleo. It's a Greek word that's found twice in verse 11 and it's translated by the NIV two different ways.

But it's the same word. Do not slander one another. If anyone speaks against his brother, same word.

To slander is to speak against. It is to speak evil about. To say bad things about someone.

To speak maliciously with the intention of harming their reputation. It's a compound word that's made up of two words. The word to talk and the word down.

Put them together and you have to talk down. Don't we still speak of put downs? With our tongues, we can put people down. We can talk them down. And that seems to be the center of the meaning of this word.

[9:47] It's something that we say that's calculated to bring down what other people think about this individual. To make the hearer think less of them. Maybe you come to me after the sermon and we're talking in the foyer and you're full of praise for someone.

And I'm envious of that person. I'm jealous of that person. And so I immediately feel called upon to share with you some of their faults.

Perhaps some juicy morsel, some negative thing about them. You see, what is my aim? It's to lower your opinion of that person. And we can be quite adept at this matter.

We may just drop a hint. Not actually say it, but, you know, point toward it. An innuendo. A critical comment. But the intention is that you might think less of them.

That's slander. That's speaking against. And that is what is forbidden. It's speaking unkindly. It's not speaking with love about another. It's a judgmental spirit that delights to find faults with others.

[11:01] To find fault. To point out to others about them. It's to defame. To smear their character. Now, this has become so popular and common in politics that we're not even surprised anymore when we see it.

And that's when it gets scary, folks, when sin becomes so common that it doesn't shock us anymore. Whatever sin it is. And I'm afraid that this is one of those sins. That it is so common. Not only in the world, but in the church as well. That we don't shudder to think that we're guilty of slander. James is going to make us shudder that we're guilty of slander. He's going to pull the contextualized, culturalized approval of this sin right off and show us the ugly nature of slander.

It's not just politicians that dig out any skeletons that can be found in the other man's closet. Any failures of their past or of their present. But we can do the same thing with people that we have a controversy with.

[12:07] And we want others to think less of them. Now this talking down about other people is often done in the absence of the person we're talking about, isn't it?

So William Tyndale, the old English commentator or translator of the Bible, when he came to this word, *kataleō*, he translated it, do not backbite, brothers.

Because it often is done behind the back of the person we're talking about. And so gossip is just another form of slander.

We hear some dirt on someone and then we feel called to pass it on to somebody else. It often starts with, did you know? Did you hear?

And then something bad about the person follows. Romans 1, 29 and 30. They are gossips, slanderers. It's just another form of slander.

[13:12] Now before we go on, I want to make a qualification about what we've said so far, about what slander, what this command forbids us to do. There are some times when duty calls us to speak about our brother or about a neighbor and to say things that they've done that are bad.

I think of a prosecuting attorney. He's got to stand up and say some bad things about the guy that's being put on trial. I think about the witness who takes the stand and maybe saw this man do something and he is duty bound as a witness, sworn witness to tell the truth of what he sees and knows, whether it be good or bad.

I think of church discipline. There are times when we must speak something bad that our brother has done.

Times when we must give words of warning about dangerous people. But here's the catch. I am forbidden to speak against another unless I am called to it.

Unless it is my duty. Unless there is some necessity that brings me to it. And even then it must be spoken only to those who need to know.

[14:37] It's not a free pass to say it to everybody. Is that person a part of the problem or the solution? Then there may be some necessity for speaking about a brother that has done some evil.

But even in church discipline my first response is to go to the one who has sinned alone just between the two of us. And it's only after they refuse to repent and that becomes clear that they're not going to repent that I take just one or two not the whole of you but just one or two along and we pray and we come and we want to recover this brother from sin and only if he refuses the two or three then Jesus says tell it to the church.

But all along the process of church discipline Jesus' concern is to keep it as private as possible isn't he? You see it's the pressure of do not slander one another brothers do not speak evil against one another that is the loving thing to do but slander has no love in it it is malicious it is meant to hurt others reputation now sometimes you can get a good feeling for a word by the company that it keeps what are other words that are often found in a list right alongside of it hold your place here and turn to 2nd Corinthians chapter 12 and verse 20 the end of 2nd Corinthians chapter 12 verse 20 and notice this long list and sort of in the middle we've got our word there slander and I want you to notice the company it keeps

I fear Paul says that there may be quarreling jealousy outbursts of anger factions slander gossip arrogance and disorder and we could take every single one of those and show how that when you are jealous of someone or envious of them you will be all the more tempted to speak evil of them to try to pull them down or if you're in a faction they're of they're of Paul and you're of Cephas or whatever you'll want to speak evil of that other group that'll be a temptation you'll have or if you're

angry at someone a very critical time to zip your lip or to be very careful before you speak about them to anyone and so on let me just point out three characteristics of slander one of them is found here in this passage where he speaks slander gossip arrogance and the first characteristic of slander is that it is proud it is proud we put others down in order to lift ourselves up I feel pretty clean when I'm spreading the dirt on somebody else it makes me feel good about myself to have all the fingers pointing at someone who has slipped or fallen in some way and so if I'm given to finding fault with the conduct of others and spreading criticisms in the church about them it shows that pride is just oozing out of my mouth it's filthy pride that Paul says this filth must be gotten rid of James says in James 1 in verse 19 get rid of this filth and this is part of it this slander that enables us to sit in judgment on our brothers I can only sit in judgment and criticize my brother when I sense that I'm higher than him and so I easily look down and speak down and put him down in my speech is it any wonder that the verse before verse 11 in [18:57] James 4 just before James says brothers do not slander one another he has told us to humble ourselves before the Lord because if you humble yourself before the Lord you will be so low you will only be able to look at!

and to him better than you and speak of him as better than you rather than to be on a campaign to put him down yes slander is a very proud thing but secondly it's a very judgmental thing and this is something that James speaks to here in verse 11 there's this element of judging involved in slander he says do not slander one another anyone who speaks against his brother that is anyone who slanders his brother or judges him or judges him it's it's spoken in the same breath because to slander them is to judge them we set ourselves up as the critic there's more and more programs on TV isn't there with a panel of critics and someone comes before the panel and does something and the panel weighs in with their criticism and we can have the idea critics and judge the performance of our brothers and sisters well we're judging them we are their critic and we may think that we can impugn motives to them oh she did that because she's so proud she's so vain she's so selfish and we can act like we're aware of the motive of the heart as self appointed judges we carry around our little judges seats and make our criticism is known about this one and that one we're judging with sinful intent unloving intent so slander is proud it's judgmental and last of all it's devilish it's devilish now

James has already told us in chapter 3 in verse 6 that our tongue is set on fire by hell but there's something especially devilish about slander did you know that one of the Greek words for slander is diabolos it's the name for the devil some 40 times in our new testament he's called diabolos which means slanderer accuser and indeed revelation 12 10 says the accused he is the accuser of the brother he's the slanderer he's speaking evil about us he's pointing out our faults and our sins so what the reality is that when we speak against our brothers we're imitating Satan we're imitating the slanderer himself instead of doing what verse 7 of our text says is to resist the devil we are imitating the devil he's a slanderer and so am

I it's a devilish thing to take pleasure in pointing out the faults of others that is so very like him and when we do so we're doing the devil's work for him you know he he roars about like a lion seeking whom he may what devour but many times we do the biting and devouring of each other for him he is the slanderer of all slanderers and so slander is a very devilish thing now James chapter four is not the only place in scripture that forbids slander the bible is full of commands to not slander in fact one commentator says he believes that there is no other offense in the bible that is forbidden more than slander whether that is true or not it is very commonly said to us in scripture that we're not to slander what should that teach us well I suggest at least two things that this sin of slander is something that is very common and God needs to say it often to us it's not only common in the world but in the church as well and I wonder if anyone here has gone two weeks without speaking against another sinfully it was widespread then it's widespread now we have our list of biggies don't we big sins to avoid but you know I don't know that any of us have slander on that list and James is telling us

