

POWER OF LIFE AND DEATH

By Jamie McNab
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You will recollect that we said before that our words, our tongues, and our ability to speak and communicate, really is a gift. Unfortunately, of course, it can be abused, like any other natural force. You could take electricity for example: you can light your house, cook your meals and so on, but wrongly used, electricity can burn and kill. We said in our first discussion, that we should “Guard our Lips”. Last week we entitled the message: “Choose Words of Life”. Today, we are heading this message as: “Power of Life and Death”.

Proverbs 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

“Death and Life are in the power of the tongue...” meaning that the words that we use can bring about, at the most extreme, death or life. *“...and those that love it [one translation says, those who rule it] will eat its fruit”*. There is fruit, there is produce. When you and I are talking, and most of us do an awful lot of talking over our lives; the words that we are speaking are producing some sort of produce, referred to here as fruit. You and I will *eat the fruit* that we produce with our mouths; and that fruit can be fruit tending to life, or fruit tending to death. It is fairly obvious if it says here that the power of life and death are in the power of the tongue; that means that it is important that we are conscious of and do something with the power that we have in our tongue.

We would not want to be producing death, misery, unhappiness, sickness and disease, would we? We would rather be speaking positive, and producing good, encouraging, uplifting, and actually bringing goodness, kindness and life into being with our tongues. Given a choice, which one would we choose? Death and life — both are in the power of the tongue. We take our tongues for granted, I suspect, and we just say the first thing that comes into our mind much of the time, and then regret it later. By and large, we just talk, we say what is in our minds and our hearts, and we just blab, blab, blab, and out it comes. In some situations that is probably okay, but there are

going to be times when we need to be very careful and thoughtful of, ‘What are my words doing to me, what are they doing to others?’ We need to be much more aware and alert.

Proverbs 18:20 A man’s belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled.

Our lips, our tongues, and our words are producing. If you and I want to eat good things, to be satisfied by the produce of our lips and our tongue, then it is important that we endeavor to be much more conscious and alert as to what we are doing. What are the habits I have developed when I am wagging my tongue? If I reheard what I said all day today, and all day yesterday, would the words be words that are productive, that tend and lead to life, or would my words be the giveaway of a rather bad heart? Are my words negative, destructive, harmful and injurious? We cannot probably easily replay the words of the last few hours, last month, last ten years, but God can.

Matthew 12:36 But I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

I remember seeing an old black and white movie, taken way back from the 1930s of Adolf Hitler, and you have to say that words can do things. There are some images there, where you see several hundred thousand German soldiers, lined up listening to Mr. Hitler and his words. His voice was almost hypnotic and mesmerizing. That man, through his words, the way that he pronounced them and the energy that he put into them, and the way that he crafted them, turned a nation. It turned the world into the Second World War. It was largely driven by his ability with his words. In Britain, Sir Winston Churchill was a man who was well able to choose his words, words that would drive home a message and that would encourage, and instill fortitude. Words are important in multiple ways.

Again Jesus says, *“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment”*. You and I may not recollect the words that we have spoken over the last few hours, or the last twenty years, but God can replay those if He chose to. I am not sure that He would! It certainly implies that lots of idle words are going to be recorded.

Matthew 12:37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

This depends clearly on what our words were. Certain words will justify us, and will be right; and certain words that we have used are going to bring us into serious judgment. *“Every idle word...”* We said before that idle has the meaning of inactive, empty, and non-productive. Have we used any? Of course we have! We have to be cautious about the words that we use, because as it said earlier, death and life are in the power of the tongue; and Jesus says that we are going to be judged by our words. How do you use your tongue?

As we said before, our words can be used to bless another person, to bestow favor on them, as Isaac did to Jacob for example. Or, our words can be used to curse, meaning to assign or devote someone to destruction. James was very careful to say that we should not have blessing and cursing coming out at the same time, from the same opening. How can you be blessing God, and at the same time cursing your fellow man? Yet it is possible. You could even be kneeling before God and talking to Him, praising Him; but at the same time saying, ‘that nasty so and so that I work with. It would serve them right if their car caught fire’. God says, ‘What is this, you are praising Me, and at the same time you are condemning another person?’ So James tells us that should not be, and we must be careful. We saw Jesus cursing a fig tree, speaking to the fig tree, and it curled up and died. Equally, we saw Him blessing the little children. On both occasions He is using His words, because Jesus knows that words are powerful and important. When He blessed the children, it was not just a nice little religious service, but He was bestowing favor on them. It would have had a real impact; because words are powerful and words are important.

