

## **CHOOSE WORDS CAREFULLY!**

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We have been talking about the importance of our words for a couple of weeks.

Talking is natural ... every day ... like breathing.

Our words can have a big impact on our lives ... and on other's lives. So we do need to take care with what we say and how we say it.

Too often ... perhaps ... we're on autopilot. Just saying whatever comes into our minds? That can be dangerous.

Speech is very much a Godly characteristic. Animals ... birds may bark ... howl ... growl ... whistle ... and communicate with each other. But conversations ... using thousands of words ... that type of ability is Godly (God ... Angels ... Human Beings in God's image use this form of communication).

The message is: PAY MORE ATTENTION!

**Proverbs 18:21 (NKJV)**

**21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue,  
And those who love it will eat its fruit.**

So. Are our words important? Yes! Life and death importance. Build up ... or tear down.

**Matthew 12:36-37 (NKJV)**

**36 But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.**

**37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."**

Justified —> Enter into Life

Condemned —> Enter into Death

Our words can be powerful ... we can use them to bless ... or to curse.

We saw last week the example of Isaac the patriarch blessing Jacob (Genesis 27). Isaac's words would bring prosperity to Jacob (even though he meant them to be for Esau).

He couldn't take them back. They all understood the importance of words (Isaac ... Rebekah ... and their 2 sons). The words were powerful. We may not know this ... but the patriarchs did!

Last week we saw Jesus blessing the little children. Just a platitude or was Jesus aware that he was pronouncing words of prosperity ... well-being and blessing over them. Jesus knew His words were important.

Let's look at Jesus' illustration of the power of words ... this time to curse.

#### **Mark 11:12-14 (NKJV)**

12 Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, **He was hungry.**  
**13 And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.**

14 In response **Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again."**

**And His disciples heard it.**

JESUS SPOKE TO A FIG TREE. Out loud ... His disciples heard it.

#### **Mark 11:20-24 (NKJV)**

20 Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

21 And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "**Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away.**"

22 So **Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God.**

23 For assuredly, **I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.** (*Whoever says = speaks. It's the speaking that's important*)

24 Therefore I say to you, **whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.**

If we want something to move ... or wither away out of our lives ... Jesus implies we SPEAK TO IT (Jesus said to speak to the mountain not only speak to God about it).

We often speak out what's in our heart ... without thinking ... carelessly.

- Asian Flu's going to be bad this year ... I'll be the first to get it.
- My dad and granddad both died young. I'm sure I'll die young too.

### **Numbers 13:30 - 14:4 (NKJV)**

30 Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it."

31 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we."

32 And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature.

33 There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

Chapter 14

1 So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.

2 And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness!"

3 Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"

4 So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."

- Heart and Mouth Connection ... they were saying what was in their hearts
- Death and Life are in the power of the tongue
- Written for our admonition ... we can learn from their situation

God gave them WHAT THEY BELIEVED AND SAID.

### **Numbers 14:26-30 (NKJV)**

26 And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,

27 **“How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me.**

28 **Say to them, As I live,’ says the Lord, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you:**

29 The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above.

30 **Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in.**

**“Just as you have spoken”**. They got what they said. They were judged by their own words. They pronounced their own sentence.

Remember:

**Ecclesiastes 5:2 (NKJV)**

2 **Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God.**

For God is in heaven, and you on earth;  
Therefore let your words be few.

They had hearts of unbelief ... and spoke out of the abundance of the heart.

What if they'd been positive? “At last ... the Promised Land. Thank God!”

When you look at the Bible from this perspective ... we can see that the Bible is full of examples of the importance and influence of our words.

We know Jesus spoke to a fig tree ... told his disciples they could do that too and in fact “whoever” would speak to a mountain would see results.

Here are a couple of further examples in Jesus’ life.

**Luke 4:38-39 (NKJV)**

38 Now He arose from the synagogue and entered Simon’s house. But **Simon’s wife’s mother was sick with a high fever**, and they made request of Him concerning her.

39 So **He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her.** And immediately she arose and served them.

Note the method here: Jesus rebuked the fever. He spoke to the fever ... admonished ... chided it. Go! And ... it got!

Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

### **Luke 8:22-25 (NKJV)**

22 Now it happened, on a certain day, that **He got into a boat with His disciples.** And He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side of the lake." And they launched out.

23 But **as they sailed He fell asleep.** And **a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water, and were in jeopardy.**

24 And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!"

Then He **arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water.** And they ceased, and there was a calm. (*Jesus rebuked the wind ... He spoke to it ... chided it*)

25 But He said to them, "Where is your faith?"

And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, "Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!"

It's easy to say: "Well that was Jesus".

In a sense ... but don't forget ... Jesus Himself said "Whoever" speaks to a fig tree ... or to a mountain ... will get what he says and believes. Tree ... mountain ... fever ... storm ... fairly similar?

Jesus spoke to them all. Most of us wouldn't speak to any situation!

### **Luke 17:5-6 (NKJV)**

5 And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."

6 So **the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.** (*If you have faith ... you can say. If you had faith ... you would speak. Say to the situation ... "Change" ... and it would change. He's not talking about Himself*)

Faith is in 2 places ... the heart and the mouth.

Faith in the heart is expressed through the mouth.

We might say: “I don’t believe that. I don’t believe my words would have any effect”. Well — if we believe nothing will happen ... and say nothing will happen ... guess what? — it will work ... and WE’LL GET NOTHING!