God does and the whole word of God weighing in over and over and over again says this is important to me this is a biggie guys when you speak evil and put down your brother so I suggest that that at least is hinted at by the way that it's found so often in scripture but secondly it should show us how serious God is about this sin that we so easily overlook it may be a common fault but it is no less hated by God Leviticus 19 and verse 16 do not go about spreading slander among your people Psalm 15 1 to 3 perhaps the passage James Hart was thinking on even as he writes for

there are many parallels in what James says in chapter 4 with this passage that asks Lord who may dwell in your sanctuary who may live on your holy hill now this is not an unimportant question is it who can dwell with God who can fellowship with God and the answer he who speaks the truth from his heart and has no slander on his tongue who does his neighbor no wrong and cast no slur upon his fellow man no smear upon his fellow man's name so do we have a good idea then of what is being forbidden in this command do not slander just one more thing about it

[25:16] I hope you've seen it is not merely forbidding lying about another obviously that's wrong to lie is always wrong to lie about another person and say they did something they didn't or that's always wrong so be very careful before you pass on information that you heard that it is true but I want you to see and I trust you've already seen it but this command to not slander goes well beyond speaking the truth you see what you have to say about your brother may be perfect truth exact truth even so you are not to say it you are not to repeat it J.A.

Motier says the fact that it is true does not give us permission to speak it we are not so to use our tongue as to devalue another person's character to drag down their name you see the law of kindness is to be on our mouth our lips as well as the law of truth and so I suggest the threefold test before we ever speak anything about another person one that my father often told me is it true okay there we are it's got to pass the truth test but the test isn't over for slander with is it true is it kind is it is it is it the kind thing to do because love is kind isn't it and then thirdly is it necessary even if it's true even if it's kind you may still need to zip your lip if it's not necessary that this individual knows this information about this person am I called is there some pressure from

God calling me to tell this person what he has done if not tight rain on the tongue do not slander do not put down your neighbor is it true is it kind is it necessary it must pass all three tests or we find ourselves slandering another or here is another question to ask did what I just said make the hearer think better or worse of this individual did they go away thinking more highly or lowly of them from what I said in other words are other people's reputations safe in your hands or I should say in your mouth is your brother's and sister's reputation!

my reputation is safe because he is no slander he casts no slur upon his fellow man brethren we do this in our homes as well as in our church we may slander others to our spouses or to a stranger makes no difference as Dr.

Henry Crabindam writes each and every time our tongue is used to the detriment of another we're breaking this command of James 4:11 so how often have you been the guy up on the hill blowing the dandelion seeds oh in many things we we all stumble if any man is never at fault in what he says he is a perfect man you've got to get in line behind me as we come to the cross and confess our sin of slander to the Lord Jesus and he gives more grace that's the sin forbidden it is deeply rooted in our flesh brethren it is as deeply rooted as our pride you find that an easy one just to get rid of you see slander is a proud thing and so we need some power beyond our own we need some strong arguments to help us to no longer slander one another and so

[29:37] God stoops to our need and he gives us four considerations to keep you from slander I saw it first in Motier commentary but I say to you anybody reading verses 11 and 12 can see it the four points are just laying right on the surface we are to consider our brother the law God and you yourself so let's look first of all at brothers three times in verse 11 he speaks of brothers brothers do not slander one another anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him and the Greek says it again judges his brother in other words this sin that is found so often in the world is also found its way into the church among brothers in Christ and though slander against anyone is sinful it's especially sinful against your brothers that person you were speaking against is a brother in

