



Bethel South Sermon Notes – “*Sins of the Tongue*”

Speaker: Ps Julie Gowans

Series: Awesome God

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:1–13, Psalm 34

Main Idea

Holy fear should transform not only what we do, but also what we say. Our words reveal the posture of our hearts, and Scripture warns us not to treat complaining, grumbling, or other sins of the tongue lightly. God invites us to bring our pain honestly to Him while learning to honor Him with our lips and our lives.

Get Under the Waterfall

During worship before preaching, the Lord gave Ps Julie a picture of a breathtaking waterfall.

Some people were standing directly underneath it, completely drenched in God's presence, love, and cleansing. Others were standing on the outskirts simply watching.

God's invitation is to **come under the waterfall**.

There may be hurt, rejection, pride, or hardness that has caused us to remain on the sidelines, but we don't have to stay there.

Allow God to:

- **Cleanse your soul**
- **Soften your heart**
- **Heal your hurt**
- **Break down pride**
- **Draw you deeper into His presence**

Don't settle for watching what God is doing in others.

Step in and allow Him to do His work in you.

Spiritual Experiences Are Not the Same as Spiritual Maturity

In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul looks back at the Israelites and emphasizes five things they **all** experienced:

1. **They were all under the cloud.**
2. **They all passed through the sea.**
3. **They were all baptized into Moses.**
4. **They all ate the same spiritual food.**

5. **They all drank the same spiritual drink.**

They experienced incredible supernatural provision and the presence of God.

Yet Scripture says God was not pleased with most of them.

This gives us an important warning:

We cannot mistake experiencing God's blessings for walking in obedience to God.

Attending church for decades doesn't automatically produce sanctification.

Having powerful spiritual experiences doesn't guarantee spiritual maturity.

God doesn't simply want us around His presence. He wants His presence to **transform us**.

Five Warnings From the Wilderness

Paul identifies five failures among the Israelites that serve as warnings for us:

1. **Craving evil things**
2. **Idolatry**
3. **Sexual immorality**
4. **Testing God**
5. **Complaining**

Some of these may immediately sound serious to us.

But complaining?

We can easily treat complaining as a harmless personality trait rather than something that needs to be confronted.

Scripture doesn't treat it lightly.

Complaining Reveals What We Believe About God

Complaining isn't simply expressing that we don't like our circumstances.

At its core, complaining can become an accusation against the goodness and character of God.

It says:

“I don't like what You're doing, and I think I could manage this better.”

The Israelites had been miraculously delivered and were being supernaturally sustained every day, yet they continued to grumble.

Grumbling is not the language of the destitute. It is the language of the provided-for.

When we lose sight of God's provision, gratitude can quickly be replaced by entitlement.

Holy fear reminds us that God is good, God is faithful, and God can be trusted even when our circumstances aren't what we would choose.

There Is No Such Thing as a Private Grumble

Our words don't only affect us.

Complaining spreads.

The words we repeatedly speak can influence:

- **Our families**
- **Our children**
- **Our friendships**
- **Our workplaces**
- **Our church**

What begins as dissatisfaction in one heart can quickly become dissatisfaction in an entire environment.

That's why sins of the tongue aren't merely personal issues.

They become communal issues.

Holy fear makes us conscious of the atmosphere our words are creating around us.

The Fear of the Lord Changes the Way We Speak

Psalms 34 teaches about the fear of the Lord and immediately connects it to our words:

“Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies.”

One of the clearest ways we can practice the fear of the Lord is by learning to **guard our mouths**.

Our words matter to God.

Holy fear should affect:

- **What we say**
- **How we say it**
- **What we repeat**
- **What we complain about**
- **How we speak about other people**
- **How we speak about our circumstances**

Growing in holy fear means allowing God to sanctify our speech.

Complaining vs. Lament

There is an important difference between **complaining and lamenting**.

Lament doesn't pretend everything is okay.

Lament brings our genuine pain, disappointment, heartbreak, and questions **directly to God**.
Complaining takes our frustration with God and repeatedly speaks it **to everyone except God**.

Lament says:

“God, this hurts. I don't understand. I need You.”

Complaining says:

“Look at what God has allowed to happen to me.”

God invites us to cry out to Him.

He hears our cries.

But He also hears our grumbling.

Instead of allowing pain to turn into bitterness and complaining, bring it honestly into the presence of God.

God Always Provides a Way of Escape

1 Corinthians 10:13 reminds us that temptation is common to humanity, but God is faithful.

Whatever trial or temptation we face, God will never place us in a situation where **sin is our only option**.

He always makes grace available for obedience.

And when temptation comes, He provides a way of escape.

There is always an **exit ramp**.

The question is whether we're willing to look for it and take it.

When you're tempted to complain, gossip, speak dishonestly, lash out, or use your words in a way that dishonors God, cry out to Him.

His grace is available to help you choose obedience.

Final Challenge

It's time to grow to another level of holy fear.

And one of the places that growth needs to become visible is **in our words**.

Ask yourself:

What has been coming out of my mouth?

Have complaining and grumbling become normal?

Have my words been spreading gratitude and faith, or dissatisfaction and negativity?

Instead of excusing sins of the tongue, allow the Holy Spirit to expose and transform them.

Fill your heart with the Word of God. Speak His truth out loud. Allow Scripture to reshape what you believe so that it ultimately reshapes what you say.

Make the commitment:

I will honor God with my lips and my life.

Discussion Questions

- 1. The Israelites experienced God's presence, provision, and miracles but still fell into disobedience. How can we make sure our spiritual experiences are actually producing spiritual transformation?**
- 2. Why do you think we tend to treat complaining as less serious than many other sins? How does viewing complaining as a reflection of what we believe about God's goodness change your perspective?**
- 3. Ps Julie said there is “no such thing as a private grumble.” How have you seen one person's words influence the atmosphere of a family, workplace, friendship, or church community?**
- 4. What is the difference between biblical lament and complaining? How can we learn to bring our disappointment directly to God rather than allowing it to become grumbling or bitterness?**
- 5. First Corinthians 10:13 promises that God provides a way of escape from temptation. What could it practically look like to take that “exit ramp” the next time you're tempted to complain or use your words in a way that doesn't honor God?**