

## NEWTON'S LAW

**Today is Rally Day 2015 at Centennial!** Aside from the games and fun, and to mark the beginning of new classes, programs, and events what are we rallying for or to?

The dictionary says to “rally” is to bring or come together as support for united action. Again the question for us is *what are we rallying for or to?* If we believe in our mission statement of Centennial “*to be a caring family of disciples, who know Christ and make Christ known in the community and the world*” then our starting point, our rallying point is to know Christ, know how God has gifted each of us, and out of gratitude share ourselves and gifts with others in and outside the church. Will we stumble sure, but as I said last week, **God expects progress not perfection!**

Now for anyone who has not taken physics or ever watched “Mr. Wizard” , Isaac Newton through observation formulated three laws of motion. Two of his laws are detailed and will not apply to the message today. However, the third law of motion which states “*for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.*” And has everything to do with today’s reading from James!

**Last week James encouraged us to not only be hearers of the word, but doers and that faith without works is dead.** In Chapter Three James lays out for us a clear picture of “war of words” waged with the tongue. Using a horse, a ship, a small flame he shows us that untamed part of our body that can bring as much destruction as to set the whole forest on fire! Today we hear stories too many times of the words that through bullying results in devastating results.

That is not our focus today on this Rally Day Sunday, for when we focus too much or constantly on the negative it can bring us down. **Our focus should be positive**, and that is where newton’s third law of motion comes in. Remember his third law is “*for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.*” When we are faced with criticism, a negative attitude or change what is our equal and opposite reaction? Or do we just “return” the criticism, negativity or change with more of the same?

God has given us free will, which simply means we can choose the way we go, the path we will take. Will we make the situation or circumstances better or worse? Words not thought out or carefully chosen can do damage for years! **Just a few weeks ago wise advice was given in James 1:19 “let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger”** or as James says did we just go away and forget that advice? Because James said in Verse 26 **if we don’t control our tongue then our religion is worthless!!!**

Proverbs 15:1 “*a gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare.*” I believe James’ advice and Mr. Newton’s third law - “*for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.*” And even Proverbs all agree. **Giving a gentle answer would be an equal and**

**opposite reaction to harsh words, which do nothing but stir up anger.** Consider all the times Jesus took insults, accusations, and more, but never returned unkind words.

This is where I want us to focus this morning – what should be our “equal and opposite reaction”? **Let’s reflect on what we do in circumstances we find ourselves in.** Can we “rally” and do the right thing?

When we find ourselves in circumstances where we want to respond quickly or even consider “striking back”, but we can remember the words of Solomon in Proverbs *“the one who has knowledge uses words with restraint, and whoever has understanding is even-tempered.”* I don’t know how many of you can relate with me, but I am known to “think out loud” instead of thinking it over in my mind before I speak!

Our culture speaks loudly and proclaims we have the “right” to strike back after all haven’t “they” attacked first? We are serving Christ, and like a servant we have no “rights” only privileges.

**Galatians says freedom is to not do anything we desire, but do the right thing.**

Another point to remember is by striking out what do we accomplish? Is it a short-lived revenge, but then what? **Youth, if a friend happens to misunderstand and spreads incorrect information is it worth, losing years of their friendship for the momentary satisfaction?**

Again I will repeat – **religion and how we show it to other people is reflected in how we behave, react, or speak in our relationships.** You can quote scripture all day long to someone, but if you don’t live it then as James put it religion is worthless.

The other words I don’t buy is when a person says *“that’s the way I am, live with it”.* **No!!!! God can change lives every single day, young or old, church-ed or non-church-ed.** I believe when we make such a statement about not changing **we are short-circuiting God!!!** More importantly He has something special, meaningful for you to do in this life.