You and I need to be more conscious, and more alert, to the words that we are using, and not be careless. We must think first, and then speak; not speak first, and then think afterwards, ‘That was not such a good idea, was it?’ Once the words are out, they are pretty much impossible to retract. You might have to apologize, and depending on the situation, the person might accept your apology for being highly offensive. But in many ways, it may be too late. In scripture there is talk of our words being like a razor blade. You take a razor blade and slash somebody’s face,

it may well heal, but there may be a scar there for the rest of their lives. If we use our tongues wrongly, people may forgive, but quite likely there will be a scar there for life. We have to be very careful.

Proverbs 15:28 The heart of the righteous *studieth* to answer: but the mouth of the wicked *poureth out* evil things.

One translation says ‘ponders or meditates’, and the impression is that this person is *thinking*. They are thinking of what the most appropriate response is. In fact, is any response actually appropriate or perhaps just being silent might be the best response. If not silence, then what words would be fitly spoken? Versus the wicked person who just blah, blah, blah, just pours it all out with no thought and no care, and gets himself into trouble. Sometimes what you hear yourself saying, or what you might hear your family, friends or your neighbors saying, is often a good insight as to what is in their heart. But the *heart of the righteous* takes time, ponders and thinks about what is the best thing, if anything, to say here. Whereas the wicked person or the foolish person just lets it all race out; and this is a person who is rash in their words. Being rash in your words is not advisable.

Proverbs 21:23 Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles.

Guarding our mouth does not mean that we do not speak, there are a lot of things that we can talk about depending on our environment and who we are with, and what we are talking about. But a wise person, a prudent person, has some control over their vocal apparatus. We may need to ask ourselves, “Do I need to say this, or should I be a bit cautious in this environment, and with these people, at this time?” There is a time for silence, and there is a time for speech. A prudent person who bridles his tongue is careful, and puts a guard on his mouth, and on his tongue. At times silence is the best choice. After all, if death and life are in the power of the tongue, we do not want to be speaking words of death, words that condemn or inflict harm or injury on ourselves or others. Lots of our conversation is friendly chit chat, friendly banter, but you know that there are occasions where what we are saying, or are about to say, is going to make a big difference, and we need to be watchful.

Proverbs 10:19 In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise.

Here we are given more advice on how to control our tongue, and being more watchful of how we use our tongue.

The more that we talk, the more risk there is of us transgressing and of some sin creeping in, especially if we are talking about other people. We might start off not too badly, but as we keep on talking, more chit chat, talk, talk, talk, somewhere along the line we are going to get into areas that are not appropriate. *“In the multitude of words....”* That means lots of words, lots of talking, and lots of ‘my opinion is this and my opinion is that, and my opinion is whatever’. Somewhere along the line, our opinions are going to get us into trouble. *“But he who restrains his lips....”* We might say to ourselves, “Well, I think I have said enough here, I think I will leave off at this point, and I will say no more. The person who is careful about how much he says, and to whom he says it, is a wise person.

Proverbs 10:20 The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the heart of the wicked is worth little. The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of wisdom.

The tongue is important, and our words are important. It can add value to a situation, or it can get us into serious trouble. Probably most of us, I suspect, have been in that position of saying something and then thinking, ‘Oh that was not too bright’, and then we start scrambling, backing off and wriggling, and perhaps even starting to lie to get out of the trouble we got into. Really, all of that could have been prevented if we had restrained our lips, rather than just blurting it all out. It is better to think, study, meditate on how to answer, than to just blast away and regret it after the event.

Ecclesiastes 5:1 Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil.

In our day and age, that would be talking complete nonsense to God in prayer, and that would not be a terribly attractive sacrifice to Him. We must not be too quick to talk. Turn off, *and listen* and learn something.

Ecclesiastes 5: 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.

