

Good Morning, Horizons Community Church. Morning. It is so good to be with you in worship. Texting is a great way to communicate with others, right? I'm an introvert, right? So, you know, if you're an introvert, you know, like texting, calling right there, there is that there's a difference. But we also know that texting misses some parts of communication.

Right. There is a communication model called the 73855 model of communication, right? 7% of what we communicate comes from our words. 38% comes from our tone of voice, and 55% comes from our body language. So texting right is only 7% words. Unless you throw in an emoji, then, you know, that adds a little voice. But right. It's missing some things.

So when we communicate in person, other factors back up our words. So to give you an example, if I would say to you, I'm shy, right? Or I'm confident, right. My words don't really back up my actions or my tone of voice. Now, there are body language experts that study tone and actions to hear what someone is actually trying to communicate.

Now there's a recent real life example of this. And although this this this was this is a serious issue. The media had a lot of fun and a lot to say about Amber Heard in the Johnny Depp Amber Heard trial. Right. Body language experts tore Amber testimony to pieces. Now, you don't have to be an expert to know this, but it is human nature.

Right. We want to know that someone is being truthful with us or being sincere with us when they are speaking words. We all do some sort of analysis. When people are communing, communicating with us. Now, companies used to use mandatory polygraph test when to assess a person's personality and credibility when they were hiring. Now, in 1988, this became mandatory polygraph testing became illegal in the United States, except for law enforcement agencies.

Now, when it became illegal for polygraph testing, what happened is that companies started using personality assessments or personality profiles, and that became a really big thing. And the idea for companies to use them is to hire the right person to fit with the right job. And it's to help teams better communicate with one another and be more effective.

Now, for me personally, just recently I began a residency, which is just part of the ordination process. And for residency we are learning the process, communication model or PCM. I'm a sister for leadership, Lincoln, which I am starting this year and I'm excited about. We took the Enneagram. I'm a one and at home my son and I, Lex, we, we like to dig into the Myers-Briggs personality assessment.

I'm an AI and T.J. And then here at Horizons, we are beginning a study called I said this, you heard that. And it's based on our temperaments. It's called the color study or the temperament study. And I am a red, which I agree with mostly, except I am not an extrovert. I promise you. So many of our life groups will be studying this.

And if you're not in the life group, your life group is doing something else you can sign up on Tuesday nights. We're going to be doing this study together. But this study is based on the temperament theory. And the temperament theory has been around for a really long time, like B, C, a long time, like it was started in Mesopotamia and around 400 B.C..

Greek physician hypocrite. He's developed the temperament theory into a medical theory, and he thought human moods and emotions and actions were caused by a lack of or an excess of certain body

fluids yellow bile, black bile blood and phlegm. Right. So maybe next time you're with a friend and they're acting a little off, maybe you're like, I really think that you have too much phlegm.

Okay, maybe you shouldn't do that, because obviously, since then, they've realized that the medical aspects are a little inaccurate. But the idea that most people fit in these four basic categories has stuck around. This is something that has been proven pretty accurate. So the idea of this temperament theory was around before our scripture that we're reading today was even written.

Now I know that I've probably lost some of you because talking about personality assessments for some of you is exciting. But for other of you, it's torture. It's annoying, right? I'm in any year, Graham. Blah, blah, blah. Right. You're tired of hearing people say that and maybe you feel like you just don't want to be put into a box, right?

These things are not 100% accurate, but they are tools. They are important tools for businesses and teams and individuals and families and couples. So why does it matter? Why does it why is it important for us to learn these things? And of course, the answer is pretty simple for everyone, right? Learning these tools, these ways to help us communicate better, it helps make relationships stronger and healthier.

Right. But what does it matter for a Christian? Why would it matter for us? So for that answer, we turn to Ephesians chapter four. Now, the apostle Paul wrote a letter to the believers in Ephesus. And just like every other human, Paul had a certain personality type. Now, I'm guessing when I kind of read the four descriptions here, I'm guessing that Paul was probably read he was he spoke the language of power and control.

He was authoritative and influential right. He was comfortable with power. He was adventurous. Think about all of his traveling that he did. He was disciplined to write all of these characteristics of read. Now, if you remember Paul's story, Paul didn't always use his personality traits for good. So an example found in Galatians chapter one, Paul writes, You have heard no doubt of my earlier life in Judaism.

