

The Words of My Mouth

July 28, 2020

Scripture: Psalms 19:7-14

7. The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple.
8. The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes.
9. The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.
10. More to be desired *are* *they* than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.
11. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: *and* in keeping of them *there is* great reward.
12. Who can understand *his* errors? cleanse thou me from secret *faults*.
13. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous *sins*; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.
14. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

Summary: The words we use don't always have the effect we want.

But, unfortunately, there are times when the words we use aren't intended for noble purposes.

During the course of his sermon, a preacher wanted to emphasize the brevity of life.

He took a long pause, then said, "Every member of this church is going to die."

But, to his ultimate surprise, a man in the back row responded to this statement with a big smile.

Well, the evangelist was stunned, so he repeated the phrase with even greater volume.

This time he noticed that the man crossed his arms and looked even happier than before.

Well, this rattled the preacher so much that he literally shouted the words a third time at the top of his lungs, “Every member of this church is going to die!!”

But, in the midst of a loud but serious cry of “Amen” from the congregation, that guy in the back seat just kept beaming from ear to ear.

Well, immediately after the service, the evangelist tracked down the man and asked, “Why in the world did you smile so big when I said ‘Every member of this church is going to die?’”

The man erupted with a huge smile and said, “Because I’m not a member of this church.”

Unfortunately, the words we use don’t always have the effect we want.

Sometimes words meant to spur people on toward action, fall on deaf ears and immobile people.

Sometimes the words we use to try and encourage are interpreted as superior or arrogant.

Sometimes we don’t know what words to use, and we choose ones that end up doing more harm than good.

And, these are mistakes that all of us make - because we’re human. We’re not perfect.

Even with the best of intentions, we will still misstep in our choices of words from time to time.

But, this evening, we’re not going to be talking about the times that we slip-up, and use the wrong words.

We're not so much concerned with the accidental misunderstandings that are bound to happen between two human-beings trying to communicate.

The title for this evening's lesson is "The Words of My Mouth" - taken directly from the verses read to us a moment ago from Psalm 19.

Let's look again at these words of David.

Verse 14: Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

This is obviously our key verse for this evening, but it's especially important that we notice the context in which this writer refers to the words of our mouths.

Notice that we are in the midst of a section declaring the glory of the laws and commands of the Lord.

Look at all the descriptors: first we have "the law of the Lord is perfect" - v. 7.

And, as we go down through here we see that they're described as sure, right, pure, true, to be desired more than gold, and sweeter than honey.

So, it's important for us to notice the link between "the words of my mouth" and "the law of the Lord." Because the only way our words and thoughts will be pleasing to God is if it's in accordance with His commands.

I want us to take some time to look at a few places in Scripture that give us direct instruction concerning the things we say.

I. Ephesians 4:29

29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

A. This verse is a pretty general rule concerning the words we use, but it's a good place for us to begin.

Think about the words you use on a day-to-day basis.

What kind of attitude is being displayed when you speak to others?

Are the words you use on a regular basis corrupting?

Or, as one translation puts it, “unwholesome”?

When we use our words to put others down, or when we use our words to criticize, or when we use our words out of anger, we aren’t doing ourselves or those around us any service.

It’s especially important that we notice the last half of this verse.

Not only does the Apostle Paul instruct us to avoid using words that are “corrupting,” but he says that we should only use words that are going to benefit those who hear them.

It would be a good rule of thumb to consider before we speak whether or not what we are about to say is going to “give grace to those who hear.”

There’s an anonymous poem that I read that says:

“When you are disposed to criticize a friend,

Just remember, the beginning’s not the end;

When within, this urge you find,

These three questions bring to mind:

Is it TRUE? Is it NEEDFUL? Is it KIND?”

II. James 3:9-10

9. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

10. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

A. Now, this chapter in Scripture is a lengthy section concerning the taming of the tongue.

But, I especially want us to notice what James says here in these verses.

How could we ever expect the words of our mouths to be acceptable to God if we are using them to bring down His Creation?

At this point in our study, I think it's important for us to consider the ever-increasing problem of gossip. Gossip is being rationalized away these days as nothing more than "truth-telling" or "I'm just giving warning."