Christ Jesus honors him and you dishonor him the Lord Jesus forgives him and covers all of his sins with his blood and you come along and uncover his sins with your mouth mouth the Lord Jesus builds him up and you come along with your mouth and tear him down oh he's your brother and we need to hear Jesus saying he's my brother I'm not ashamed to call him brother and neither should you where's your family loyalty don't speak evil against one another brothers you see if I know something negative about my brother my duty from God is not to publicize it as we've already seen but to cover it cover it with prayer to pray about it perhaps go to the man and to gently and humbly seek to restore him he's my brother

Christ died for him we've come from the same womb of the Holy Spirit we have the same father in heaven we have the same savior the same spirit dwelling in us we've got the same destiny the same eternal inheritance so when you're thinking about speaking evil against a brother just think

twice about who he is he's your brother your sister in Christ slander starts in the heart in the mind in the way I think about that person and when I'm ready to slander him at that moment I'm not thinking of him as my brother in Christ grace fellowship church if we love the peace of Christ in this church as I know we do and if we love the unhindered ungrieved Holy Spirit coming among us and bringing his word to bear on our hearts and conversion and sanctification we must be very careful about this matter of not slandering our brothers and that means two organs will need to be watched very closely your tongue and your ears don't use your tongue as a pipeline to hell doing the devil's work for him

I trust that's clear on the text but there's another organ you need to be very careful of if we would keep slander from destroying the peace and ungrieved workings of the spirit and that is your ears don't give your ears to encourage it listen to what David says in Psalm 101 5 whoever slanders his neighbor in secret him will I put to silence wouldn't that be good if every one of us could say that whoever slanders his brother him I will put to silence whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart him will I not endure David saying I will not be a willing party to slander I'll not give my ear to them rather I will show my displeasure and even rebuke him maybe you need to speak a word to the one who's bringing slander maybe you just need to give a frown a hurt look it's my brother you're talking about maybe a shaking of the head some expression of your disapproval tell him you'd rather not hear it walk away hang up the phone gently pleasantly

I'm sorry but this this has gone into slander sister I can't go there maybe we just need to say 411 to each other we need to help each other it's not one that's free of slander correcting!

[34 : 56] who can cast the first stone this morning none of us and so we come as one who has ourselves tripped up before and we say oh brother remember 411 remember TKN true kind necessary that ought to keep us from slander to remember it's our brother secondly consider the law consider what you're doing to the law when you slander or judge your brother verse 11 you notice what it says after saying do not slander one another anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it when you judge the law you're not keeping it but sitting in!

judgment on it not a small thing to speak against the law of God and to judge it that's a big thing we ought never to do but that's exactly what we do James says whenever we speak against our brother and judge him to slander your brother is to slander the law that forbids it now the entire law of God is in purview here but especially I believe that law that summarizes the entire law what is your duty to your brother to your neighbor well James told us didn't he back in chapter 2 in verse 8 if you really keep the royal law found in scripture love your neighbor as yourself now that's the law that summarizes all God's law as it pertains to you and your neighbor so love your neighbor as yourself as yourself do you like it when other people spread the goods about you it may be true you fell you stumbled you didn't act right what you said was wrong and do you like it though when they go about and publicize it and tell everybody about it no you don't love your neighbor as yourself so that means that the law of

God is requiring me not to slander my neighbor and not to pass along the goods on my brother either when you defame your brother you're not loving him and you're not obeying God's law either are you rather you're defaming and slandering God's law that's what James is telling us I told you he's blowing the cover on this sin of slander it's a big thing we judge we slander God's law we speak well of the law when we obey it don't we when you walk gladly in the ways of God you are commending God's law to others you are saying this is the perfect law that gives!

freedom you're saying whoever it is a worldling or a Christian you're saying God's ways are the best ways blessed is the man who walks in them this law about not slandering oh it's a good law and by living according to it we speak well of the law but when we break that law we slander that law we speak evil of that law we're saying this law isn't worth my obedience this law has some fault in it it's not the perfect law after all this law is too strict it's restricting my freedom of speech too much and it does not deserve my obedience say that's slandering God's law as if we own our lips who is our master Psalm 12 and verse 4 you say I've never thought of it that way James is saying think again brother think again sister that's the way God thinks of it every time you slander and speak evil of your brother he says she is slandering my law that forbids slander she's she's talking down my good and perfect law but there's more it's also to judge the law isn't it when we when we slander or judge our brother we slander or judge the law and