I was violently persecuting the Church of God and was trying to destroy it. Right? So then from this Paul encountered Jesus, and then he went on to build and grow the church. Now, Paul had the same temperament, right? His temperament didn't change. He just used it in a different way. He was building up instead of tearing down. Now Ephesians chapter four has three sections in it and they have these really cool section titles now we added section titles right after right as we were translated, we kind of added them in, but I really like them.

So the first section is titled Unity in the Body of Christ. Now if you want to know why we should care about effectively communicating with others, we read the first six verses of chapter four. Now these first six verses is actually one sentence. So keep that in mind. Keep the word one in mind. So Paul writes, I, therefore the prisoner in the Lord beg you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

Still the same sentence, right? There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called, to the one hope of your calling, one lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is above all and through all and in all now, because of our faith in Christ, unity is the goal, and the first step of unity is humility.

Now, that's a really hard thing for four people to do. Sometimes it's hard for me to be humble sometimes. Now, when I when I look at this book and I look at the list of strengths that are in here, there are there's 40 strengths for the read. Right. And I look at the 40 strengths and I'm like, Yeah, I mean, I agree with most of these strengths that I have, right?

Like I'm productive and I'm competitive and I'm adventurous and I have a great sense of perspective and I can take charge when needed. I'm practical, I'm energized by challenges. I'm self-sufficient and independent. I can control my emotions in emergencies. I'm responsible, right? I could list them all. I'm like, Yeah, this is me, right? And then on the other side, there's 40, 40 weaknesses and I'm like, Oh, wow.

Am I all 40 of these? Right. But, but, but it's true. When I'm when I'm functioning in distress or I'm anxious or when I'm at my worst, these qualities come out right. I don't analyze details. I dislike tears and emotions. I can't relax. I'm in patient on here. It says knows everything. Like, is that a weakness? I'm just kidding.

Like, sarcasm should probably be on my weakness. I'm too independent, I'm selfish and I could read on the rest of the 40 ways. But if we want unity, we must start with humility. So we're all born with these temperaments and we can't change them. But we can recognize our strengths and our weaknesses and we can understand that other people have different strengths and different weaknesses.

Now we believe in and one God in three persons. We call this God the Trinity, and we must mimic the tremendous Trinity because these three persons have this incredible relationship. Sometimes we call it a dance where one moves, and then the rest moves with one act, you know, acts and moves. The other one moves in such a way.

It's just this beautiful relationship that God, the Father, God, the Son and God, the Holy Spirit have with one another like this is what we are to mimic. This is why building up relationships is important. So we're called to walk. That's what the Bible verse that we just read said. It's called We're Called To Walk. And How do we do that?

We do that with humility, gentleness, patience, love, and why to maintain the unity of the spirit, to maintain peace. Because we are one body, we're one spirit. We have one colleague and we worship one Lord. We have one faith, we have one baptism, we worship one God. Now, the second section of chapter four is titled The Old Life and the New.

Now, I invite you maybe later to read the whole entire Chapter four, and I'm just kind of picking out a few verses of each section. So we're skipping down to versus 21 through 24. Paul continues on for surely you have heard about him and were taught in him as truth as in Jesus. To put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lust and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

We are made in God's image, in God's likeness, and we are called to bear that image because of our faith in Jesus Christ. Like our old lies, we probably wouldn't care much about learning what Scripture says or what Jesus taught in our new lives. We care about loving our neighbor as ourselves, and we care about loving our enemies.

Our new selves care about becoming more like God. Now sometimes we say as Christians, Well, I was baptized, so check. I'm good or Well, I have faith in Jesus, so I have eternal life. So what more do I need? Or. Well, I go to church on Sundays, so I'm good, but it doesn't work that way. Our new life is a process of growing and learning and moving to be more like God for those personality strengths that we were born with, to come out in ways and to strengthen relationships around us.

So the third section in chapter four is titled Rules for the New Life, right? The first section calls us to two unity, by the way, of humility. And the second section tells us to put away our old self and put on our new, new self in Christ. And then the third section, the rules for our new life.

And I want to just read one verse, verse 29, let no evil talk come out of your mouth, but only what is good for building up as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. In other words, if you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all. But it's not just about being nice.

It's about building up others and showing God's grace through our words. That's a big deal. That's not always easy when we think about every word that comes out of our mouth. Now, there are some people in life that are this. This is easier for than others. Like some people just have this natural way of like building people up.

And I have two examples for you. The first one is this was at my last appointment at St Andrew's and the staff. We were all playing nine square in the year, same thing we have out here and we were playing nine square in the air now. Now remember my one of my strengths competitive. Okay. So and there was this, there's this one staff member at St Andrew's and she just has this gift, right?