This is a warning, that when you are coming before God, we must not be rash. Study how to answer. We are not heard because of our much speaking. Jesus said that we are heard because of what is right, not just because we keep on saying and saying it. And if we cannot say it often enough we will get a few other people from our email chain to say it with us. We are not supposed to be trying to convince God to do good; God is already disposed to show us favor.

Ecclesiastes 5:3 For a dream comes through much activity, and a fool's voice is known by his many words.

How do you recognize a fool? They will be talking all of the time!

Ecclesiastes 5:4-5 When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; for He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed— better not to vow than to vow and not pay.

We do not vow these days, but I guess we are tempted to make commitments to God, which are statements of intent akin to vows in olden days. We are to be careful. It does not say, 'Do not do it', it just says, 'Are you aware of the situation that you are getting into here?' What if you and I tell God that we are going to turn over a new leaf, for the four thousandth time? We say, "I am committing now to pray every day before I start my day; I am going to pray for thirty minutes every morning". That would be tantamount to a vow, in spirit, because you are committing and making a promise. The scripture says that you are better not to present that as a promise, unless you intend to actually deliver on it. Or do you say, "Well God I am going to become more spiritual, so I am going to fast once a month from now on"? Or, "I am going to read my Bible through every twelve months without fail". Well, God knows that we are frail, of

course, and He always forgives. But God takes His words seriously. God is true to His word, and thank heavens for that. If He says something then you and I can depend on it, and every generation throughout all eternity can. God's word is good, and God's word is true. God says what He means, God means what He says, and He does it. This is how God likes communications to be. For you and I to vow to God, to commit to God, to make promises to God, and not to deliver on them, well as it says here we must do it. Again, "*When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; for He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed—better not to vow than to vow and not pay*".

Ecclesiastes 5:6 Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger of God that it was an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands?

No harm in saying to God that you would like to do better, and try really hard, and that you would appreciate Him supporting and helping you. Asking God to help you to be alert and aware, and to please grant you more of His Spirit. 'I am going to really try very hard this time'. But if you say, 'I hereby commit thirty minutes every morning come hell or high water', and then three days later you are still snoring in bed, sleeping through the alarm clock. We must be careful in what we say, and we must not be rash in our words.

Our words are very powerful and very important; and the more that we realize this then we will be more careful how we use them.

James 1:26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

James is saying that a person who does not bridle his tongue is pathetic, meaningless, empty, and vain. Because if we do not bridle our tongue then we blew it; it is that important. You and I think that we are sort of religious in a sense, well we are church-going people, and we read our Bibles at least now and then, and we pray when it is convenient, and we do not swear too much

really, and by and large, etc, etc. James quite bluntly says, ‘Quite honestly you lot out there, if you do not bridle your tongue you are deceiving yourselves and your religion is useless’.

Notice the heart and mouth connection. If you do not bridle *your tongue* you are deceiving your *heart*. It is up to you and me to restrain our tongues. Bridle can be translated “hold in check,” or “restrain,” and that is something that we can practice every single day. We do not have to wait for some special time to arrive to bridle our tongue. We can bridle our tongue today and the day after. Sometimes it is general conversation, just chit chat, and we might be fairly open and relaxed, and more or less safe. Sometimes it can be a heated conversation where we are arguing with somebody over something, and that is where there is more danger of us saying things that might not be entirely appropriate. Sometimes, it can be when we are alone, and we can be talking at things. Like, ‘that lousy motor car of mine, it is always letting me down, it is a lump of junk’. Then you go and kick it a few times. Or, watching television, and on comes your favorite politician, and here is your chance to offer him or her some advice on their politics, and on their teachings. You tell them what you think about how they are spending your money, about their families, how they are spending their time. You criticize their nose, and shape of their teeth. You sit there in your chair shouting abuse at the television. This would be wrong because you are abusing your tongue, and you are saying words which are inappropriate. The fact that the person does not hear you does not change the fact that it is wrong words that you are saying. We have no right to say them, and they would probably be harming you. You might be alone in your car, driving along, and then some so-called maniac cuts you off. Well, you might say some words, and those words might be entirely inappropriate and rash words that you are better off not having said. Just because somebody cuts you off does not give you permission from on high to say lots of rude and nasty words about them and their parentage, and whether they knew their father. We have to be more cautious and control our words at all times.

