

## WORDS MATTER

### I. Matthew 12:33-37

A. For a few weeks now we've been tackling some of the harder sayings of Jesus. Why stop now?! A couple weeks ago we heard Jesus warn the disciples (and by extension us) that whatever persecution He endured we too should expect. We also learned that one of the names they called Jesus was *Beelzebul*, "*prince of demons*." They called Him this right after Jesus delivered a demon-oppressed man who was also blind and mute. Jesus heals the man and people are astounded because he can now see and speak. '*Could this be the Messiah?*' they say aloud. The Pharisees try and tramp that down by calling Jesus Beelzebul. Then Jesus tramps down their stupidity.

B. Matthew 12:33-37 (ESV) is part of Jesus' rebuke: **33** *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. 34* *You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35* *The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. 36* *I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, 37* *for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.*

C. One piece of truth we should immediately carry away from these words is that the tree determines the fruit. John Piper put it this way: "*Fruit does not make a tree good; A good tree bears good fruit... it shows that the tree is good.*" The tree-trimming outfit that cuts trees for the power company came down our street this past Monday. Our maple tree was hacked beyond recognition. I thought about turning it into an apple tree by buying several bushels of apples and tying them to what's left of our maple. But in the end it still would have been a maple tree...

D. But part of V34 should cause us all to pause: "*For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*" That verse is sobering! Ever said something and it no more crossed the threshold of your lips and you wanted to take it back? Or you uttered something and immediately knew it grieved the Holy Spirit? Lin Pearson said: "We can never hear the warning often enough. The tongue (or typing finger) may be small, but oh so deadly when not under the sanctifying grace of God."

E. So Psalm 19:14 (NIV) becomes our prayer when it comes to our words: **14** *May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer. (We all desire that to be the fruit of our lips...)*

F. We grew up with the children's rhyme, "*Stick and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me.*" But Proverbs 25:15 (NLT) contends with that notion: "*Patience can persuade a prince, and soft speech can break bones.*" As Jesus hung dying on the cross with every kind of mockery being spewed at Him, He mustered enough breath to declare: "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*" You may wonder if those words had any piercing effect? Maybe ask the one thief that turned to Him. Maybe ask that hardened executioner below Him. Words matter!

**G. Listen to Isaiah 50:4-6 (NASB/77) foretelling of Christ our Lord: 4 The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of disciples, that I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple. 5 The Lord GOD has opened My ear; and I was not disobedient, nor did I turn back. 6 I gave My back to those who strike Me, and My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting. (And out of the abundance of His heart, while bleeding for our sins, He declares forgiveness! What incredible love!)**

**H. We're coming into the season of giving. But I'm always hopeful it's an unending season, where we're always looking for needs and then partnering with God to meet them. There's countless ways we can give. One of those ways is to GIVE WORDS. Words are inexpensive but can prove to be priceless. Give words that sustain the weary. Give words that will encourage a broken heart or a desperate soul. A note to that old friend who made a difference in your life, whom God used, who may now be far away or just down the road. What would a note of gratitude mean to them? (What do they mean to you?) You could save it for their eulogy but I suspect it'll mean more right now. Be it far from me to urge you to tie apples onto your maple branches! But I believe you all here to be fruit trees! Bear that fruit!**

**I. I love this verse from Proverbs 25:11 (VOICE) 11 A well-spoken word at just the right moment is like golden apples in settings of silver. (Maybe someone's coming to mind? It's too bad in our day and age we don't have more ways to communicate!)**

**J. As for Jesus when He walked the earth, John 7:5 says: "For even His own brothers did not believe in Him." This was right after they prodded Jesus to go to the Festival of Booths in Jerusalem where they knew Jewish leaders were lying in wait to kill Him. I'm sure they came to regret that menacing suggestion. But who was likely first among those cajoling brothers? James. But then came his post-resurrection encounter. I believe it was there that Jesus placed a burning coal upon his tongue...**

**K. James 3:1-12 (NLT) are words ever so true: 1 Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly. 2 Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way. 3 We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. 4 And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. 5 In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. 6 And among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself. 7 People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, 8 but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. 9 Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. 10 And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right! 11 Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? 12 Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring.**

**\* Let's let those words take us home... Close with Prayer...**

## **Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff**

### **Matthew 12:33-37 (ESV)**

**33** 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. **34** You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. **35** The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. **36** I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, **37** for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.

### **Psalm 19:14 (NIV)**

**14** May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

### **Isaiah 50:4-6 (NASB - 77)**

**4** The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of disciples, That I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple. **5** The Lord GOD has opened My ear; And I was not disobedient, Nor did I turn back. **6** I gave My back to those who strike Me, And My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting.

### **Proverbs 25:11 (VOICE)**

**11** A well-spoken word at just the right moment is like golden apples in settings of silver.

### **James 3:1-12 (NLT)**

**1** Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly. **2** Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way. **3** We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. **4** And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. **5** In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. **6** And among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself. **7** People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, **8** but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. **9** Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. **10** And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right! **11** Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? **12** Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring.

### **Psalm 45:1 (NASB)**

**1** My heart is moved with a good theme; I address my verses to the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

### **Quote by John Piper**

"Fruit does not make a tree good; A good tree bears good fruit... it shows that the tree is good."

### **Quote by Lin Pearson**

"We can never hear the warning often enough. The tongue (or typing finger) may be small, but oh so deadly when not under the sanctifying grace of God."

- Lin Pearson is a Scottish believer long involved in writing Biblical teaching curriculum for children & adults.