Everything she says, she just she encourages people and builds people up. And it is just like the sweetest. Right. But we're playing this game. Playing a game, right? And somebody would, you know, get out or they have like a really good shot. And she would just naturally she'd be like, yay, good job. That was so good. And she'd be like, Oh, that's all right, you'll get it next time.

And but the game would continue on and she'd be in one of the squares and, you know, she'd be busy clapping and celebrating someone and the ball would come right in her square and she'd be out, right. And eventually we just lovingly laughter her and told her she needed to stop encouraged being so encouraging. But it was natural for her.

My mother-in-law, she uses words to build others up when playing Scrabble. So years ago we were playing Scrabble with my mother in law and keep in mind one of my strengths competitive. Right. And so we were playing with my mother in law and it went my mother in law and then Tom and then me.

Right. And so, you know, Scrabble, you have these really special squares on the board, like triple word or double word, triple letter, right? All these really good ways to score extra points. And so we went around a few times and, and my mother in law would, would, would set Tom up. Right. Tom was wedding, right. And then she'd just put a word so he would have an opportunity to score big.

And like after a couple times of this, I'm like, Phyllis, what are you doing? He's winning. Stop doing this. And she's like, you know, I used to play Scrabble with my grandma when we were when I was little. And she said it was all about setting people up so that they could succeed. Right. She used the words of the game to build up others.

Now, now, real life is not a game. And of course, there's time to be competitive and to have fun. And there's other times where words really, really matter. And that's when we have to put our ourselves aside, our own needs, our own wants, our own desires to build others up. Now, there's another tool out there that you may have heard of.

It's called The Love Languages, and it's by Gary Chapman. And in his book he talks about how sometimes we speak these different languages. Right. And even though we're speaking, you know, we're speaking English, but yet we have these different love languages and he says in his book that sometimes we fall into the category of having the know without having the will so we can study all of the personality things all we want.

And I may know how I act and maybe I know how other people act, but if we don't do anything about it, it's not going to help. God wired us all different, yet we are one because we were all made in the likeness of God. Yet we have different aspects of God in the strengths that we carry. Words are such a powerful tool and combined with tone of voice and our body language, our actions, speaking, uplifting words can actually change someone's life.

Because when someone hears hurtful words sometimes when we hear hurtful words like that, it screams in our heads at times over and over again. And when my kids were younger, I heard that for every negative thing that I said to them that I had to say five positive things. But is that true for our partners and our coworkers and for the person that we were short with at the grocery store?

Now, the idea of scripture is much more than just being a good person or being a good teammate or workmate. The goal is not just having less conflict in our lives, but the goal is unity. It's being one in Christ and lifting each other up with every word that comes out of our mouths. The goal is to be more Christ like recognizing and building up our strengths.

So it really doesn't matter if you're an iron A.J. or an NFT or a blue or a red or green or a yellow. It doesn't matter if you're an Enneagram one, six or eight. These are just tools or tools for us. But they allow us to know ourselves and others because we are all uniquely made but one in Christ.

So the sayings think before speaking. If you don't have anything nice, don't say anything at all. Like these are just decent things that all humans should do and we could stop there. But because of the sacrifice that that Christ made for us, we seek unity and we build each other up. Do you ever think back to conversations maybe that you had any regrets, maybe something you said or something you should have said, encouraging and building up others with our words.

These words first need to be our thoughts, and our thoughts can change when we study Jesus's life and Jesus's words. So I want you to hear Ephesians 4:29 again. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is good for building up as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.

Imagine the profound change that this one verse could bring to our relationships, our community, our world, if we would apply it to all of our conversations. So let's do it. Let's be that change in the world by using our words to build each other up. Would you join me in prayer, gracious and loving and holy God, you have given us this powerful tool of communication.

You've given us a tool with our words and our voice in our in our actions and how we communicate with others. But, God, we don't always do it in a way that builds each other up. Sometimes we're just really quick with our words, and it's and it can be kind of a knife in someone. And then at that point, we, we don't know what to do or we don't know what to say.

And so sometimes we say nothing like God. There's power in our words. And through the power of the Holy Spirit, we, we, we want to be better. We want to say the kind of words that shows Your Grace, that build each other up, that, that, that remind us that we are one in Christ. God help us to use our words that people would hear and see your love through them.

We say all of this in Jesus name. Amen.