

The Power of the Tongue

Are you speaking Life or Death?

Crossroad – July 25, 2010

Proverbs 18:20-21 (NIV)

*From the fruit of his mouth a man's stomach is filled;
with the harvest from his lips he is satisfied.*

*The tongue has the power of life and death,
and those who love it will eat its fruit.*

- Satisfaction / contentment/ enjoyment – from words
- Words bring life and death!
- If we love tongue, use well, we can enjoy it's fruit

1) Wise and Foolish Speech

• Proverbs 18:6-7 (NIV)

*A fool's lips bring him strife,
and his mouth invites a beating.*

*A fool's mouth is his undoing,
and his lips are a snare to his soul.*

- Strife, beating, undoing, snare ... fools words

• Proverbs 19:1-2 (NIV)

*Better a poor man whose walk is blameless
than a fool whose lips are perverse.*

*It is not good to have zeal without knowledge,
nor to be hasty and miss the way.*

- Fool seen by perverse lips ...
- Don't go running off without knowledge

• Proverbs 18:13 (NIV)

*He who answers before listening—
that is his folly and his shame.*

- Listen first

• Proverbs 25:7b-10 (ESV)

*What your eyes have seen
do not hastily bring into court,*

*for what will you do in the end,
when your neighbor puts you to shame?
Argue your case with your neighbor himself,
and do not reveal another's secret,
lest he who hears you bring shame upon you,
and your ill repute have no end.*

- Don't be hasty {the story of the Ents ☺}

• Proverbs 17:27-28 (ESV)

*Whoever restrains his words has knowledge,
and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.*

*Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise;
when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.*

- Be careful what you say ... speak less!

• Proverbs 15:28 (NIV)

*The heart of the righteous weighs its answers,
but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil.*

• Proverbs 12:18 (NIV)

*There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts,
but the tongue of the wise brings healing.*

• Proverbs 13:2-3 (NIV)

*From the fruit of his lips a man enjoys good things,
but the unfaithful have a craving for violence.*

*He who guards his lips guards his life,
but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin.*

• Proverbs 15:1-4 (NIV)

*A gentle answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.*

*The tongue of the wise commends knowledge,
but the mouth of the fool gushes folly.*

*The eyes of the LORD are everywhere,
keeping watch on the wicked and the good.*

*The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life,
but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.*

- **Proverbs 10:18-21**(NIV)
*He who conceals his hatred has lying lips,
and whoever spreads slander is a fool.
When words are many, sin is not absent,
but he who holds his tongue is wise.
The tongue of the righteous is choice silver,
but the heart of the wicked is of little value.
The lips of the righteous nourish many,
but fools die for lack of judgment.*

2) Speaking Death

- **Proverbs 18:20-21**(NIV)
*From the fruit of his mouth a man's stomach is filled;
with the harvest from his lips he is satisfied.
The tongue has the power of life and death,
and those who love it will eat its fruit.*
- **Proverbs 6:12-19** (ESV)
*A worthless person, a wicked man,
goes about with crooked speech,
winks with his eyes, signals with his feet,
points with his finger,
with perverted heart devises evil,
continually sowing discord;
therefore calamity will come upon him suddenly;
in a moment he will be broken beyond healing.
There are six things that the LORD hates,
seven that are an abomination to him:
haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
and hands that shed innocent blood,
a heart that devises wicked plans,
feet that make haste to run to evil,
a false witness who breathes out lies,
and one who sows discord among brothers.*
 - Crooked speech, sows discord, lying ... ruin

- **Proverbs 11:12** (NIV)
*A man who lacks judgment derides his neighbor,
but a man of understanding holds his tongue.*
 - Deriding others verses holding tongue
- **Proverbs 26:28** (NIV)
*A lying tongue hates those it hurts,
and a flattering mouth works ruin.*
 - Lying ... Flattering ... is to hate and bring ruin
- **Proverbs 17:19-20**(NIV)
*He who loves a quarrel loves sin;
he who builds a high gate invites destruction.
A man of perverse heart does not prosper;
he whose tongue is deceitful falls into trouble*
 - Quarrel Deceitful ... loves sin ... fall into trouble
- **Proverbs 16:27-28** (ESV)
*A worthless man plots evil,
and his speech is like a scorching fire.
A dishonest man spreads strife,
and a whisperer separates close friends.*
 - Speech fire ... strife ... whisperer ... separate friends!
- **Proverbs 26:17-28**(NIV)
*Like one who seizes a dog by the ears
is a passer-by who meddles in a quarrel not his own.
Like a madman shooting
firebrands or deadly arrows
is a man who deceives his neighbor
and says, "I was only joking!"
Without wood a fire goes out;
without gossip a quarrel dies down.
As charcoal to embers and as wood to fire,
so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.
The words of a gossip are like choice morsels;
they go down to a man's inmost parts.
Like a coating of glaze over earthenware
are fervent lips with an evil heart.*

*A malicious man disguises himself with his lips,
but in his heart he harbors deceit.
Though his speech is charming, do not believe him,
for seven abominations fill his heart.
His malice may be concealed by deception,
but his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly.
If a man digs a pit, he will fall into it;
if a man rolls a stone, it will roll back on him.
A lying tongue hates those it hurts,
and a flattering mouth works ruin.*

- Rod – physical hurt when do wring
- To spare that is hate, to love disciple diligently

- Look at **JAMES 3:3-12** – Power of the Tongue

³ When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴ Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. ⁵ Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. ⁶ The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

⁷ All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, ⁸ but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

⁹ With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. ¹¹ Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? ¹² My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

- Also uses fire analogy – set entire forest ablaze!
- Tongue corrupt entire person!
- No man can tame the tongue ... it is a restless evil
- Should not have praises and curses out of same mouth!

- So how do we get control of tongue?

- **Luke 6:43-45** (NIV)

⁴³ "For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, ⁴⁴ for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵ The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

- Must get to the root!
- Again, speech, like discipline and other issues, comes from the heart ... so God must change the heart
- Repentance and Faith, Cross and Redemption
- What would a righteous tongue look like?

3) Speaking Life

- **Proverbs 10:31-32** (ESV)

*The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom,
but a perverse tongue will be cut out.
The lips of the righteous know what is fitting,
but the mouth of the wicked only what is perverse*

- **Proverbs 16:21-24** (NIV)

*The wise in heart are called discerning,
and pleasant words promote instruction.
Understanding is a fountain of life to those who have it,
but folly brings punishment to fools.
A wise man's heart guides his mouth,
and his lips promote instruction.
Pleasant words are a honeycomb,
sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.*

- **Proverbs 28:23**(ESV)
Whoever rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with his tongue.
 - Good application of last week on words of discipline
- **Proverbs 15:4**(NIV)
The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.
- **Proverbs 25:11-15**(ESV)
A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver. Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold is a wise reprovee to a listening ear. Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest is a faithful messenger to those who send him; he refreshes the soul of his masters. Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts of a gift he does not give. With patience a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue will break a bone.
- **Proverbs 15:23** (NIV)
A man finds joy in giving an apt reply— and how good is a timely word!

Example:

“Teasing” in youth group ... including “kiss girlfriend” long-distance hug from friend in Switzerland

Conclusion:

In Deuteronomy Moses puts before the people 2 paths – a path of life and a path of death – and tells them to choose which they will follow

Proverbs tells us the tongue has the power of Life and Death ... so what will you choose to do with your tongue?

4) Application

- Look at **HEBREWS 10:19-25** - spur one another on!

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God,²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.²⁵ Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

- Look at **PHILIPPIANS 4:8** - What to Think on (... and Speak on ...)
⁸ *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*