**He has gifted us all and no one should be shaking their head right now. God wants you. He made you unique and gifted for a purpose, and we can ignore even reject his gentle prompting, but you’re missing out on the most important thing in your life and will always be searching for something to take its place if you don’t do it.**

**How we react to words and situations is important but it is how we react to people and the effect on them and others is even more important.** If we respond negatively all of a sudden people avoid us because people do not want to be around negative people.

Some of the greatest speakers of our time are very positive people and realistic too. One comes to mind after reading many of his articles in the paper is Harvey McKay. He wrote *Swimming with the*

*Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive.* When I listened to Adam Hamilton he is a realist, but so positive! Those are the kind of people that we want to be around and listen to. Such people live their talk not unlike when Jesus spoke these words “*let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works...*” **religion means action** - *love your neighbor as yourself can't be done when you stay behind closed doors watching tv or surf for hours on the internet!* These actions all come back to what exactly is our “equal and opposite reaction” to situations and circumstances.

**Will we be “perfect” at it, no, but that doesn’t mean we should give up. For if we start in one situation not reacting to something that gets under our skin we have made progress and I believe God smiles at us!**

I discovered an interesting analogy when bringing this sermon together. Take three items a carrot, an egg and coffee beans. Now put them in boiling water. What happens? Remember the carrot went in hard and became soft. The egg after peeling off the shell is now soft on the outside, **but** it has hardened on the inside. Now the coffee beans actually flavored the water and made a good cup of coffee to drink. How do those three items compare to how we can react in circumstances less than ideal, when adversity comes our way or something we call change “happens”!

In the case of the carrot, hard and tough, when thrown into an adverse situation - boiling water, softened and became weak. Is that how we change when pain and suffering enter our life? We can talk all day long how good God is, but what happens when life is not going our way? Peter is a good example of being put in “boiling water”. Peter’s equal and opposite reaction was that he denied Jesus, when life was not so great, but later He became a disciple that let His “light show before people!”

The egg originally had a shell that protected the liquid inside, but when put in boiling water the liquid became hard. When people are put in unfavorable circumstances in life they can become hard and even bitter at life. Why me God? Examples from the Bible were people like Judas who betrayed Jesus, Cain killed his brother or Saul when David was looked upon favorably.

Lastly, the coffee beans strained by boiling water running over them actually made them better! Unlike the carrot or the egg, the coffee beans made something better. When we respond in an equal and opposite positive reaction, we can come out better and more Christ-like. Abraham became stronger under pressure when his obedience led him to

offer his own son, Joseph became stronger after being mistreated by his brothers as well as Peter and Paul after numerous adverse situations.

**We are reminded in 1 Peter and other New Testament letters that trials will come because what they produce if we react positively are far more treasured than any gold or silver.**

The toughest by far for most of us is to have an equal and positive reaction to “*change!!!*” Pastor, did you have to **mention that one!!!** I was nodding my head up to now, but that is a tough one! Friends, when we are Disciples of Christ and have the Holy Spirit we have a huge amount of help. **Matthew 19:26 “*humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible.*” and that means He can help you to react to change.** Our faith, our religion is all about change! Jesus changed the world **forever**. The Resurrection on that Easter Sunday left the world changed. *Is our faith so limited that this book, the Bible, is only words on paper, great to listen to, but have no power in them? I do not believe that for a minute, no, not for a second!!!!*

Why is change so often “greeted” with a negative reaction? It has been said by a researcher that all change is viewed as a loss. When we lose the familiar we do sense loss. The elements of change test us. There is uncertainty, a loss of control, everything seems different, and we can question our competence. (raising kids). Change will involve more work not unlike pursuing the expansion – there will be work!!! There could be unseen ripple effects. The past can betray us too, if we have had bad experiences with change in the past.

We must keep in our hearts and minds that regardless of the change, we will be there at the other end after the change. I mean look at all the change you have been through already. Young people learn to appreciate that for some day you will be there! **So much change and the pace of change seems even faster, but our equal and opposite reaction must be positive for we are called to be his disciples.**

Amen.