

## The Power of the Tongue Series Part 1: Life and Death

A few weeks ago, we looked at the Power of the Resurrection that was available to us because that power came from the Holy Spirit who lives within us. This week I'd like to start a series on the power of the tongue, because this is a power that we also possess to bring both life and death when we use it.

***"Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit."***

**-Proverbs 18:21**

James writes about the tongue and its power in **chapter 3** of his epistle:

***"Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well. Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things.***

***See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh."*** -James 3:1-12

Most people understand that words have "power." Even when we are taught and use cliché phrases like "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me," we realize this is untrue. Words *can* and do hurt; And they can do irreparable damage sometimes.

Words also can be a source of life, a fountain of healing, they can impart hope, peace and love.

The Bible says that we will all give an account to God at the end of this age, for everything we've done in our bodies, both good and bad (**2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:10**); this includes the words that we speak. Jesus tells us that every. Single. word we speak, we will give an account for.

***"But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."*** -Matthew 12:36, 37

But it's not just as simple as "changing your vocabulary." Sure, word choices matter. Thinking before you speak is not just a good idea, but a great idea. However, Jesus showed us that words originate from the inside of us, from our hearts, when He confronted the Pharisees, He told them:

***"You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart."*** -Matthew 12:34

You've heard the saying, "What goes up, must come down." Well, what goes into your heart, will eventually come out, in some form or fashion. If you truly want to change the way you speak, then you must change what is already in or is presently going into your heart:

***"But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man..."*** -Matthew 15:18-20

I want to remind you of something I'm pretty sure I presented here before. You are a 3-part being made up of Body, Soul and Spirit; made in the image of God. Your body is obviously the physical part of you. Your spirit and the Holy Spirit are now one (**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6:17**), if you are a believer. Your soul is comprised of your mind, your heart, your will and your emotions. In the process of transformation that God desires in your life, He is wanting you to renew your mind, have your will conformed, have your heart transformed and have your emotions operate in a healthy manner. This process is the transformation process into the image of Jesus (**Romans 8:29**).

It is very similar to this illustration [**SLIDE: Computer Illustration Picture**]

[**Koolaid, water and sponge demonstration**]

Whatever you absorb is what will come out of you when you get squeezed. The word "*tribulation*" literally means, "*to be made narrow by pressure.*" Whatever you are continually exposing yourself to and absorbing, will become a part of you. And that will come out of you in certain situations and circumstances.

Where *do your words* come from?

-**Your heart** (we've established that...)

-**Your hurt** (pain; hurting people, hurt people; unhealed areas of your life, will become words of anger, bitterness, malice, judgment, etc.)

-**Your heritage or your home** (Sometimes words are programmed into you because of the atmosphere you grew up in or now currently reside in or certain people in your life that you were associated with)

I want to tell you a story of how words can have such a powerful negative affect on us.

**Monica's story:** Long Island neighborhood. Ugly, hateful words from a neighbor.

Japanese elementary school class and the plants experiment. They used the exact same plant, the exact same soil, the exact same care routine. The only thing that was different was the words they spoke over the plant each day: One plant received nice, complimentary, encouraging words and the other negative, insulting, hurtful words.

Dr. Masaru Emoto and the water/ice crystals experiment [**SLIDE: Ice Crystal Formations**]

In the next few sermons of this series, we are going to unpack this a little deeper and talk about the different ways our words can have an effect on, not only people, but in the spiritual realm. We'll look at truth vs. lies and deceptive words, blessings vs. curses, cursing, impartation, confession: both positive and negative and much more.

I'll leave you with this primer: Many people think that using or taking the Lord's name in vain is basically using a phrase in anger, saying or yelling "Jesus Christ" or "God (fill in the blank) with a last name which He doesn't have... Many liken it to cursing.

And although those are not good word choices in any frustrating situation, that's not what "taking the Lord's name in vain" actually means. In the Jewish culture, the Name of God is so holy that it is not to be spoken or even written, so they will use YHVH and even when they write the word God, they will use G-D. Another way they will refer to God is by calling Him Hashem, which means "the Name." They have such a reverence for Him and His name.

Taking the Lord's name in vain, literally means to make the name of the Lord "common," to have "no real value or significance."

Are you careless with your words? Whether talking or texting... Are you conscious of whether or not you are speaking life or death? Are your words hurting people or helping people? Are your words hurting or helping you?

I want to help you be able to process correctly, when you say something hurtful to someone. It's not just about repenting and saying you are sorry for the words that you said. I learned this a while back in my marriage (remember: man here. Linear, logical thinking). When I would do something or say something to hurt Monica, and the Lord convicted me not to just repent for the action or speech, but HOW THAT MADE HER FEEL.

Your words have power. Choose them wisely. *Use* them wisely. Guard your heart, for out of it flow the issues of life. Guard what comes into your heart as well. Be intentional about absorbing the things of God in your life, so that when you get squeezed, God will come out.