

BEWARE OF IDLE WORDS

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We talked last week about the Heart and Mouth Connection. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”.

It’s an important topic. The state of our heart ... and the quality of our words ... are key indicators to God.

I want to look at this a bit more today and in particular — at our words.

There are lots of aspects of our lives that can look a little nebulous. Are we complacent about our calling ... humble ... do we compromise ... do we have integrity?

It is not always easy to evaluate ourselves.

But our words are a more practical area. We speak — lots — every day — 24/7.

Our daily words and their quality is something we can be aware of ... can monitor ... and help us to grow. Our words are very very important.

Proverbs 18:21

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

Death and life? A life and death situation — quite serious!!

Proverbs 18:21 (SEPTUAGINT)

21 **Life and death are in the power of the tongue,**
And **they that rule it shall eat the fruits thereof.**

We should be striving to rule our tongue. Control ... muzzle ... bridle the tongue.

Matthew 12:36-37

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.”**

We will give account of our words!

Jesus is warning: OUR WORDS ARE IMPORTANT.

Why?

Matthew 12:33-35

33 “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.

34 **Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.** (*Heart and Mouth Connection*)

35 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

YOUR WORDS REVEAL WHAT IS IN YOUR HEART.

Psalms 15:1-5

1 LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle?

Who may dwell in Your holy hill?

2 **He who walks uprightly,
And works righteousness,**

And **speaks the truth in his heart;**

3 He **who does not backbite with his tongue,
Nor does evil to his neighbor,
Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;**

4 In whose eyes a vile person is despised,
But he honours those who fear the LORD;
He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;

5 He who does not put out his money at usury,
Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.

He who does these things shall never be moved.

“Speaks the truth in his heart”. Keeps his/her word even if it is to their hurt.

The motto of the London Stock Exchange: "My word is my bond". Legally binding without written documents.

God's Word is His Bond! Is it ours?

Psalms 34:8-15

8 **Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good;**

Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

9 **Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints!**

There is no want to those who fear Him.

10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger;

But those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing.

11 Come, you children, listen to me;

I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

12 **Who is the man who desires life,**

And loves many days, that he may see good?

13 **Keep your tongue from evil,**

And your lips from speaking deceit. (*Watch what your say!*)

14 **Depart from evil and do good;**

Seek peace and pursue it.

15 **The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,**

And His ears are open to their cry.

Do you desire life? Then — watch your tongue! First!

Psalms 34:12-13(NET)

12 **Do you want to really live?**

Would you love to live a long, happy life?

13 **Then make sure you don't speak evil words**

or use deceptive speech!

Psalms 39:1-5

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."

2 I was mute with silence,

I held my peace even from good;

And my sorrow was stirred up.

3 My heart was hot within me;
While I was musing, the fire burned.
Then I spoke with my tongue:
4 “LORD, make me to know my end,
And what is the measure of my days,
That I may know how frail I am.
5 Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths,
And my age is as nothing before You;
Certainly every man at his best state is but vapour.
Selah

“Guard my ways — lest I sin with my tongue”.

Are we aware that we can sin with our words? Be careful!

Note again: **THE HEART AND MOUTH CONNECTION.**

Proverbs 29:20

20 **Do you see a man hasty in his words?**

There is more hope for a fool than for him.

Don't be hasty! Watch your words. Take time to speak. Our words can bring disaster!

The **VOCABULARY OF SILENCE** may be better?

If someone is recounting all of their woes to you ... don't rush in with your “brilliant solutions” — “if I were you ... I would do x ... y ... and z”. Often a listening ear is better than rushed words.

Remember 3 gates:

- Is it true?
- Is it necessary?
- is it kind?

Proverbs 15:4

4 **A wholesome tongue is a tree of life,**

But perverseness in it breaks the spirit.

“Wholesome tongue” —> LIFE.

Wholesome = gentle ... soothing.

Twisted ... careless words can cause great harm. We are probably all aware of the damage harsh words can cause to children — often ruin their whole lives.

Scripture gives us many illustrations of where words get people into trouble.

Numbers 13:27-28

27 Then they told him, and **said**: **“We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.**

28 **Nevertheless** the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there.

Numbers 13:30-33

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 (wimps) in our own sight**, and so we were in their sight.”

The 12 spies gave a BAD REPORT!

Only words? Words convey a message — either of hope or fear — leading to action. And the action you take leads to life or death.

Numbers 14:1-4

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.”

Verse 2: “If only we had died in this wilderness!” Wasn’t that being hasty with their words? It shows us the Heart and Mouth Connection of these people. Their heart was in a very bad place. They had no trust in God.

Consider:

- Death and Life are in the power of the tongue
- Heart and Mouth Connection
- Written for our admonition

THEY GOT WHAT THEY SAID.

Numbers 14:26-30

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**”. You have said it — I have heard it — I will do it!