### **Mark 5:25-34 (NKJV)**

25 Now **a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years,**

26 **and had suffered many things from many physicians.** She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse.

27 When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment.

28 For **she said, “If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.”**

29 Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction.

30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, “Who touched My clothes?”

31 But His disciples said to Him, “You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, ‘Who touched Me?’ ”

32 And He looked around to see her who had done this thing.

33 But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth.

34 And **He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.”**

She could have said:

- If it’s God’s will to heal me ... He’ll send Jesus to my door. If he doesn’t ... it must be God’s will for me to die.
- or ...I’ll go find this Rabbi ... then I’ll see what happens. You never know. I might strike lucky.

But ... her words were definite. SHE BELIEVED ... SHE SAID ... SHE ACTED.

Jesus said it was HER FAITH.

### **Mark 5:21-24 (NKJV)**

21 Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea.

22 And behold, **one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name.** And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet

23 and **begged Him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.”** (*Jairus said words of faith*)

24 So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

Things were delayed for a while ... then:

### **Mark 5:35-36 (NKJV)**

35 **While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue’s house who said, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?”**

36 **As soon as Jesus heard the word** that was spoken, **He said to the ruler of the synagogue, “Do not be afraid; only believe.”** (*Jesus cut in before Jairus could say anything negative*)

Fear not! DON’T STOP BELIEVING. DON’T SAY ANYTHING DIFFERENT.

He might have been tempted to say:

- Oh ... we’re too late. I’ll never see her smile again.
- Oh ... why did we have to stop for that other lady? She’s already lived her life.
- If we’d have got here earlier ... she could have been healed. But no one can raise the dead.

It was easy for Jairus to just blurt out whatever was in his mind. But ... don’t be hasty! Rash words can get you into trouble.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue. Thankfully Jesus spoke life ...  
Jairus observed the vocabulary of silence.

### **Mark 5:37-42 (NKJV)**

37 And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James.

38 Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly.

39 When He came in, He said to them, “Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.”

40 And they ridiculed Him. But **when He had put them all outside**, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with Him, and entered where the child was lying. *(Jesus put the unbelievers outside)*

41 Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, “Talitha, cumi,” which is translated, “Little girl, I say to you, arise.”

42 Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement.

### **Numbers 20:2-10 (NKJV)**

**2 Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron.**

3 And **the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying: “If only we had died when our brethren died before the Lord!**

4 Why have you brought up the assembly of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here?

5 And why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates; nor is there any water to drink.”

6 So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and they fell on their faces. And the glory of the Lord appeared to them.

**7 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,**

8 **“Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water;** thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals.” *(Speak to the rock ... like speak to the fig tree ... storm ... sycamore tree ... mountain)*

9 So Moses took the rod from before the Lord as He commanded him.

10 And **Moses** and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he **said to them**, **“Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?”** *(Does he mean Aaron and me ... or me and my buddy God?)*

Moses was clearly frustrated. He spoke rashly to the people (“Rebels”. Jesus said in Matthew Chapter 5 not to call your brother “Raca” ... you fool ... or you are in danger of Gehenna).

### **Numbers 20:11-12 (NKJV)**

11 **Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod;** and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.

12 **Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.”**

Did Moses not believe that his words alone would work on the rock? Maybe he thought that only physical actions would be effective?

God said SPEAK TO THE ROCK. Jesus said SPEAK ... to the fig tree ... sycamine tree ...mountain.

Moses didn't believe. Do we?

Psalms 106 tells us Moses spoke rashly (NCV: “Moses spoke without stopping to think”).

#### **Proverbs 13:3 (NKJV)**

3 **He who guards his mouth preserves his life,**  
But **he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction.**

#### **Proverbs 13:3 (God's Word)**

3 ... **whoever has a big mouth comes to ruin.**

It is wise not to be rash! Whether Moses or you and me! We can always hit the pause button.

#### **Proverbs 21:23 (NKJV)**

23 **Whoever guards his mouth and tongue**  
**Keeps his soul from troubles.**

Guard your mouth and tongue ... and avoid trouble.

#### **Psalms 39:1 (NKJV)**

1 I said, **“I will guard my ways,**  
**Lest I sin with my tongue;**  
**I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle,**  
While the wicked are before me.”

#### **Proverbs 15:28 (NKJV)**

28 **The heart of the righteous studies how to answer,**

But **the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.**

**Proverbs 15:28 (God's Word)**

28 **The heart of a righteous person carefully considers how to answer ...**

**Psalms 19:14 (NKJV)**

14 **Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart  
Be acceptable in Your sight,**

O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.

What we meditate on will affect our words. Are we okay with what God sees there?

**Colossians 4:5-6 (NKJV)**

5 Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.

6 **Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.**

Our words should “taste” just right to the hearer.

Commentators say that in classic Greek literature — salt = wit ... humour.

**Colossians 4:6 (Barclays)**

6 **Let your speech always be with gracious charm, seasoned with the salt of wit,** so that you will know the right answer to give in every case.

There are plenty of bad things in society and from time to time we may have to speak about them ... but we shouldn't get a reputation for negative words ... always complaining ... murmuring ... criticising.

In general ... our speech should be gracious ... well-considered ... thoughtful ... more often building up and encouraging ... rather than criticising ... pulling down ... and saying harmful things.

And our words are our choice. We're in control of our words.

There are plenty of opportunities every day to choose words! Let's choose our words carefully.