Some people say, “I am seventy years old today, and that is it, I am now on borrowed time”. Well quite honestly, if you believe in your heart that you are on borrowed time at seventy, then your days may be short. There is no scripture that says that you and I are guaranteed to get seventy years, and no more. We have a message up on the website on Psalms 90 and 91 that covers that. We have heard a minister say that, “Well, brethren, I am seventy now, I guess I do

not know how long I will be around, I am now on borrowed time”. Those are words that are likely to have an effect.

Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

If we take Paul at his word, he is telling us not to let any corrupt, nasty, horrible words proceed from our mouth. But on the other hand, the very opposite: your words should be good and they should build up; so that they can impart grace, which means charm, delight or favor to the hearers. Your words should be very attractive, almost like good music, or pleasant perfume. Your words should not be nasty, vindictive, horrible and destructive.

Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

Put these away, he says, they do not belong. The Amplified translation says, *“Let all bitterness, indignation, wrath, passion, rage, bad temper, resentment, anger, animosity, quarrelling, brawling, clamor, contention and slander, and evil speaking, abusive or blasphemous language, be banished from you”*.

This means that you and I have to put these away. We must restrain our lips, and not let these damaging words come out. God is not going to stop the words coming out, that is our responsibility. We have the tongue, and we have the brain, and there is a connection between the two, and it is up to us to exercise restraint over our tongue so that we let no corrupt communication to proceed, and it must be banished from us. It says rage, bad temper, animosity towards people. And even if it is towards people on the television, those politicians where we might strongly hate their objectives, and we might totally disagree with their plans, especially pro-abortion and pro-homosexuality, and all manner of things like that. We are entitled to seriously dispute their ideas, especially when they go contrary to the word of God, but that does not entitle us to sit in our chair and shout abuse at them. ‘You sorry no good... you moron, what an idiotic guy are you! Where were you drug up?’ It says let no corrupt communication, no

bitterness, anger, clamor, etc. So we are not free to sit in our room and just shout abuse at the television, with hatred and venom in our heart; that is not proper conduct. Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and you or I will eat the fruits of what we say. If you want to shout and blaspheme or do things of that nature, or send e-mails saying something similar, that is dangerous. We saw previously, how speaking is so important, and one of the ways that it is so important is that our words, what we say, is what *releases our faith*.

Mark 11:20-21 And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away". Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away".

‘The fig tree that You spoke to and assigned to destruction, it is gone, all the branches and the leaves have dropped off’. It is dead, because Jesus spoke to it.

Mark 11:22 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God".

Sometimes we think that was Jesus, because after all He was the Son of God in the flesh, and walked on water, and so He can do things like that.

Mark 11:23 "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*.

Jesus makes it very plain that if we speak to a mountain, we believe, and we do not doubt in our heart, then we will have *what we say*. A mountain is representative of something big in our lives, something that we could not naturally move by ourselves. It might be some financial problem, health crisis, a problem with our job, or a family difficulty; something that you and I do not have the power or the wherewithal to move. Then what we do is go to God, discuss it with God, and check out what His word says. Because faith, believing in our heart, comes from

hearing His word; so we go to the word and find out what it says, we believe and then we speak to the mountain.

We release our faith, our belief with our words. It says here “...*he will have whatever he says.*” Not whatever he just believes. It does not say to talk to God and say, ‘Oh God please move the mountain’. God says, ‘Listen, I am telling *you* to speak to the mountain. Do not tell *Me* to speak to the mountain that is your place’. God is saying here whoever speaks to the mountain and follows the instructions.

All of us, from time to time, say that our prayers do not work. I am praying to God but nothing is happening. Well, there may be some conflict here, we may be *praying* the right thing; we have God’s word and His promise on it, but then we end up *saying* something different. So we are praying one thing, and saying something else. The scripture says that we will have what we say, not **just** what we pray about. We cannot just pray to God and say, ‘It is in Your word, I am praying and asking You to deliver it, thank you very much, amen’. That is a good prayer perhaps, but then what are we saying *afterwards*? The mountain is not going, and it is getting bigger and bigger. Why is that? It is what we say that we get. We may be praying to God for healing, and somebody asks us how we are doing, and we tell them it is getting worse. ‘I do not think that I am going to get better; I think that my days are numbered. I have actually been looking at coffins on the internet recently’. Wow! They are not words of faith. Well the words do not line up with the prayer; and Jesus told us that we would have whatever we say. Of course, our mouth has to be involved, that is how we express and release our faith.