James says and when you're judging the law you're not keeping it but you're sitting in judgment on it you're not a doer you're a judge God never gave his laws for our evaluation and and critique he gave gave them to us for our obedience someone said he didn't give us ten recommendations and say get back to me with your critique he said these are ten commandments and get back to me with your glad obedience as one that I have saved by grace!

[40:04] alone but your slander of your brother is treating the law as something beneath you you! you're! sitting in judgment on it now every time the law of God comes to us what are we to do we're to do what verse seven says we are to submit ourselves to God remember submit means put yourself under and we're to let that word judge us this morning you are to submit to God and that means you're letting the word of God judge your behavior but when you slander your brother or sister you know what you do you get out from under the law and you sit in judgment on it you put your little seat of judgment and grab your gavel and sit and judge the law now you're not just judging your neighbor now you're passing judgment on God's law you're saying that law is not good that law is not worthy of my obedience and you bring your little gavel down as you sit in judgment on the law so to slander your brother is to slander the law that forbids it the law of love do to others as you would have them do to you love them as you love yourself not so our

Savior the blessed Lord Jesus was born of woman born under the law wasn't he and he lived his whole life in obedience in submission to the law of God he is the law giver we are going to see that in a moment but in humbling himself and becoming a man he puts himself in the position of every one of us under the law and he gives obedience to it perfect obedience why that he might have a perfect report card to give to every believing sinner who doesn't have anything but to lay down his life as the punishment that our slander deserves that's the Lord Jesus obedience putting under the law not judging the law third thing the next thing to consider not only your brother the law there's God himself think about who he is and what you're doing when you slander your brother and this is the most shocking and serious of all we act like we are the judge instead of

God there he is on his judgment throne and we are wanting him to scoot over and make room for us as if we could do a better job as judge have you seen this then that when we judge the law we are judging the law giver because it is his law you can't do anything to the law without the same time doing it to the law giver so when you submit yourself to God's law you're submitting yourself to God when you put yourself in judgment over the law you are judging the law giver notice notice verse 12 there is only one law giver and judge the one who is able to save and destroy but you who are you to judge your neighbor you see what he's saying you need to think more deeply about God he's the one and only law giver and judge that needs to penetrate your mind you need to have a right view of

God and if you did judging is his divine prerogative he alone knows the heart of man he alone knows all circumstances and so is able to judge a righteous judgment perfectly he is the only law giver and judge Isaiah 33 22 for the Lord is our judge the Lord is our law giver the Lord is our king it is he who will save us and so he makes the laws as the law giver as the judge the only law giver the only judge most of the world thinks that they can safely break the laws of God and get away with it they don't believe that God can enforce his laws don't mistake the patience of God with not caring about sin just because he's patient doesn't mean that he's indifferent about sin there is a law giver and he is also judge and his judgment is final for all men he has all power and authority to judge he's able to save and to destroy we heard it this morning in

Sunday school where we had it we're headed to a great white throne and the Lord Jesus the one great law giver and judge is seated! And here we come to stand before our judge our maker our law giver and from the throne of judgment there peels off two groups those that are saved and those that are destroyed here's the law giver and judge and he's able to save and he's able to destroy ultimate judgment rests in Christ and he saves from hell forever and takes them to heaven and he destroys them by putting them in hell forever and we're not at a loss to wonder who the judge will save wonder who he will destroy in hell he tells us doesn't he in his gospel he will he will destroy and put under his wrath forever all who have not believed on

