

“You Say What?” The Power of Your Words

7/25/2020

Good morning friends.

I'm standing in front of a playground at a local grade school because I wanted to share an experience I had here this past week. I had taken my 4 year old granddaughter, Audrina, here to play. While playing here, 3 other girls arrived, along with their babysitter. I discovered one of them was 6 and then her two 4 year old twin sisters. Quickly, Audrina and the other 3 girls became friends and were all playing together. They were all very friendly and full of energy. Watching them play reminded me of why Jesus seemed to love children. There's no pretenses or hidden agendas. They just love life and accept each other.

At one point in their playtime, they all migrated to the rope area behind me. And they were having a ball playing tag and navigating up and down and across the ropes. After several minutes the 3 girls I didn't know began to grill me with a series of questions such as: How old I was, when is my birthday, do I work at Polaris and a myriad of others. Then out of the blue, one of the 4 year old girls turned and faced me and said, ***“Did you know that Jesus didn't listen to the opinions of men, but only listened to the voice of His Father in Heaven?”*** Somewhat stunned, I asked her to repeat that, to make sure I heard it correctly. And she repeated it once again. ***“Did you know that Jesus didn't listen to the opinions of men, but only listened to the voice of His Father in Heaven?”*** I replied, that is so true. Great job. Then they asked me if I attend church and things got even more interesting after that. A short time later, the girls' mother showed up and the babysitter promptly announced to her that her girls had shared Jesus with me and that I'm a pastor. The mom didn't seem too surprised at the boldness of her daughters.

Later, when Audrina and I left, I thanked the girls for sharing Jesus with me and encouraged them to keep up the great job telling people about Jesus.

I don't remember much detail about these three girls. All I remember is their ages and the fact she asked me about Jesus. I'm pretty sure I'll always remember that. And this amazing encounter, came after I'd spent the day laying out my new sermon series on the importance of our words. What comes out of our mouths matter greatly. So, right now I'm going to go to a different, slightly quieter setting and share the rest of this message. I'll be right back.

As I was saying, our words are powerful. Let me share a couple of verses:

Proverbs 10:11 (ESV) *The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.*

Proverbs 18:21 (ESV) *Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.*

Proverbs 12:25 (ESV) *Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad.*

Our words can either build up or tear down. They can communicate truth or speak lies. They can communicate love or hate, blessing or cursing. And every moment of every day we get to choose which

Question: Is my part of the world a better or worse place because of the words I said?

- Did your words bring healing or inflict pain (Prov. 10:11; 12:18)
- Did you speak life into someone or break their spirit? (Prov. 15:4)
- Our words hold the power of life and death (Prov. 18:21)

We are commanded to speak words that build others up and in the process impart grace to those on the receiving end.

Ephesians 4:29 (ESV) *Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.*

Jesus' words always fit the occasion, but they were not always soft, gentle, encouraging words.

Jesus chose his words with precision.

- Sometimes he affirmed people's faith as the cause of their healing.
- Twice, both with Gentiles, he verbally pointed out people's great faith.
- He affirmed the accuracy of Peter's Great Confession (correctly identifying Jesus' identity) but then pointed out that Peter didn't come up with this but rather came from the Father in Heaven.
- In the Sermon on the Mount he challenged the commonly held beliefs of how God wants us to treat one another.

And Jesus taught that the key to uttering words of healing, rather than destruction is not simply in more carefully choosing our words but in rightly forming our hearts.

Matthew 12:33-35 (ESV) *"Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.*

Did you catch Jesus' point? What's in your heart first, is what's typically going to show up in your words. People can't see your heart but they can see a reflection of it in your words.

I appreciate Pastor Paul Tripp comments on this passage:

Christ is teaching us that we live out of our hearts. The heart is your directional system, your steering wheel. Your behavior is shaped and caused by how your heart reacts to and interacts with the situations and relationships that are outside of you. Have you ever said to someone: "Oh, I'm so sorry – I didn't mean to say that." It would be more biblical to say, "Please forgive me for saying what I meant," because if it hadn't been in your heart, it wouldn't have come out of your mouth.

In this passage Jesus refers to this "treasure" we each have in our heart. It's like a treasure chest. And depending upon the contents of that treasure chest, once you open it up the contents of that chest show up in the words that come out of your mouth. So, the key is not to focus on the quality of your words but on the content of your treasure chest in your heart. The Apostle Paul tells us what to fill it with.

Philippians 4:4 (ESV) *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.*

So put a lifestyle of praise of the Lord in your treasure box.

And then a few verses later he adds:

Philippians 4:8 (ESV) *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.* Throughout the day focus your mind on these kinds of things, thereby filling the treasure chest of your heart with thoughts generated from those thoughts.

We live and speak out of our hearts.

Many of you have been deeply affected by words spoken to you – both good and bad.

Parent:

- “I never really loved you!”
- “You were such a big disappointment”
- “You’ll never amount to anything” and they’ve spent their life trying to prove them wrong.”

OR:

- “I’m so proud of you”
- “I know I can always count on you”
- “I just know you’re going to accomplish great things in your life”
- “I love you to the moon and back”

Encouragement and affirmation are **spiritual warfare**.

Satan is constantly trying to discourage us through accusations he plants in our minds.

And so we are charged to counter these attempts to undermine our faith by uttering words of encouragement to each other. (**Hebrews 3:13**)

Hebrews 3:13-14 (ESV) *But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end*

Anyone ever get discouraged from situations in your life? God has set up a system by which we fight that off. And it’s called speaking words of **encouragement** and **exhortation** to one another.

Over the next few weeks I’m inviting you to join me as we dive deeper into ways that we can speak words of healing into each others’ lives. The Bible has a lot to say about it and I’m excited for me and us to become better communicators of God’s love each and every day.

If you want to prepare for next Sunday’s message, I’d encourage you to read through the little book of **James** and write down everything he says about the use of our tongue and words and then reflect on how to apply this to your life.