

Sound Speech

Titus 2:8

Introduction

1. Words are powerful things.
2. God shows us the tremendous power of words through the creation according to Ps. 33:6, *“By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.”*
3. Our ability to speak is comes from having been made in the image of God.
4. Like all things God has given us, our speech can be used for both good and evil.
5. In this lesson we will consider the power of words and how to use them properly.
6. The goal is to better understand God’s instructions for *“sound speech, which cannot be condemned”* (Titus 2:8), which is something that must be sought by all of God’s people.

Discussion

I. The Power of the Tongue

- A. James 3:1-6: There is great power in the tongue.
 1. The effects of our words must never be underestimated.
 2. Like a bit in a horse’s mouth or the rudder on a ship, the tongue is a small member of the body, but its effects on the body are very great.
 3. When left unchecked, the tongue can do great damage, as a small flame that sets an entire forest on fire.
 4. Like fire, our words are a tremendous asset. But just as we must respect the power and the potential dangers of fire, we must also respect the power and the potential dangers of our words.
- B. Matt. 12:34-35: *“From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”*
 1. It has been said that “The eyes are the window to the soul” (unknown).
 2. But, according to Jesus, our words express what is in our hearts.
 3. *“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.”*
- C. Matt. 12:36-37: Therefore, how we choose to use our mouths has a profound effect on our salvation.
 1. Our words express what is in our hearts.
 2. If our words are lies and deceit, then there are lies and deceit in our hearts.
 3. If our words are sharp and bitter, then there is bitterness in our heart.
 4. If our words are careless and disrespectful toward God or man, then in our hearts there is carelessness and disrespect.
 5. A person is judged not only by his deeds, but also by what is in his heart.
 6. Since our words are produced by the abundance of what is in our hearts, Jesus was able to say, *“for every idle word that men may speak, they will give an account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”*
 7. For this reason we must be on our guard against sinful uses of the tongue.

II. Sins of the Tongue

- A. Improper conversation: For every word we use, there is something in our heart that motivates it.

1. Eph. 5:4:
 - a. Filthiness: “Baseness...is used of obscenity” (Vine’s). “Obscene or indecent conversation...shameful or deformed” (Barnes)
 - b. Foolish talking: “Talk that is insipid, senseless, stupid, foolish; which is not suited to instruct, edify, or profit” (Barnes).
 - c. Coarse jesting: Jestings which conveys an “obscene or offensive meaning” (Clarke).
 2. Col. 3:8:
 - a. Blasphemy: “Universally, slander, detraction, speech injurious to another’s good name...specifically, impious and reproachful speech injurious to the divine majesty” (Thayer’s).
 - b. Filthy language out of your mouth: “vulgar, obscene, dirty talk” (Louw) “fouls speaking low and obscene speech, shameful speaking” (“Thayer’s).
- B. Speech concerning others:
1. Prov. 10:18, slander: “whispering, defamation, evil report” (BDB), i.e. speaking evil of others behind their back.
 2. 1 Tim. 5:13, Gossip: “tattlers” “to prate against” (Vine).
- C. Euphemisms
1. Eph. 5:4 mentions filthiness, which is also translated obscenity.
 2. Everyone understands what obscenity is—though it can mean more, it is simplistically referred to as “four letter words” by parents and children.
 3. With this idea of “four letter words” some have come to the conclusion that if they simply change a couple of letters in a word, they can say it without it being bad.
 4. These transformed words are known as euphemisms. “*A substitution of a...less offensive expression for one that may offend*” (Wikipedia).
 5. What we need to understand is that though euphemisms may sound slightly different, they mean exactly the same thing because they are used in exactly the same way as the real thing.
 6. Consider our use of *baptism*: The Greek “*baptizo*” is translated “emersion”, but was transliterated as *baptism* in order to avoid the wrath of the Roman Catholic Church which was practicing the use of sprinkling. Understand, that the word “baptism” (though less offensive to those who don’t believe in emersion) still means the same thing!
 7. This same principle holds true for profanity. We may change the words, but remember that our speech comes from our heart.
 8. When we use euphemisms for the same purpose as profanities, we are expressing the same attitude of heart, except that we’re trying to disguise it with the euphemism.
- D. The Lord’s name in Vain (Ex. 20:7)
1. One of the Ten Commandments says, “*You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold Him guiltless who takes His name in vain.*”
 - a. “Vain” means worthless or useless: thus, take the Lord’s name in a worthless, useless, or flippant way.
 - b. We understand that the Ten Commandments are not our law for today.
 - c. But, it is commonly understood that there are certain attitudes and principles reflected in the old law which God has taught to all men since the beginning—such as having a proper respect for the Lord.
 - d. Thus, even in the New Testament we are taught to fear and respect the Lord.

2. We have power for salvation through the name of the Lord, therefore we must call on the name of the Lord with reverence and godly fear (Rom. 10:13; Heb. 12:28).
3. We refer to Him in several ways:
 - a. God, Lord, Jehovah.
 - b. Jesus, Christ, Jesus Christ.
4. Understand that how we use God's name says a great deal about our attitude toward Him.
5. According to Psalm 139:20, those who use the Lord's name in vain speak wickedly against God for they were His enemies.
6. Since we speak from the abundance of the heart, if we use the Lord's name in vain, does it not follow that our attitude toward God is likewise vain and worthless?
7. Therefore, be careful how you use the Lord's name in your speech.

III. Sound Speech

- A. Titus 2:8: There is a proper way for us to use our speech.
 1. We have seen the evil ways in which men use their tongues.
 2. But our speech is meant for good: to build up our brethren and to honor and glorify our God.
 3. Let us therefore understand how to accomplish good things with our words.
- B. Honoring God with our speech:
 1. Eph. 5:4: Giving of thanks.
 2. Heb. 13:15: Praise to God, giving of thanks to his name.
 3. Luke 12:28: Confessing Jesus
- C. Benefitting others with our speech
 1. Titus 2:1: Speaking things proper for sound doctrine.
 2. Eph. 4:15: Speaking the truth in love
 3. Eph. 5:19: Singing, speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs.
 4. 1 Pet 3:8-12: Speak things which work toward peace.
- D. Slow to speak—limit our speech to those things that are necessary and beneficial.
 1. "Think before you speak", not spout whatever comes to mind.
 2. "If you don't have anything good to say, don't say anything at all."
 3. Better to keep silent than to multiply words like a fool (Prov. 17:28).

Conclusion

1. 1 Pet. 2:1: As Peter said, let us "*lay aside all evil speaking.*"
2. Understand the power of the tongue that the good that can be accomplished if we use it properly.
3. If you have used your tongue in a sinful way, repent of that and change the attitude of your heart.
4. Let us all determine to use our speech to glorify God and to benefit our brethren.

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