

Final Words

Destructive Words

2 Timothy 2:14-18

October 21, 2018 pm

HDBC

It has been said, *It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and remove all doubt.* Unfortunately I have not always followed that advice. On more than one occasion I have opened my mouth and only to realize that I said the wrong thing or it was the wrong timing, or it was untrue.

Every time you speak you take a risk. Risk being wrong in what you say, or of saying right thing in the wrong way or at the wrong time.

Text tonight is 2 Timothy 2:14-18. Remember, Paul is about to be executed for his faith. Timothy will be one of the key leaders in establishing new churches and in helping churches grow. Therefore Paul is giving important instructions.

Paul knew that the problem of destructive words among church members and leaders had the potential to derail the mission of the church. The destructive words that Paul has in mind came in a couple of forms. One, false teaching by leaders of the church. Second, unnecessary disputes among members. He addresses both these instructions to Timothy.

As a leader, Timothy would be expected to notice and react to both kinds of destructive words. It would be his responsibility to make sure that neither would be allowed to do its destructive work in the church.

1. Description of Negative Talk Note 2 phrases . . .

A. Wrangling about Words (14)

Wrangling - To argue, dispute. To fight with words.

Not only a dispute about words, but one in which the words are the weapons. Arguing over unimportant, trifling matters.

Warn them not to indulge in controversy. (Bernard)

Warn them about pious nitpicking, which chips away at the faith. It just wears everyone out. (The Message)

B. Worldly and Empty Chatter (16)

Talk that is devoid of godliness. That which is actually evil, in nature.

Avoid - *Perihistimi* - to place around, to turn one's self around for the purpose of avoiding. Like wanting to avoid coming face to face with someone you see down the street.

Worldly – Worthless, pointless. Not sacred.

Empty Chatter – Having no substance. **Like child trying to speak but the only sounds are babble.**

The idea is of not getting drawn into conversations about things that are totally devoid of truth or merit. Don't let your energies be expended in futile verbal pursuits.

Pointless, philosophical discussions (The Jerusalem Bible)

Profane jargon (Moffit)

Don't get into arguments that are fruitless. Sometimes it is pointless. The issue may be important, but it is obvious that neither party is interested in changing. Fruitless to engage. I will dialogue with people of other faiths, but I will not argue with them or dispute them.

What is the point of both verses?

Don't get into arguments with people over unimportant matters. Like ***was it an apple or a peach that Adam and Eve ate in the garden? Will Christ come at the beginning, middle or end of the Tribulation?*** We worship this way, you that way? I use NASB you use KJV.

2. Destructiveness of Negative Talk

Why should we avoid worldly chatter and empty word skirmishes?

A. Useless (14)

No profit or no value. No benefit. Waste of time. It helps no one.

B. Harmful (14)

Katastrepho - To turn under, as a plow in soil. Our word catastrophe. Only used on other place in the N. T. 2 Peter 2:6 where Peter uses this word to describe the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Devastating to those who are involved because it could sidetrack them from the key issues that are important. Not only harmful to those involved but to others. Some who witness these arguments may be confused or totally turned off by it. They will get the idea that we are not unified.

C. Lead to Ungodliness (16)

This kind of activity always advances the cause of ungodliness.

Leads to - Cuts a path for. **Like a scout cutting through a jungle in order to allow those coming behind to have smooth sailing.** This kind of talk will open the door to all kinds of ungodliness. Lays a foundation for it.

Paul made it clear that our words are a great indication of what's in our hearts. If we are careless with our words and are lead into fruitless arguments, it indicates a lack of spiritual discernment that will impact other areas of our lives as well.

D. Spread (17)

Spread means to find pasture. **Like cows shuffling along moving to the next clump of grass.** Not concerned about where it is going. Just moving outward. Empty chatter, gossip is contagious. Encourages others.

Our word gangrene comes from the Greek word. Carries the idea of spreading poison throughout the body. Like cancer, If it is left unchecked it will spread and grow. **Peterson calls this a poison in the soul.**

3. Demonstration of Negative Talk (17-18)

Paul offers two negative illustrations.

Hymaneaus - mentioned in 1 Timothy 1:20. He joined Alexander in teaching that the gospel did not require obedience. Kicked out of the church.

Philetus – Promoted a twisted concept of the resurrection. Maybe that it was only spiritual and not bodily. Maybe that it had already happened. We know nothing else about. But this is enough.

Paul says they had gone astray and were thus, leading others astray.

Gone astray – Comes from archery. The truth was likened to a marksman's target. The Greek word is the word for **target** turned into a negative. Anti-target. Means missing the target. To deviate. To abandon the truth.

Paul knew how easy it is to get caught up not only in playing word games, but in engaging in word battles. Must avoid it. Underlying reason is that words are powerful for good or evil. When we toss them around casually in foolish arguments, we are using them in a destructive way.

Talking about frivolous, casual word fights.

Talking about false teaching by leaders.

Alan Redpath once formed an accountability group. Members agreed to a simple formula that they applied before speaking on any subject that might be controversial or that might create a dispute.

T - True

H - Helpful

I - Inspiring

N - Necessary

K – Kind

If, what I am about to say does not pass the T H I N K test, then I will not say it.