Romans 10:8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" [that is, the word of faith which we preach]...

Where is the word of faith? It is in two places. It is in your mouth as it says here, and it is in your heart. Again, we see the heart and mouth connection. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, or the mouth leaks. The word of faith is to be found in your mouth, and in your heart.

Romans 10:9-10 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

It might be to do with salvation, like Paul is implying here, but it is exactly the same with healing, or financial support, or any other thing that you and I require from God. With the heart we believe, and with the mouth confession is made, and we are saying what we believe. You have to believe and say, you do not just believe. It is incomplete to just believe and remain silent. Faith speaks, and we say what we believe. It has to be in two places, in our heart and in our mouth. In our mouth does not mean chewing a bible page; it means that we are talking, we are speaking. For example, we speak to the mountain. Our words are powerful, they are life and death.

Mark 5: 21-24 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. And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet 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". So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

So Jairus took some effort here, and he actually probably had to fight his way through; and he probably used his elbows and his feet and kicked his way through. He was not going to wait at home piously saying, 'Well if it is God's will to heal my little daughter, He will send Jesus. No, that is not going to happen, so I am going to find Jesus, and lay my hands on Him and get Him to come'. This is a good example of an active faith. When he gets there he says to Jesus, 'If you come and do this, she will live,' which is a statement of faith. 'I know that if you do it, she will live'. Of course Jesus said, 'Fine, lead on'.

Then there is a bit of a delay because of the woman with the issue of blood; and we covered that the week before. She made her statement of faith, and she grabbed hold of Jesus' garment and

she was healed. Then at the end of that process, some time had elapsed, perhaps an hour or so, Jesus went to Jairus' home.

Mark 5:35 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?"

They said it was too late, end of story. But what did Jesus do?

Mark 5:36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe."

As soon as Jesus heard them say that to Jairus, He turned around and said, "*Do not be afraid; only believe.*" So Jesus said to him, 'Say nothing Jairus, do not agree with them; do not open your mouth and say that "it is too late, if only you would have come quicker, Jesus."' He may have done this otherwise, but Jesus stopped him in his tracks and said, 'Do not be afraid, do not change your belief'. If Jairus would have opened his mouth and said the wrong things, well the power of death and life are in the tongue. Jesus knew that words were important and He told Jairus to say nothing, but to believe.

Mark 5:37-40 And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping." 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.

He put them all out. Jesus does not like unbelief, and in fact it could affect even the Lord Jesus. Mark 6 talks about Jesus not being able to do any mighty works in His own hometown, and He marvels *at their unbelief*. An atmosphere of unbelief can affect even the Lord Jesus Christ. So He said to Jairus, 'Say nothing, do not open your mouth, you just believe'. And Jairus zipped his

lips, and kept on believing. I guess that his faith was probably rocking a bit, but Jesus probably looked at him rather sternly and said, "Believe!"

Mark 5:41-42 Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." Immediately, the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement.

There is a lesson in here for us. If you and I have gone to God, and we have His word, then we have to be careful that our words line up with what we believe. If Jairus had said, "Oh it is too late, what can we do? I guess that would have been the end of the little girl. For you and I, if we cannot say something positive about what we believe in, then we are better off to say nothing. If you think about it Satan, and his demons, his principalities and powers, are on this earth. There is no evidence that they can read our minds; he is not like God, he is not omniscient. He cannot just peer into your brain and read what you are up to. But once we speak, they can hear and know. We are revealing our secrets to the enemy by what we say. So sometimes, it is better to say nothing. You do not want Satan to hear about your fears and anxieties. But if he hears you just talking words of faith that is all that he can hear.

