

2-19-23, COTR Texarkana

Title: The Power of Words

Purpose: Provoke people to speak words that make relationships stronger, not tear them apart.

Spiritual truth: There is power in the words we say to make relationships stronger or tear them apart.

Text: Proverbs 18:21

Topic: Words, Tongue, Blessing

Series Title: Building Relationships that Last

Series Purpose: Provoke people to build healthy relationships that can last a lifetime by embracing Biblical principles.

The Power of Words

I. Introduction

A. I asked the all-knowing Siri some questions about relationships: (1) How long does the average marriage last? 8.2 years. LaNell and I will celebrate 40 years of marriage April 9th, Pastor Mike and Sharon 42, Pastor Travis and Whitney 16. (2) How long does the average pastor stay in a church? 4 years. J/L 33 years, M/S 34, T/W 14 (3) How long do best friends (BFF, besties) last? 7 years. Our senior pastoral team has worked and played together all these years and are still friends. I'm not bragging but I want to make a point. There's a reason our relationships have lasted all these years. It's because we've built our relationships on Biblical principles.

B. New series: Building Relationships that Last. I want to help you build healthy relationships that can last a lifetime by embracing Biblical principles. This series will help you in family relationships, friendships, teams, work relationships and may even make enemies friends. We'll learn Biblical principles that, if applied, can make a good relationship better and restore a relationship that's in trouble.

C. Today we'll talk about the one of the greatest determinants of how long a relationship lasts, the words we say. There is power in our words to make relationships stronger or tear them apart. [Pr. 18:21 (MSG) **Words kill, words give life**; they're either poison or fruit-you choose. (NCV) **What you say can mean life or death**. Those who speak with care will be rewarded. (NKJV) **Death and life are in the power of the tongue...**] I want to help you speak words that make your relationships stronger, not tear them apart.

D. Title: The Power of Words

II. The words we say to people will help them or hurt them.

A. [Matthew 3:16–17 (NCV) As soon as Jesus was baptized, he came up out of the water. Then heaven opened...17 And **a voice** from heaven said, “**This is my Son, whom I love, and I am very pleased with him.**”]

(Imagine the setting.)

1. Why did God the father say this to Jesus His Son? Probably, it’s because Jesus the man needed to hear it to accomplish His mission I life. If Jesus needed to hear he was valued, loved, and approved, how much more do my spouse, my kids and my friends need to hear me say it.
2. Jesus had the greatest mission a man ever had. The whole world depended on Him to save us from their sins, yet it would be the most difficult task anyone ever faced. Maybe His Heavenly Father knew Jesus needed to hear affirmation, approval, and confidence from the person that mattered to Him the most.

B. Contrast: Boot camp, a Navy Lieutenant verbally assaulted me, a 19-year-old impressionable boy, in boot camp. He damaged me psychologically and took all my confidence away after an inspection. Before I was a confident, successful young man afterwards I doubted my abilities. His words crushed my spirit. [Proverbs 18:14 (NLT) The human spirit can endure a sick body, but **who can bear a crushed spirit?**] I spent the next 20 years trying to regain the confidence he took from me by what he said. Our words have power to impact people. Our words will give them confidence and assurance or destroy it. People believe what we say; our words shape the way they think about themselves, especially children and people who trust us.

III. The tongue is a powerful force

A. [James 3:5–8 (NCV) ...the tongue. It is a small part of the body, but **it brags about great things...**6 the tongue is like a **fire...**The tongue **spreads its evil** through the whole body. The tongue is **set on fire by hell**, and it **starts a fire** that influences all of life....8...It is wild and evil and full of **deadly poison.**] E.g., Video HS football movie, Friday Night Lights, contrast coach and dad. Another scene. “Look at this ring; I won a state championship, but you’ll never have one.” How did the boy feel? Dad was trying to motivate him but the boy needed encouragement, not put down.

1. [Psalm 140:3 (NLT) **Their tongues sting like a snake**; the venom of a viper drips from their lips.] Facebook operates the same way. Posts can destroy a person.

IV. What we say reflects what's in our heart. If we want to change our words, we must ask God to change our heart.

A. [Mt. 12:34 (NLT) You brood of snakes! How could evil men like you speak what is good and right? **For whatever is in your heart determines what you say.** Mt. 15: 18–19 (NIV) **But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart**, and these defile them. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, **false testimony, slander.**]

1. According to Jesus, If I want to change my words, I must change my heart. If my words are tearing relationships apart, I have a heart problem and I need God to help me change on the inside. He can and will, e.g., did anyone used to cuss before they became a committed follower of Christ, or yell at people?