Now, I think we all understand that there are going to be times when we talk about each other, and each other's lives, and certainly all of this conversation is not gossip.

So, the question we have to answer is - when is it gossip, and when is it acceptable conversation?

Well, there are two important aspects of our conversation that we must examine.

The first of these is the accuracy of what we are saying.

If there is even the slightest doubt in our minds that what we are sharing isn't true, then we should stop where we are, and not go any further.

Now, one of the more common excuses for gossiping is when people say, "But, I'm concerned about this person I love, and I don't want them to get hurt by being involved."

Well, there's an easy way for us to resolve this issue.

If we are unsure of the accuracy of the information we have, we must first go directly to the person in question, and find out the truth.

And, we don't have to be antagonistic about it, either.

We can very simply say, "I heard this, and I wanted to make sure it wasn't true."

Any of the words we are using to speak about others that we aren't absolutely certain is true, absolutely is gossip.

But, that's only part of the test for gossip in our conversation.

Just because what you are sharing with people is true, doesn't necessarily mean it's acceptable in God's sight.

The second aspect of our conversation we need to be certain of is our motives.

Even if the story we are sharing has been verified to be true, if we are sharing it with the motive to hurt the person, to taint their reputation, or just because we want to be the first to share the juicy news, our motives are impure.

If you have to begin the sentence with phrases like, "I don't want to gossip, but . . ." or "I wasn't going to say anything, but . . .", then chances are you shouldn't finish that sentence.

Here's an example for us: Let's say I have a friend who confides in me that after only 6 months of marriage, he is going to divorce his wife, because she had an affair with someone. Naturally, I'm going to feel sorry for this guy, and do whatever I can to help him through this difficult time. But, later on, I run into a friend of mine who also happens to be a friend of my soon-to-be-divorced friend.

One option would be to share with them simply the news that our friend was getting a divorce, and then say, "I think he would really appreciate you getting in touch with him, because he could use some encouragement at a time like this." Now, certainly there's nothing wrong with this. I've shared what I know to be true, without sharing the seedy details of why our friend is getting divorced. And, I've done so out of concern for my friend.

My second option would be to share all the base details with this friend, and every other person I come in contact with. Sure, my information would be accurate. But, clearly my motives would be improper, and my actions would do nothing to benefit the divorced friend. Gossip does not benefit those who hear it. Gossip does not lift up those being discussed. So, clearly, gossip is not going to be acceptable to God.

III. Titus 3:9-11

9. But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

10. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;

11. Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

A. Finally, I wanted us to look at these strong words from the Apostle Paul.

It should be clear to us that there is no place in the Lord's church for people who desire to stir up divisions among the brethren.

Certainly someone who is trying to get people on "their side" in order to try and draw battle lines, and create some confrontation within the church does not have the best interests of God's kingdom in mind.

These kinds of actions are so despicable that they are listed in Proverbs 6:19 as a part of the "six things the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to Him." Along with the haughty eyes, and lying tongue, and so on, we have, "one who sows discord among brothers."

If you have a problem with one of your brothers or sisters in Christ, you take it directly to them.

It is never acceptable for you to go to other members of the church and begin turning them against those whom you are dissatisfied with.

Paul felt so strongly about this, that he tells Titus if you have to speak to someone more than once about this, and they still won't change, then you should have nothing more to do with that person.

Now, that might seem a little harsh. But, consider for a moment the danger a person who causes division in the church is.

Not only does it pit one brother in Christ against another, but it will impede the progress of God's Kingdom. It will have an adverse effect on the growth of the church.

Because when we use our words to degrade and divide ourselves within the church, the rest of the world will want nothing to do with us.

IV. Conclusion

A. Matthew 12:36 says, "I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak."

Have you ever thought about how many careless words you have spoken?

Perhaps you didn't think it mattered if your words were divisive in the church.

Maybe you didn't understand what was or wasn't gossip.

Maybe you never really gave any thought to how beneficial the words you were using would be to those around you.

But, it should be clear to us now what God expects of us.

It should be clear what kinds of words are expected to be used, and how we're to use them.

Because our words can be very encouraging, and uplifting, and comforting, and empowering.

But, they can also be degrading, critical, and divisive.

So, we must be very careful with our words.