### **Bonus Rations**

**"Pass the Promise" - Keith & Kristyn Getty with Sandra McCracken**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-l1JzkzNug>

**Kindness in a World Gone Mad - David Mathias (Desiring God)**

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/kindness-in-a-world-gone-mad>

**Self-Worship Is the World's Fastest-Growing Religion - Thaddeus Williams (TGC)**

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/self-worship-booms/>

**"Words" Bee Gees Live on the Ed Sullivan Show (1968) :-)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKyrDyvzCil>

**Operation Christmas Child 2021 - Samaritan's Purse (Everything You Need to Know)**

<https://www.samaritanspurse.org/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/>

**Samaritan's Purse - Animals, Agriculture, Livelihoods (Goats, Chickens, Bees, Etc)**

<https://www.samaritanspurse.org/what-we-do/animals-and-agriculture/>

### **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 (NIV)**

**13** Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. **14** For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

### **Acts 17:30-31 (ESV)**

**30** The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent, **31** because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a Man whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead.

### **1 Peter 4:4-5 (NLT)**

**4** Of course, your former friends are surprised when you no longer plunge into the flood of wild and destructive things they do. So they slander you. **5** But remember that they will have to face God, who stands ready to judge everyone, both the living and the dead.

### **Ephesians 5:15-21 (ESV)**

**15** Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, **16** making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. **17** Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. **18** And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, **19** addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, **20** giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **21** submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

### **Hebrews 13:15-16 (NASB)**

**15** Through Him then, let's continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips praising His name. **16** And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

### **Psalms 37:30 (ESV)**

**30** The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice.

### **Psalms 45:1 (NASB)**

**1** My heart is moved with a good theme; I address my verses to the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer."

### **Proverbs 11:9 (NLT)**

**9** With their words, the godless destroy their friends, but knowledge will rescue the righteous.

### **Proverbs 12:18 (AMP)**

**18** There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

### **Proverbs 15:1-4 (AMP)**

**1** A soft and gentle and thoughtful answer turns away wrath, but harsh and painful and careless words stir up anger. **2** The tongue of the wise speaks knowledge that is pleasing and acceptable, but the [babbling] mouth of fools spouts folly. **3** The eyes of the LORD are in every place, watching the evil and the good [in all their endeavors]. **4** A soothing tongue [speaking words that build up and encourage] is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue [speaking words that overwhelm and depress] crushes the spirit.

### **Proverbs 15:23 (AMP)**

**23** A man has joy in giving an appropriate answer, and how good and delightful is a word spoken at the right moment--how good it is!

### **Proverbs 16:24 (NLT)**

**24** Kind words are like honey--sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.

### **Proverbs 18:4 (NLT)**

4 Wise words are like deep waters; wisdom flows from the wise like a bubbling brook.

### **Proverbs 25:18 (NLT)**

18 Telling lies about others is as harmful as hitting them with an ax, wounding them with a sword, or shooting them with a sharp arrow.

### **Colossians 4:5-6 (ESV)**

5 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

### **Quote by Martin Luther**

"If he have faith, the believer cannot be restrained. He betrays himself. He breaks out. He confesses and teaches this gospel to the people at the risk of life itself."

### **Quote by George Whitefield**

"God forbid that I should travel with anybody a quarter of an hour without speaking of Christ to them."

### **Quote by D.L. Moody**

"When a man is filled with the Word of God you cannot keep him still, If a man has got the Word, he must speak or die."

### **Quote by Thomas Fuller**

"If I speak what is false, I must answer for it; if truth, it will answer for me."

### **Quote by Charles Spurgeon**

"I would go to the deeps a hundred times to cheer a downcast spirit. It is good for me to have been afflicted, that I might know how to speak a word in season to one that is weary."

### **Quote by Blaise Pascal**

"Kind words do not cost much. Yet they accomplish much."

### **John Wesley to Hotheaded Woman**

"A hotheaded woman told John Wesley, *'My talent is to speak my mind.'* Replied Mr. Wesley, *'Woman, God wouldn't care a bit if you would bury that talent.'*"

### **Quote by Robert Frost**

"Half the world is composed of people who have something to say and can't, and the other half who have nothing to say and keep on saying it."

### **Quote by Mark Twain**

"The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug."

**Quote by Garrison Keillor**

"English is the perfect language for preachers because it allows you to talk until you think of what to say."

**Quote by George Whitefield**

"I was honored today with having a few stones, dirt, rotten eggs, and pieces of a dead cat thrown at me."

**Leighton Ford & Billy Graham**

I was speaking at an open-air crusade in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Billy Graham was to speak the next night and had arrived a day early. He came incognito and sat on the grass at the rear of the crowd. Because he was wearing a hat and dark glasses, no one recognized him. Directly in front of him sat an elderly gentleman who seemed to be listening intently to my presentation. When I invited people to come forward as an open sign of commitment, Billy decided to do a little personal evangelism. He tapped the man on the shoulder and asked, "Would you like to accept Christ? I'll be glad to walk down with you if you want to." The old man looked him up and down, thought it over for a moment, and then said, "Naw, I think I'll just wait till the big gun comes tomorrow night." Billy and I have had several good chuckles over that incident. Unfortunately, it underlines how, in the minds of many people, evangelism is the task of the "Big Guns," not the "little shots."

- Leighton Ford, *Good News is for Sharing*, 1977, David C. Cook Publishing Co., p. 67.