

ANGER - HURTS – INSULTS – BAD LANGUAGE

Based on a story of unknown authorship. by P.Ribes, s.j.

*The tongue can cut more than the sword
Each wound leaves behind its own scar
Our scars remind us of former wounds
You can say “sorry” to others,
But healing the scars you inflicted in their hearts you can’t*

Robin, was a good boy, but very hot tempered. Although he tried many times to control his temper, unfortunately, at the least provocation, he turned aggressive and abusive. On such occasions, nasty and filthy words freely flew from his mouth, painfully hurting the hearts of friend and foe

In desperation, one day he asked his Dad how to control his temper. Dad replied: “If you really want to stop that insulating habit of yours, you will have to do what I am going to tell you. Go now, to the hardware shop and bring a packet of big nails and a hammer. From now on, every time you abuse or insult any anyone, you will hammer one of those nails deep into the wooden fence of our compound.

On the first day, Robin hammered 30 nails into the beautiful fence. Next day, he hammered in as many nails or even more. After some days, finding that hammering so many big nails into the fence, was a tough job, he decided to reduce the number of abuses and injuries he was hurting to others. As the days went by, the number of nails he hammered daily into the fence grew fewer and fewer. Finally, a day came when he had to hammer no nails at all.

With joy and satisfaction, Robin told his dad. “Daddy, I have good news! I stopped abuses and bad words. I have not hammered a single nail into our fence for many days together!” His Dad congratulated him and said; “Now, my dear Robin, come down with me to look at the fence. I want to teach you a very important lesson”

Once on the garden, Dad handed to Robin a pair of pliers and told him “Now, pluck out of the fence, all the nails, one by one and throw them away” . When Robin finished his task, Dad asked: “Dear Robin, where are the nails now?” With an air of triumph, Robin replied; “In the dustbin Dad!”

Very emphatically, Daddy remarked: “Yes, you have pluck all the nails from the fence and thrown them into the dustbin, but now, look very carefully at the fence and tell me how does it look” Robin said: “It looks very spoiled and shabby. The entire fence is covered with ugly holes”

“Now, my dearest son”, Daddy remarked : ”Learn a lesson: You have stopped hurting abuses and insults to people - it’s all very good, indeed - but never forget the ugly holes and painful wounds so many people will carry in their hearts for life because of your former habit of abusing and insulting them.

REFLECTION:

We may try to pluck out - so to say - the nails we have hammered into people's hearts, by saying to them 'sorry, I apologize'..... but remember, that the scars and holes we inflicted on them, will remain for good. deep down in their hearts!

APPENDIX **Ephesians 4:29-32** **Temper & Bad Words**

“Guard against foul talk; let your words be for the improvement of others, as occasion offers, and do good to your listeners, otherwise you will only be grieving the Holy Spirit of God who has marked you with his seal for you to be set free when the day comes. Never have grudges against others, or lose your temper, or raise your voice to anybody, or call each other names, or allow any sort of spitefulness. Be friends with one another, and kind, forgiving each other as readily as God forgave you in Christ.”

James 3 Chapter 3 **Taming the Tongue**

“: ¹ Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. ² We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

³ When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴ Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. ⁵ Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. ⁶ The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

⁷ All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, ⁸ but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

⁹ With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. ¹¹ Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? ¹² My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.”

