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CROSS THE RUBICON

It was calculated. It was so much more than just the crossing another river by a general and his army. When Julius Caesar and his 13th Legion crossed the Rubicon separating Gaul from Northern Italy, he deliberately violated law and set in motion the Roman Civil War, which eventually would lead to Caesar becoming a de facto dictator and the beginning of the imperial era of Rome. The date was January 10, 49b.c.. No general previously ever had the audacity in marching troops on Rome. Clearly, what he did was viewed as an act of treason.

To this day, the phrase “crossing the Rubicon” is used widely as a idiom for “passing the point of no return”. Stated another way, it is an irrevocable step that commits one to a specific course, which is exactly what Caesar fully intended. However, there are times when in our relationships we can in essence “cross the Rubicon” with some of the things we say or the tone in which we say them. *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue...”* (Proverbs 18:21) Solomon was correct, words can either provide healing, comfort and help or bring about damage that can seem to be just as irrevocable as Caesar’s march on Rome.

In his epistle, James speaks openly about the power of the tongue as clearly evidenced in chapter three verse six. *“And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.”* In verse nine he points out, *“With it we bless our Lord and Father; and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God”* Most assuredly great care needs to be employed with the use of the tongue. We surely don’t want to intentionally or for that matter unintentionally say something that will set in mo-

tion anything that would bring about strained relationships with any one. If ever words become weaponized, then relationships become the collateral damage. Sadly we are forced to admit that somewhere along life’s pathway we have “crossed the Rubicon” in this regard.



Acknowledgement is essential, for when one feels as if perhaps they had “crossed the Rubicon” with another, they can and should seek forgiveness. Dualistically from the individual as well as from God. There are number of passages that come to mind that support this approach, Matthew 5:23-24 and 1John 1:8-10. But take note of what Paul writes in Romans 12:18. *“If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.”*

No doubt all would benefit from the sage wisdom of Solomon as seen in Proverbs 10:19. *“When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable. But he who restrains his lips is wise.”* When we do speak accept the challenge set forth by Paul, as he penned to the brethren in Colossae in the fourth chapter and verse six. *“Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.”*

What is the old saying, “many things are opened by mistake, but none more so than the mouth.” Consider all the ramifications when speaking with others. Exercise self-control, bearing in mind what James pointed out, *“But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison.”* (3:8) James goes on to point out that the tongue can be tamed, provided the individual follows the wisdom from above (see James 3:17-18)

“There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword. But the tongue of the wise brings healing.” (Proverbs 12:18) Let us ever strive not to “cross the Rubicon” (wbe)