We would not want to give the enemy any help. Back in the Second World War, in Britain, there were lots of posters up everywhere giving people support, advice, and some warnings. One of the warnings was about the danger of loose talk. There were German spies in Britain, and they would speak perfect English, and they would be dressed like ordinary folk in this country, and would be listening. They would be in pubs, and down near the docks, and mixing with soldiers off-duty. You do not want to be saying things that could give away secrets to the enemy. The posters said things like, "Careless talk costs lives". You'd see a poster of a couple of men talking in the pub, and behind was a caricature of Adolf Hitler, with big ears listening. Other posters were: "Tittle tattle lost the battle," "Talk kills," "Be like Dad, keep Mum".

Satan is our enemy, and you and I have to be very careful what we say. If we believe God's word, then let us repeat God's word, and not just say our anxieties and our fears. I guess we have not always realized fully the influence of our tongue on ourselves, and on other people.

Scripture uses a particular symbol to picture the words of our mouth. What item would the scriptures use to symbolize a picture of the words of our mouth? Something like a bullet, which would be a powerful weapon? How about a rubber hammer, or a tickling stick, or a baby's pacifier? Well no, one symbol that the Bible uses to describe the words of God's mouth, and equally the words of our mouth, is found in the book of Revelation:

Revelation 19:19-21 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the *sword* which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

He who sat on the horse is the Lord Jesus Christ, and it says the armies were killed with the sword which proceeded from His mouth. Now, that is symbolic; and I do not think for a moment that the Lord Jesus was sitting on a horse with this five foot long sharp object poking out of His mouth. It is talking of His words being described as a sword; because a sword is an offensive weapon, and with it you would kill. The Lord Jesus is going to utter instructions with His words, to destroy multiple millions of soldiers who are fighting against Him, and who are clearly under the power of Satan and the demons.

Revelation 2:12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword...

We are talking of the Lord Jesus, and He has a two-edged sword; and I wonder where it is.

Revelation 2:13-14, 16 ... know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. "But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a

stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed ‘Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with *the sword of My mouth*.

So the Lord Jesus is warning here, that He has a two-edged sword, and that it is sharp. It is the sword of His mouth; and it is His words. When Jesus curses, we know what happens; and when Jesus blesses, we know what happens. Jesus’ words work.

We are talking about the power of life and death, and our tongues. The picture that the scriptures use for the words of our mouth, is the sword; not some little rubber duck that you poke at people. Our words are swords, and sharp swords at that.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The Word of God is likened, as back in Revelation, to the sharpest sword you will find. God’s word is a sharp two-edged sword in His mouth. But, of course, you and I can use God’s words too, in which case they become a sharp sword in our mouths. It says that it is a two-edged sword; and that might be referring to the fact that the words can bless and the words can curse, there are two edges to it. Back in Deuteronomy 28, we have the “Blessing and the Cursing” chapter. It says, ‘If you obey me and keep my word, then blessings will come on you, and overtake you. But if you do not keep my word, then all these curses shall come on you, and overtake you’. In God’s word, He tells us that He will bless or curse us. The sword has two edges, but it is not just God’s sword; He has given it to us.

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

That sounds good, and we can get some strength and power from this scripture.

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

So you and I will need armor.

Ephesians 6:12-13 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

You and I want to stand, and to be standing when the battle is over.

Ephesians 6:14-17 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*;

So you liken God's Word to a sword, and it says that you and I are to take the "*sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God....*"

You and I are to take the sword, and to use it against the powers of darkness. How do we do this? Well it is a sword when it is *in our mouth*, and we speak it, we say it. It is powerful, and we are speaking to our mountain.

It says back in Proverbs, that death and life are in the power of the tongue. The Word of God is even more powerful when we speak it. If we do not speak it then it is not really working. The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, is in our mouth. You and I need to have the Word of God on our tongue, and speak it like Jesus did.

Matthew 4:4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become

bread." But He answered and said, "*It is written*, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

How did Jesus respond to a spiritual attack? He used the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. He did not just think happy thoughts, but He used scripture and He quoted it directly to Satan. This is taking the Word of God as the sword of the Spirit. When He did this it caused Satan to back off.