B. How can we change our heart? We can ask God and allow Him to change us. [Gal. 5:22–23 (NLT) **But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control...**] The HS can change me on the inside. If my heart changes, my words will.

V. 6 words people need to hear to make our relationship stronger:

A. I love you.[Mt. 3:16–17 (NCV) As soon as Jesus was baptized... 17 And a voice from heaven said, "**This is my Son, whom I love**, and I am very pleased with him."]

1. When His Heavenly Father said, "My Son, whom I love", he meant I cherish you; I hold you near to my heart; I'm committed to you; you're very dear to me; I cherish our relationship. When I say, "I love you", the person I care about feels valued and secure.
2. Love needs to be expressed with words. It's not enough to feel it; we need to say it because the people we care about have a deep need to hear it. If Jesus needed to hear it, so do we.
3. Some of us weren't raised hearing "I love you" at home. We can start today telling people we care about that we love them. Everyone will be better off.

- B. I'm proud of you. [Mt. 3:16–17 (NCV) Jesus was baptized... 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love, and **I am very pleased with him.**"] i.e. I'm proud of you. I bet Jesus smiled and felt good inside when His Father said what you're doing makes me happy; you're doing a great job! When we say, "I'm proud of you", we're being a cheerleader inspiring courage to keep going when it's hard; we're acknowledging effort for a job well done, e.g., fans stand and clap after a homerun or touchdown. If Jesus needed to hear His Father approved of Him, so do the people we care about, e.g., me asking dad at 61: RU proud of what I've done with my life?
- C. You're making a mistake. [Proverbs 27:5 (NCV) It is better to **correct someone openly** than to have love and not show it. (Not on FB) Nobody likes to be told they're doing wrong but if I care about you, I'll tell you when you're messing up. It's kind of awkward to say you need a breath mint or "xyz" examine your zipper but if I care I'll say something, e.g. As a pastor, I regret not telling people who were about to make a big mistake, e.g., move to another city or marriage was a bad idea because I didn't want to meddle. If we care, we'll tell people we think they're making a mistake.
- D. I'm sorry; I was wrong; please forgive me. [Pr. 28:13 (NKJV) He who covers his sins will not prosper, But **whoever confesses and forsakes them** will have mercy.] Every relationship has tension and conflict; Saying I'm sorry is the starting place to fix what's broken. E.g., Pastor missions trip, fight because I teased him. When we realize we hurt someone by what we said, don't let pride stop us from apologizing.
- E. Speak God's Word to them. When my kids were growing up and wanted to quit. e.g. [Phil. 4:13 (NKJV) **I can do all things through Christ** who strengthens me.] There is power in the Word of God. [Isaiah 41:10 (NKJV) Fear not, for I am with you...] Why? [Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) For **the word of God is living and powerful...**]

VI. Conclusion: Saying "God Bless You" brings hope and peace to everyone.

- A. [Ruth 2:4 (ESV)...Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, "**The Lord be with you!**" And they answered, "**The Lord bless you.**"] In greeting someone in ancient Israel, it was normal to wish God's **blessing** on him.¹

1. There is power in the spoken blessing. We can say, "God bless you" to everyone: our family, our friends, strangers and even our enemies.

B. Let's make a commitment to speak words that make our relationships stronger, not tear them apart. Tell the people we care about that (1) I love you, (2) I'm proud of you, (3) You're making a mistake, (4) I'm sorry, I was wrong, (5) Speak God's Word to them and (6) Say "God bless you to everyone".

VII. Response

A. Altar: I have a relationship that's in trouble and I need God to help me.

B. Prayer

C. Souls

VIII. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

A. Ross, A. P. (1985). [Psalms](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 886). Victor Books.

IX. Supplemental Material

A. V: Speak/ remind them of personal prophetic words spoken over them, 1 Timothy 4:14 (NIV) **Do not neglect your gift**, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

B. Verse 9 We use our tongues to **praise our Lord** and Father, but then we **curse people**, whom God made like himself. 10 Praises and curses come from the **same mouth!** My brothers and sisters, this should not happen.

1. E.g. a parent arguing with a teenager before church, "If your mother had used birth control you wouldn't be here." They step inside the sanctuary and pastor Zach says sing with me...

2. Something's wrong; how can good and bad things come from the same mouth? Jesus tells us how this can happen.

C. VI Context: Phrase from a man that was hurt by people, [Psalm 129:8 (ESV)...**"The blessing of the LORD be upon you! We bless you in the name of the LORD!"**]