They were judged by their words. **Pronounced their own death sentence!**

Ecclesiastes 5:2

2 **Do not be rash with your mouth,**

And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God.

Don't do it!!

Another example:

Genesis 27:1-4

1 Now it came to pass, **when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see**, that **he called Esau his older son** and said to him, "My son." And he answered him, "Here I am."

2 Then he said, "**Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death.**"

3 Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me.

4 **And make me savoury food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die.**"

It was time for Isaac to bless Esau.

Isaac knew that his words — spoken formally and legally — would have a big impact.

Rebekah and Jacob also knew the importance of formal words. Do we?

Genesis 27:22-29

22 **So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau."**

23 **And he did not recognise him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him.**

24 Then he said, "Are you really my son Esau?"

He said, "I am."

25 He said, "Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's game, so that my soul may bless you." So he brought it near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank.

26 Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near now and kiss me, my son."

27 And he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him and said:

"Surely, the smell of my son

Is like the smell of a field

Which the LORD has blessed.

28 **Therefore may God give you**

Of the dew of heaven,
Of the fatness of the earth,
And plenty of grain and wine.

29 **Let peoples serve you,
And nations bow down to you.
Be master over your brethren,
And let your mother's sons bow down to you.
Cursed be everyone who curses you, (Curses and blessings are
words)
And blessed be those who bless you!"**

Isaac blessed Jacob with words that produced prosperity — prestige.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue. These are words of life (A Tree of Life).

But:

Genesis 27:30-37

30 Now it happened, **as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob**, and Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, **that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.**

31 He also had made savoury food, and brought it to his father, and said to his father, **"Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that your soul may bless me."**

32 And his father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?"

So he said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau."

33 Then Isaac trembled exceedingly, **and said, "Who? Where is the one who hunted game and brought it to me? I ate all of it before you came, and I have blessed him—and indeed he shall be blessed."** (These words will change Jacob's life)

34 **When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me—me also, O my father!"**

35 **But he said, "Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing."**

36 And Esau said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. **He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken**

away my blessing!” And he said, **“Have you not reserved a blessing for me?”**

37 Then Isaac answered and said to Esau, **“Indeed I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with grain and wine I have sustained him.** What shall I do now for you, my son?”

Isaac confirmed to Esau that Jacob will prosper.

Note also that it may not be possible to take back our words! Or their impact.

On a personal level: “Be careful with your words. Once they are said ... they can only be forgiven — not forgotten”.

Mark 10:13-16

13 **Then they brought little children to Him,** that He might touch them; **but the disciples rebuked those who brought them.**

14 **But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God.**

15 **Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.”**

16 **And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.**

Jesus blessed the children. He spoke good words over them ... over their lives. Encouragement ... health ... opportunity ... protection.

Not just a platitude!

Jesus demonstrated the power of His Words.

Mark 11:12-14

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 tree (would we?)

To curse: to devote to destruction with words.

Mark 11:20-24

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.**

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

WHOEVER — WILL HAVE WHAT HE SAYS

The teaching seems clear enough ... even if our "natural" minds struggle.

"Mountain" is figurative. The teaching is that a "big situation" can be affected by our words (and heart).

BE CAREFUL WHAT WE SAY! Are we aware?

The Israelites said: "We're going to die out here".

Numbers 20:2-8

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: “Say unto this mountain?”)

Unfortunately ... it went wrong. Moses was probably at his wits end with the endless provocation?

Numbers 20:9-13

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?”** (“*Must we bring water ...*” — *The focus shouldn’t leave Jehovah*).

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.”**

13 This was the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel contended with the LORD, and He was hallowed among them.

Verse 12 says: Moses did not believe. Did he not believe his words would be sufficient? Moses seemed to rely on the physical act of striking the rock.

All of us need to be careful not to deviate from God’s instructions. We mustn’t treat the Words of God lightly.

Psalms 106:32-33

32 They angered Him also at the waters of strife,
So that it went ill with Moses on account of them;

33 Because they rebelled against his spirit,
So that he spoke rashly with his lips.

Moses spoke rashly.

A particular problem when we're under pressure!! We don't always think clearly. It is more important at that time to be ready to press the pause button. Count to 100.

Always be aware of THE POWER OF OUR WORDS.

The onus is on us to stay alert. Daily!

We've got opportunities all day long to listen to our words. And make adjustments if necessary.

Remember: **DEATH AND LIFE ARE IN THE POWER OF THE TONGUE** ... and we need to learn to rule it.

There is no reason why we can't seek to improve the quality of our words ... avoid negative ... carping ... criticism ... defeatist words. I don't think Jesus would have had "idle words" in His vocabulary.

Matthew 12:36-37

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."

So: Let's watch our words ... so that we don't have to really regret them — either in this life or the next!