Matthew 4:5-7 Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "*It is written again*, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'"

Jesus quoted scripture to Satan, He spoke words; and in this case Jesus spoke the words which are the words of God, the sword of the Spirit. Of course, if Jesus had to do this to fight off Satan, do we have some other route to follow? No, we need to do the same; and we should know the scriptures well enough that it is a sword in our hand. If we do not know the scripture very well then we are going to be handicapped. We may have the armor on, the breastplate of righteousness on, have our feet shod with the gospel of peace, and perhaps have on the belt of truth, but you do not have a sword because we do not know God's Word well enough. Jesus was able to instantly pull out of His memory the appropriate verse and say, "No Satan, it is written".

Matthew 4:8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For *it is written*, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

Jesus sets us a good example. He is in a battle here, and as Paul says, “*we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers and rulers of the darkness of this age, and wicked spirits in heavenly places*”.

Therefore, he says that we need to take up the whole armor of God, every bit of it, all of it; and one bit of it is the sword of the Spirit. The sword is a weapon. God’s Word is a weapon, and actually your word and my word is similar. Again, in our tongue is the power of death and life. Actually when we take God’s Word in our mouths, and apply it, that is a pretty powerful sword. Jesus said, “It is written.” For you and me to think that we can do it some other way is being a bit naive, and Jesus set us a good example. This is one reason why we should take the time to know God’s Word. We do not have any good excuses for not knowing God’s Word. We probably all have plenty of copies of the Bible, in many different versions. Most of us have plenty of places where God’s Word resides. The one place it needs to be is off the page and into our minds. In the book of Psalms it says, “*Thy word I have hidden in my heart that I might not sin against you*”. You and I need to have God’s Word available, and then we can use our sword in combat. God’s Word is living, it is powerful and it is sharper than any other two-edged sword.

Your words and my words are powerful words. Death and life are in the power of our tongue. We can choose to bless, or we can choose to curse. We can choose to employ the Word of God, as a really sharp sword, or we can choose to ignore it. You and I need to learn how to use and control our tongue. We can do harm, or we can do good; and we can build up, or we can tear down.

This has been our third message on this. We can take this message and do nothing about it, and just file it away, or we can review what the Bible says about our tongues, and our words and what they can achieve. Then you and I can make changes, if necessary. It says that the humble person makes adjustments, but the proud person makes excuses — because they do not need to change, do they? But you and I hopefully do recognize that there are things that we can improve on in the way that we use our tongues.

Psalms 34:11-12 Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good?

I guess most of us would be in that category, and would like a long life with many days, especially a long life where we see good. This would be very attractive as an offering. Who is the man or woman that is going to see that?

Psalms 34:13 *Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit.*

This is the first thing that he says. If you want to enjoy a long life and see good things, then you need to keep your tongue from evil.

Psalms 34:14 Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.

And even that might be referring to seek peace with your words, and seek to do good with your words. If you want to enjoy many days and see good things, if you desire life, then keep control of your tongue. Like we said before, the English word “desires life” come from the Hebrew expression “chofetz chaim”. There was a Jewish rabbi a century or so back, who wrote a book on all of the places in scripture where it talks about warnings of our words. He particularly focused on not being tale-bearers, not gossiping, and not slandering. There are many, many things that scripture says that you and I have no business talking about. He was then nicknamed the “chofetz chaim,” the man who desires life; because his book was all about watching your tongue if you desire life. For you and I it is the same; we need to watch our tongues. This does not mean that your task is to go out and listen to everybody else and critique their words and their conversations. The message is for me to me, and for you to you. How are we doing individually with our tongues?

Proverbs 18:20 A man’s stomach shall be satisfied from the fruit of his mouth, From the produce of his lips he shall be filled.

The produce of our lips are the words that we are using.

Proverbs 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

I guess that means the fruit of death or the fruit of life. The choice is going to be yours, and the choice is going to be mine.

It is going to be very good for us to ponder, in our own lives, how well are we using the gift of speech? What do our words reveal about what is in our hearts? Is our conversation positive, uplifting, and faith-filled, or is it negative, critical, fault-finding, murmuring, derogatory and unkind? Do our words tend to death, or do our words tend to life? Whatever it is, you and I will eat the fruit, so be warned, and be instructed.

Transcript by Patricia Plunkett (many thanks Trish!)