[46:03] Jesus Christ who have not repented of their sins and come to him for salvation who will he save whosoever believes on him shall not perish but have everlasting life he is this great law giver and judge are you ready to meet him this morning you must be it's for real it's not games it's not just God talk it's reality so speak and act as those who will be judged by the law that gives freedom James 2 and verse 12 and so the Lord is the only law giver and judge who is able to save

and to destroy but you who are you to judge your neighbor and that brings us to the last consideration yourself consider yourself who are you can you hear James asking that question after he's just spoken of who

God is this great law giver but you who are you you ever been in a court of law and as the honorable mister so and so comes into his throne the courtroom stands in honor of him and James has just said there's one lawgiver and judge the honorable God can you imagine someone going up to that throne and saying to the judge scoot over I want to call the shots here I want to have my hand on that gavel for a moment who are you would you please introduce yourself who are you to scoot the one lawgiver and judge over and you yourself to take the position of lawgiver and judge that's what you do when you slander I haven't thought of it that way you must way it's a humbling question for all of us to consider this is the way to true humility consider

God who he is and then consider you who you are and bring those two together if you would humble yourself before the Lord and in not speaking slanderously about your brother who are you well I would be that hell deserving sinner who has never had a day when I have made it to lunch without sinning that's who I am who has enough sin that when I see sin in a brother I have enough business to examine my own heart and to see the roots of that same sin in me and if there's anything of its presence to to take the occasion to confess it to God and to ask for the cleansing of my heart as well as my brothers and sovereign grace for making me to differ from another who are you John why would be that man with a log in his eye and I've got work to do to get that log out before

I can even be of help to my brother who are you I'm that God wannabe I'm that one who is the usurper to his throne pretending to be God for the moment and taking judgment hands so that I'll slander a brother I'll slander the law I'll slander the one and only lawgiver and judge and so once I've answered the question who are you there's only one place for me brother and that's at the cross with a fresh sense of my depravity and my sin and my need for grace and I come low and God gives what to the humble he gives grace to the humble so follow me up to the top of another hill there's three men hanging on crosses and the middle one is the son of God and what is he doing in a place like this well he the spotless sinless savior who never slandered another is dying to take the punishment that his people deserve for their slanderous tongues and he's dying for my slander and he's dying for your slander and

James you see in all of his letter has this in mind he wants to get us back to calvin he wants to get us back to christ humble because god opposes the proud slander but he gives grace to the humble repentant slander he gives grace he gives more grace than there is slander in your tongue he gives more grace than that and what do we find when we come to christ well I'll tell you what we don't find we don't find a put off oh it's you again or oh this sin again your tongue got you again has it none of that we find one who is gracious and compassionate slow to anger abounding in love that means he's plenteous in mercy it means that he has more grace than you have sin it means that every time you come to him if you are sincere with him he is sincere in giving grace to you forgives you he says [51:46] John we're going to blot that out it is off the record it's under my blood it's gone and I've got more grace than that for you I've got sin killing grace for you I've got slander killing grace for you I've got tongue controlling grace for you and I'll give you more of that so let's get to the cross let's get to Christ let's find in him all that we need this morning humble yourselves before the Lord and he gives grace more grace to the humble let's pray oh Lord what can we say before a passage like this but have mercy on me the sinner that we have not been thinking of our brother as you've been thinking of and we've not been thinking of your law as you've been thinking of it and we certainly have not been thinking of you our law giver and judge as you really are and deserve forgive us for such proud devilish judgmental thoughts and words

Lord we read of a man in the old testament named Isaiah who when he saw the uncleanness of his lips that should have damned him forever cried out have mercy on me and he said woe is me I'm undone a man of unclean lips with him and Lord you took a coal from the altar and touched his tongue and cleansed him we have more than coals from an altar in Jerusalem we have the blood of Jesus to appeal to so for Jesus sake look on him and pardon us look on him and give to us all the grace that we need and we thank you that when we come to you we find such a gracious savior there is none like you and we praise you in Jesus name amen