

What you say does Matter

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Matthew 12:33-37 (NLT) "A tree is identified by its fruit. If a tree is good, its fruit will be good. If a tree is bad, its fruit will be bad. ³⁴You 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. ³⁵A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. ³⁶And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak. ³⁷The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you."

Words do matter because they reveal what is in our hearts. They also matter because we will give account for every idle word that we speak.

(ALT) "But I say to you, every idle [or, careless] word which the people shall speak, they will render an account concerning it in [the] day of judgment."

(AMP) But I tell you, on the day of judgment people will have to give an accounting for every careless or useless word they speak.

To understand Jesus' remarks, we must first consider the context in which he spoke. This was not a random comment; rather, it was addressed at the pharisees, who had spoken things that revealed the state of their hearts and attitudes toward Jesus.

Context: Jesus heals a man who is mute and blind. Matthew writes that the man's affliction was caused by a demon, which Jesus clearly cast out. (12:22)

The people were so amazed that they began to ask each other. "'Could it be that Jesus is the Son of David, the Messiah?'. (12:23)

The Pharisees hear the people and immediately say, "No wonder he can cast out demons. He gets his power from Satan, the prince of demons." (12:24)

They were aware that what they were saying was ridiculous, but their rage, hatred, and jealousy blinded them. They couldn't dispute the miracle, so they attributed it to a partnership between Jesus and Satan.

Hatred and envy will always manifest themselves in foolish and harmful words and practice.

James 3:16 (AMP) For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder [unrest, rebellion] and every evil thing *and* morally degrading practice.

Jesus knew their thoughts and why they were saying this. (12:25)

He gives them a lesson on kingdom principles. Something they already know but because of their hatred and jealousy they refused to accept concerning Jesus.

A kingdom divided against itself will not stand

Any kingdom divided by civil war is doomed. A town or family splintered by feuding will fall apart. (12:26)

Matthew 12:27 (NLT) And if I am empowered by Satan, what about your own exorcists? They cast out demons, too, so they will condemn you for what you have said.

Matthew 12:28 (NLT) But if I am casting out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you.

The Pharisees blinded by hatred and jealousy were going against their own spiritual sense and deliberately closing their eyes and ears to the truth before them.

With their own words they condemned themselves by attributing the power of the Spirit to the devil, a sin that Jesus said would never be forgiven because the hardness of the heart of the one who commits it neither wishes it nor seeks it. (12:31-32)

Their words mattered and reflected the spiritual condition of their heart. The problem of the Pharisees wasn't their words it was their heart.

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They were a brood of snakes (venomous). They vomited out destructive words with the intention of destroying the listeners. The poison was rooted their jealousy and hatred. They were evil to the core and were incapable to speaking anything that produced life.

By their very words they rejected Jesus and so would give account.

Matthew 12:36-37 (AMP) But I tell you, on the day of judgment people will have to give an accounting for every careless or useless word they speak. ³⁷ For by your words [reflecting your

spiritual condition] you will be justified *and* acquitted of the guilt of sin; and by your words [rejecting Me] you will be condemned *and* sentenced.”

What lessons can we learn from this account?

1. Our words do matter

It is a good reminder for all of us to listen carefully and to be accountable for what we say, as our words reflect our hearts.

Words are indicative of the true condition of the heart; by words the heart shall be known, as the tree is by its fruit. If we speak is true, right, pure, edifying and encouraging, they will prove that the heart is right.

The pharisees were careless with their words. Their words were “idle words” literally means a vain, thoughtless, useless word; a word that accomplishes no good.

As believers, we must take the warning of Christ seriously and guard our tongues from gossip, slander, backbiting and tearing down others. Our faith in Christ must be seen in the way we talk.

James the half-brother of Jesus wrote that as believers we need to use our tongue to speak life to each other.

James 3:9-12 (NCV) 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. ¹¹ Do good and bad water flow from the same spring? ¹² My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree make olives, or can a grapevine make figs? No! And a well full of salty water cannot give good water.

We cannot truly live this way if we do not have a heart change. This happens when we are born again by believing in Christ.

Romans 10:9-10 (ESV) ...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

The Pharisees in Matthew 12 refused to believe in Jesus as Lord and instead rejected him. Sadly, their own words would come back to judge them.

As we grow in our knowledge of Christ and embrace His words, the way we think, feel, and talk will change.

2. We must guard our hearts

Even after we are born again the enemy seeks to plant seeds of destruction in our hearts. This is why we are instructed in Proverbs.

Proverbs 4:22-27 (NLT) Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

²⁴ Avoid all perverse talk; stay away from corrupt speech. ²⁵ Look straight ahead and fix your eyes on what lies before you. ²⁶ Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path.

²⁷ Don't get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil.