

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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Grace Unleashed:
The Book of Ephesians

PART

19

TITLE

Words That Give Life

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 4:29



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If you're wondering, you think, wait a minute, he is already getting ready to speak, and only sang two songs ... This verse, which we will see and look at ... it's about the tongue. And so, what we wanted to do is sort of back load the service this morning so that we can respond to what we hear and give words of life, not only to each other, but also to sing to the Lord. So it is great to see you Providence and all the venues. We're really glad that you're here today. And if you're a guest with us, welcome. We're so grateful that you have joined us today. We love the Bible. And it even says of itself, it says that it trains us up in righteousness. And it does so in various ways, all depending on where we're at in the Bible. This book ... and I love Ephesians, which is where we're at now. So if you would, you can head to Chapter 4 verse 29 this morning. But all the places of the Bible, when you combine them all together, it really does give us the full counsel of God, what God wants us to know.

And so here in this amazing book Ephesians, it's exceptionally practical to our life today. We can see how God's new identity in our life, how He saved us, how that actually changes how we live. But we can also look back in time of how God dealt with other people. And there's a lot of you who have a little journal and you are reading through the Bible a plan with us. And if you're doing that, you're reading in parts of the Bible where there's a lot of laws that may be confusing to you as to how do they apply to our life today. And what you need to understand, if you're reading those parts, is that God in his grace, He wanted to give all of humanity a section of the Bible that actually demonstrates and explains His holiness and His demand that we be holy. And so, some of the law sections of the Old Testament, they can be overwhelming when you think, "Wow, I'm supposed to remember all these things."

But what they're also put there for is to stir our hope with joy, because Jesus Christ came to this earth. And it says that he gave perfect obedience to the entire law. And then, he went to a cross where he died on that cross for our sin. When he rose from the dead, he says that everyone that believes in him, not only will he forgive, it says that he will give his righteousness to that law to you and to me. And so, as you read some of those sections, if you are confused as you're reading Leviticus and you think, "What about this skin infection that I'm supposed to care about today in my own life and what that means?" is recognize God's amazing holiness, his demand that we be holy. And through his son, he makes us holy. So we can rejoice in that. Ephesians is very different. Ephesians is after Jesus rose from the dead. And he shows us, in this book, how we as believers can actually live our life.

And so what I wanna do right now is to pray for us as we get started. Okay? So if you would, join me. Father in heaven we thank you so much for the day. And once again, this week, we come to you in tremendous need. God, we see fallenness in our own life, our own heart, and even in our own tongue, things that we've said this week that we wish that we did not say. Yet we also see, around the world, more manifestations of brokenness and fallenness. We think about people today in Parkland Florida. And for those families, we pray for them. We pray for that school. We pray for those individuals, for those young people as they're trying to process what took place this week, the tragedy that we see with our imperfect eyes. God, your word says that how can you with perfect eyes look upon the sin in the world.

God, we confess to you that we contribute to the fallenness of this world. But we also, because of Jesus thank you, that we have the privilege to be able to come to you at any time of the day and to lay before you the needs and the burdens in our heart and in our world. And we ask God right now, would you minister to the people in Parkland in ways that we cannot. God, would you comfort, would you build, would you bind, would you help? As they lean upon you, would you prove yourself strong? God, even in the confusion of the days, Lord, as people around the country search for answers as to why these things happen, God, would you help us as a people to recognize and to see that what took place first took place in the heart? So God, even as we look at the tongue now, and as we see things that have happened this last week, and this next week, we'll see other things that happen on the news all around the world, we confess to you God that we as a people ... not only myself, but as a church and in the entire world, we're in need of transformation.

And so God, would you do that today? By your grace, for our good, and for your glory, we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Well, we just sang two songs, and with it what we did is we praised God with our tongue. But the sad reality, in fact James chapter three even speaks of this, it goes that we have the unique capacity to come in here and sing words of life. We can praise the Lord. And we can encourage each other by the things that we sing and say. And then, we can walk out those doors right there, and on the way there to our car and from our car on the way back to home, we can say things that compromise everything that we just sang. We can say corrupt words. Years and years ago, when I was just a really little boy, my patient and extremely loving parents ...

And you need to understand this about them. I have exceptional parents. I say I grew up without any excuses. My parents, they shared the gospel with me every single day of my life. They opened up the Bible. And then one day though, I can very specifically remember ... actually, it took place three times. But the first time was the most memorable. My loving parents, growing so grieved within their spirit, within their own heart of the words that were coming out of my mouth, they decided to give me a spoon full of Tabasco sauce in order to give me a reminder of the fire that was coming out of my mouth and it was burning up things in our house. What I don't remember is what I said. But what I do remember were the tears in their eyes. And I remember the concern in their heart over my heart as they read Ephesians chapter 4, verse 29 to me. And this is what it says, He says, "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths. But only such as good for building up as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear."

Your tongue is a gift. He's made you a steward over your tongue. And it has the potential for great good as well as for great harm. What we find in this one little verse is a progress towards Christ likeness. Where he starts is he says the fact is, is that you and I can use our tongue in order to speak corrupt words, which is immoral, it's powerful, it's destructive, it's harmful, but that's a possibility. That's one way that we can use our tongue. Sort of in the middle, towards Christ, sort of moving in that direction, it's certainly more Christlike but it's not perfect necessarily in every way is ... that is that we can use our tongue to say no words. We can just choose to be silent. Often times we feel like that's even more moral. In fact we even teach people.

We say things like, “Listen, if you don’t have anything nice to say, then what? Don’t say anything at all.”

When we say that, we’re not in any way addressing the condition of their heart, we’re addressing what they’re saying. We’re saying if you can’t say something that’s edifying, we would rather you just simply not talk at all. The fact is, is silence may be moral. It’s certainly more moral than saying corrupt words. And it may be fitting in certain situations. And yet, there’s not a single one of us that draw hope and strength out of the promises that Jesus did not speak. For example, every single one of us, we’ve seen things like this where there’s a little print. There’s a picture. And then, we put a verse. We put something Jesus said. Jesus was on the earth and he didn’t take a vow of silence. He didn’t walk around in the picture of Christ likeness with saying nothing. No. He said things. And so, we can see things like this. And life sometimes feels like a desert. It’s dry and it’s hot.

And yet, Jesus said to us in John 14:1, “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me.” But what if Jesus gave his entire ministry to being absolutely silent? Then all of these pictures would look like this instead. We’d just look and we’d go, “It sure would have been nice to wonder what Jesus would say in this situation where it’s dry and hot in life.” And yet, that’s not what he did. And so, we can use our tongue, you see, in order to speak words that are full of rottenness and full of corruption. We can say nothing. But perhaps ... not perhaps, the best way for us to reflect Jesus Christ is to use our tongue in order to speak words of life, to build up people, and to impart grace. And this clearly reflects Jesus. And so Paul, who just has such a deep passion in his heart for the people in Ephesus, it’s a real city, he came to the real city of Ephesus 20 years after Jesus rose from the dead.

He preached the Gospel and a bunch of people believed and a church was formed. He leaves. He comes back to that place. And he begins to just teach. And he’s there, literally, for a long time. And he’s teaching. And he’s writing. And he’s ministering. And all of a sudden, there’s a riot. There’s a lot of people who don’t love the impact that the Gospel is making in the city, and so they force him to leave. And ten years later, he has such a burden within his heart for the church in Ephesus, as well as a burden in his heart for the unbelievers in Ephesus, that he writes them a letter. And it’s Ephesians. It’s what’s in your lap. Within this book, what he does is he wants so desperately for the people in Ephesus, who don’t know Christ, to be able to see Jesus and worship him and be saved and forgiven by him. But he knows that he’s in heaven and their eyes can’t see him. But there’s a church. There’s people who call themselves Christians, people who are seeking to represent Christ, who have Christ as the Lord and Savior of their life.

And so what he does is he appeals to them to walk in a manor worthy of Christ. And one of the things he gets to in chapter four is ... as it begins, this section is really really practical. He begins to address different areas of our life. And here, we find the tone. What do we use our words for in life and what do they mean about our heart? So what I wanna show you, it's so simple, it's one verse. And so, I wanna show you two truths. And then, I wanna show you three applications of how we can practice this within our own life as a church family. So, the first thing I want you to see here is this, is that God commands us to guard our mouths from corrupt words. He commands us literally, to guard our mouth from corrupt words. He says, "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouth." Now, what He's saying here is this, is that you're a gatekeeper, and your mouth is the gate. And He says that you are to stand guard, and you are to not let any corrupting talk come out of your mouth.

Every single one of us have seen, at some point in time, a horse race. And what happens is, is that we load horses into a stall. And they wait, and they're anxious, and they wanna run, and they can't wait, and so they bump around. And they jockey for who's gonna get out first. And suddenly, the gatekeeper opens the gate and all of the horses run out. What Paul is saying here is this. He's saying every single day, words. They line up at the gate of our mouth just like excited workhorses anxious to run. They can't wait to be let out. But you and I, we are the gatekeepers. And he's saying when you identify, you look to the left, and you look to your right, and you look at your words, you look at the impact of your words and what you wanna say, he says don't forget that some of those words are like really great horses. They intend to impart life. They're gonna run around that track and they're gonna literally give life and grace to everyone who observes them, who hears them, who sees them.

However, there's some horses in the stall that can't wait to be let out. But these horses, they're abusive, they're cruel, they're disruptive. You let these out, they always jump the fence and start running over people in the crowd. So he says you can't let these out. You're the gatekeeper. You cannot let them out of the gate, not with the guys, not with your wife, not with your husband, not with your sons, not in public, not in private, you don't let 'em out. Now what is it that he says we're not to let out? He looks at all the horses. He looks at all the words that just can't wait to be released from our mouth. And he says, "You know what? Some of 'em, they're corrupt." That word literally can be translated "rotten". If you go to the fridge at some point in time and you look in the very back, and suddenly you find a container in there that's so old that you don't remember when you put it in there, or what's in there. So you pull it out, and you can't quite see through it, but you know it's something in there. So you kind of shake it. You're a little bit nervous. And you open it up. And suddenly, you see a bunch of hairy, rotten, moldy peaches.

And we go, “Eww, that’s gross.” And this is the reality of what he’s saying is that when we say corrupt words, the people around us, the room fills with an odor that’s simply not that pleasant. Have you ever noticed that you can be at a meal, let’s just say it’s Thanksgiving? People you love, it’s great food, it’s an amazing aroma. And all of a sudden, somebody can insult somebody, and they insult somebody back. And all of a sudden it’s on right in the middle of an amazing meal. And now, have you ever noticed that the odor of the meal changes? It’s simply not that pleasant for everybody who’s now eating. This is what he’s talking about is that in our relationships with the people around us, what comes out of this hole right here, this mouth of ours, it is remarkable the power that it has. So we need to identify. What are some of these corrupt types of words? In verse 25, he’s already identified lying. When we lie to one another, literally it’s like rotten fruit that we pour out to each other. So, we don’t wanna do that.

Think it could also mean that when we curse God. You see, the word “curse” literally means to bring down or to pull down. When people use his name in vain, they get angry or they’re shocked about something, what they do without necessarily even knowing it is that they take the most honorable name that there is, and they use it as emphasis for their anger or shock. What we’re doing is we’re taking down the highest name and we’re shoving it down, we’re cursing it, we’re bringing it down as an emphasis for when we’re angry. Or still maybe is that when we actually tie the greatest of all names to the harshest of all realities, and that’s condemnation. You take out “com” and it’s damnation.. And some people, they use God’s name and damnation in one word when they stub their toe. What are they doing? They’re taking the most noble, the most beautiful, the most winsome name of the most winsome person in the entire world, and they’re using it as an expression of anger or shock. God says this is corrupt. This is like rotten peaches in your refrigerator. Don’t let ‘em out.

What about when we curse other people? The word “curse”, bring down. So each and every one of you, you’re an image bearer of God. You have unique dignity, personhood. You’re important to God. He cares about you. And when other people who are image bearers, they curse you. They bring you down by insulting you, or when you curse someone else and insult them ... sometimes we sort of sugar coat it. We call it sarcasm. What sarcasm really is is slow drip insults that allows us to say, “Oh, I was only kidding,” if they get offended. What we do when we insult people, we discourage people, we pull them down. We’re taking something that’s noble and we’re bringing it to the ground. Vulgarity may be another ... not may be, is another corrupt way to use our tongue. We talk about terrible realities like hell and we use them as punctuation at the end of a sentence. The worst of all places, and we speak of it in the context of how well our team played basketball. They played a blank of a game. We’re trivializing the greatest problem that people have around the entire world.

Or how about when we take some of God's most noble mysterious creations and we twist them and turn them into four letter words, so that we can use for emphasis? You see, all of these kinds of corrupt words, they have tremendous power. They can steer a person's life. James chapter 3, verses 4 and 5, says it this way. He says, "Look at the ships. Though they're so large and they're driven by strong winds, they're guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member." Isn't it interesting how many people live in the prison of another person's word? You see most of us, when somebody insults that we either don't care about, we don't respect or we don't know, that insult really doesn't stick. It doesn't change the course of our life. Isn't it amazing what happens when a father speaks to a son or a father speaks to their daughter? You are never gonna live up to your family name. And what takes place in the life of that person as they grow up, it's like placing them in a prison. It's powerful. You think about all the muscles of your body and how big some of them are.

What he's saying is this. It's like a ship. You think you can destroy with your hands, or with your arms, or with your legs. He goes, "But you know what? It's interesting is that, that tongue even though it's so small, it has destructive power and force." He goes on and he says, "You know? It's also like a fire." He says, "How great a force to set ablaze by such a small fire. The tongue is a fire." And what he's saying here is this, is that when we allow corruption to race through the gate of our mouth, it has the capacity to burn up anything in its path. And sadly, every single one of us are imperfect gatekeepers. You keep reading James. He says, "You know? It's amazing. We've tamed every animal on the world almost, dolphins, and dogs and everything." He goes, "But you know what man has never tamed? His tongue." There's not a single one of us in this room that are without regret of the things that we've said even recently. The tongue is powerful and yet we don't use it well. This causes regret. And the very first thing that we do when we feel regret is we make resolve. We have resolve. I need to change this. I don't wanna be like this anymore. I don't wanna sound like this anymore. I don't wanna hurt people like this anymore.

And so sometimes what we do is what I did years and years ago. We had this meeting. It was a retreat here for the pastors at Providence. We have it every year. And there was 2 or 3 years ... it's not like I said anything horrible, I just left the meeting. You know what? I just said too much. I just need to be more quiet. And so the next few years, literally, I would write at the top of my pad of paper, "Be quiet". And sometimes that's what we do. We settle for moralism. But the fact is, listen, what we need to actually write at the top of our paper is "Impart grace". The solution is to be more like Christ, not just to be moral and not talk. It's to be good stewards of our tongue and to be like him with what we say. You see, it's interesting that God always wants to go deeper than simply just don't talk, don't say mean things. He always wants to renovate the heart. And that's why I've kept going back to chapter 4, verses 17 to 24 in each of these case studies.

Because what he does there, in 17 to 24, is he shows us how God renovates our heart. The very first thing that He's gonna do in your life. If you wanna change and if God ... God does want you to change, you're gonna keep pressing in this way. And how He's gonna change you as a believer is the first thing is He's gonna reveal the darkness within our heart. You and I, we get all bent out of shape with the symptoms. We tend to gasp when the symptoms are unsanitized. And we tend to smile when the symptoms are sanitized. What I mean by that is this. Let's just say right now, what would you do if I just said a cuss word right now? Just bam! Just for emphasis? You would gasp. And it would be probably the most memorable, maybe the only thing you remember from the sermon. It's interesting, last week, I talked about when I was five years old that I stole some marshmallows to identify and connect with you. The only thing I've heard about for a week is marshmallows. There was more to that sermon than marshmallows, I promise.

The fact is though is that if I would do that, we would gasp. Why? Because something's happening in my heart. It's coming out my mouth. It's unsanitized. And we all know that's wrong. But what if we were in a live group together, maybe in the hall, when I say, "Hey, come here for a second. Hey, have you heard what's happening ... I want you to pray about something. Have you heard what's happening to their marriage? You know God probably doesn't know. So I wanna tell you so you can tell Him in prayer what's happening with their marriage." The Bible says that gossip is like choice morsels that drop down into the soul. Now here's the point. They're both sinful and they both originate from the same source. They both come out the mouth. And yet we gasp at one and we smile at another. One's unsanitized. The other is sanitized. And what God says is this. While you're all uptight about what's unsanitary, I see the sin of all of it and so I wanna show you the darkness of where it all originates.

It's interesting that this word "corrupt", this word, "Let no corrupting talk," is only used in one other context in the New Testament. It's actually spoken by Jesus. Now there's three different references of the same context or the same story, but this is what it is. Luke chapter 6, verse 43, 44 and 45, it says this, "No good tree bears bad fruit." That word "bad" right there is the same word, "bears corrupt fruit". And he says, "Nor does a bad tree bear good fruit." So what he's talking about is that there is symmetry between the root and the fruit, where it comes from and what comes out the hole you call a mouth. He says, "The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good. And the evil person out of the evil treasure produces evil. For out of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaks." What's he saying there? He's saying that our words never lie about what's in our heart. If I was holding a mustard bottle, there's a heart, and at the very top there's a little mouth. And if I squeeze that mustard bottle, whatever comes out of that hole is indicative of what's inside of the heart.

If I were to change it and empty out a ketchup bottle and fill it with mustard, I could stand up and say, "This is a ketchup bottle. This is what I wanna be. This is what we wanna be." And yet, when we're squeezed in life, whatever comes out of that hole at the top, our mouth, is truly what is there. You'll hear people say something that's obviously wrong. Recently, there was this celebrity and they said a really racist thing. Then he comes out with his apology. And his apology normally goes something like this. It's never, "I was wrong." It's "If you were hurt, I'm sorry." And then, "What I said does not represent who I am." Listen, our words may represent who we don't want to be, but they do represent who we are. In other words, if I speak a hateful or a racist statement, I may be fighting against that hatred in my own life and wanting not to be that way in my life, but if that's what comes out of my heart, what it's saying is I'm still there. Your words do not lie and neither do mine.

And so God, what He does ... because of this, I simply wanna show you your heart. And so He urges us. He says, "I just wanna ask you to trace your words like bread crumbs back to their source." This really is how healthy we are as a people. The second thing that He does is once He says, "Okay, now that we've identified the darkness," He goes, "I wanna shine some light in it." In verse 20 and 21 He talks about how we learned Christ, that Christ spoke into our heart, that Christ spoke about our worth, that he used his words in order to show us a superior promise. You see sin habits cannot be pulled, they must be replaced. You can't just get rid of them. They have to be replaced with something better, with something sweeter. And that's why Jesus is so critical to this is that if you're not hearing Jesus call to you, believe me, trust me, there is no way that you can amend your tongue because there's no way that you can amend your heart.

And then, what we find from verses 22, 23 and 24, is He says ... now this is what God does. He asks us to put off the things that were part of our old way of life, to put on some new patterns in life, and in the middle He says ask God to renew the imagination of your mind. And this is how this works. If you're sitting there and you're in an argument with somebody that you care about, maybe it's a friend or maybe it's a spouse ... isn't it interesting that when you're losing that argument and you really wanna win that argument, what you'll say? What he's saying is this, is that if in your mind, in the heat of the moment, the only thing that you can vividly imagine is winning, then you may just pull that trump card out and insult that person deeply in order to win. However, if in that moment, that you're patient with your tongue, and you're asking God, you're saying, "God, I wanna not be like I once was. I wanna be a new person ... "

If in that moment that you can vividly imagine God listening to your conversation, and God wanting his son to be glorified, if you can vividly imagine the day when you will lay in a casket and your kids or your spouse will speak words over you about what you were like, about how you used their tongue, what do you want them to say in that moment? If you can vividly imagine the legacy that you want to leave, if you can vividly imagine the value of the person that's in front of you, there's a really good chance that you'll guard what you say and not say corrupt words to tear them down. And so all of this, what he's saying is this. It's not just stop talking bad. What he's saying is we need to stop talking bad, but we also need to identify why we are talking like this, and ask God to renovate us from the inside out. And then the second thing, it's the flip side, is that God commands us to release words that give life, literally, to release these words.

You see, He says we're still a gatekeeper. He says, "Let only such as is good for building people up." In other words, our aim in life and with our tongue is not just to say ... or not just to not say corrupt words, it's to use our tongue as if Jesus used his tongue. What does that mean? It means this. If Jesus was in your place, he had your parents, he had your children, your job, your friends, your salary, your boss, your employer, your employees ... if he was in those same situations where you're talking, how would he speak? What would come out of his mouth at that moment? Paul's passion is, "Look, church, let's reflect what he would say." So what do we know about Christ and when he was on the earth? Well, we know that he never sinned with his mouth. First Peter, chapter 2, verse 22 says, "He committed no sin, neither was the seed found in his mouth." Second thing is we know that there were times in his life when he'd found it very very wise, and the right thing to do to be quiet, to say nothing. At his trial, he's asked all these things about all these accusations, and it says that he didn't defend himself even one time.

So there are times in our life when it's the fitting thing to do just to not say anything. But the dominant characteristic of Jesus' mouth was life giving word. He's constantly building people up from what he said. And since Paul wants us to represent him, he says, "I wanna encourage you in three very specific ways to use your tongue in order to give life." How do we do this? First, by building up people. This is what he said, isn't it? He says, "But such as is good for building up." You see, our words can be either like a wrecking ball that literally just knocks walls of bricks down, peoples lives. Or we can be like a bricklaying crew, where individually we choose very specific words at specific situations, in order to build people up according to their needs.

With words, isn't it true that we can encourage one another? We can look to the people that are around us and we can say, "You know what? God is with you. He's promised He's never gonna leave you, He's never gonna forsake you." With our words, we can affirm other people that we love. We can say, "You know what's interesting is that God created you with such dignity, such honor. He gave you these gifts." On Thursday, our son had a birthday, so we went out to eat. We started speaking words of affirmation of things that we've seen God do in his life. Your tongue can build people up. The second thing of how do we use this as an instrument or to give life? He says, "By fitting wisdom into the occasion." I love what he does here. He says this. He goes, "as it fits the occasion." In other words, every single one of our days is made up of hundreds of occasions. In a given day, your spouse can come home from a hard day, your son can skin his knees, your daughter may ace a test, your friend may have a car accident.

Whatever those occasions are, what He's saying is this. There are fitting words for each and every one of these occasions. It's sort of like a puzzle. You've put together a puzzle before. You look and you're like, "Pretty sure this goes in there." And you try to push it in there. And you know it's not, but you just wanna be done with that piece. And so you just kind of jam it in there as best that you possibly can knowing that I'm eventually gonna have to pull that back out. It doesn't fit. Listen, Jesus was a master that when he went into a situation, he found an occasion, he says, "You know what? This is the perfect puzzle piece for that person at this moment of this day." Proverbs chapter 25, verse 11 says, "Like apples of gold and settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances." So we don't just wanna throw words out that are kind. We want those kind words to fit where people are at and what they're struggling with.

And then the third way that we use our tongue in order to build people up and to give life is by bringing grace to people, by bringing grace to people. He says, "so that it may give grace to those who hear." You see, every single one of us, we've gone to a party in our life. When you go to a party you ask, "Are we supposed to bring anything?" If it's a food party, usually everyone brings something. Christian, listen to me. One of the gifts that God has given us is that whatever the situation, whatever the party, whatever the person, we get to bring grace. Grace is to receive what we do not deserve. So when we come to people and we share the Gospel with a friend who doesn't know Christ, we're bringing grace to the party. When we remind believers of the Gospel in order to give them encouragement for their struggles, we bring grace to their life. When we encourage another, when we speak the words in truth to one another, we're bringing grace. What I'm simply saying is this, we're very much like Jesus when we bring grace to people's life.

And the only way that we can bring grace to people's life is if we've received grace from Jesus Christ. And so, I wanna close with three applications. And then what we're gonna do is we're gonna sing to the Lord, we're gonna use our tongue in the very way for which it was created. The first thing is this is let's examine the words coming from our mouth. This is very similar to last week. And I wanna say something very similar to it. And that is that most of us are not gonna do this. Most of us are gonna say, "Okay. Great sermon. I'm gonna go out and I'm gonna say something kind to my wife." What I wanna really encourage you to do is to do the hard work to till down into the soil. And ask yourself a few questions. Ask yourself, "What's coming from my mouth?"

You see, your words are not lying about your heart, they're not. They're an accurate representation, maybe not who you wanna be, but a part of who you are. If you said it, it came from a source and that source is not outside of you, it's inside of you. And if you're not quite certain as to what you're saying, one really easy way, though it's very very devastating, is to ask the people around you a question like this, like I ask my sons a few years ago. On the basis of what you hear coming out of my mouth at home, what do you think I care about in life? That'll be eye opening for you. Is the people around you listen to your words, they know what you say. And so, you can ask them. Another person you can listen to is the Holy Spirit. This verse is gonna be for next week. But if you look at the very next verse, verse 30. It says, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

If you know Christ, the Holy Spirit lives within your heart. When you sin, the Holy Spirit grieves. He feels your sin and mine. And how he grieves is he grieves in such a way so that we're gonna know. And how we know when he's grieved is it feels like conviction. It makes you feel bad. We feel guilty. We feel regret. And that's God's spirit leading us to see that what we're saying is not helpful, that He's grieved about it, so that we can confess it to Him and receive forgiveness. I would ask you to go one step deeper, and it's this though. Once you identify what's coming out of your mouth, ask one more question. And it's, "What do these words indicate about my heart?" The fact that I just said that, what does that mean about the actual condition of my heart? The greatest healing will come to those who go deeper, with God's help, hand in hand, to what's happening inside their heart. The second thing I would encourage us to do as a body is let's imagine life if we gave ourselves to this speaking words of life. What would it look like?

It's interesting that the Bible recognizes that part of our human nature is the idea of retaliation. Jesus used this understanding is that when we are hurt, we naturally hurt. When we're encouraged, we naturally encourage. When someone loves us, we naturally love them back. The whole world is set up like this. And so what God does is, is He says is even if someone's not treating you the way that you wanna be treated, treat them like you wanna be treated. In other words, that our words, they're sort of like a boulder. And those boulders, they roll. And whenever you get rolled over by a word, whatever it is, it's only natural for you to respond in like kind. That's why sarcasm gives birth to more sarcasm, and encouragement gives birth to more encouragement.

And so, if somebody rolls you over with a negative word, with an insult, you have the opportunity with the spirit of God to imagine at that moment what could happen if I respond in either way. Their insult could give birth to the insult that's like a horse just ready ... I mean, it so close to the tip of my tongue, it's almost to come out. It's gonna devastate them. It's the button that I know they hate when I say it. And I'm gonna ...

Wait a minute. What if, at that moment I stopped. And instead responded with encouragement in the hopes that they would then retaliate against me ... or for me. You see, what would it look like in your home or your friendship or this church? Can you imagine the compound interest of allowing words that give life to just roll over each other? I believe it would look a whole lot like heaven. This is why Jesus asked us to pray, "Hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." We can practice that now because of God working in our heart. The third and last application before we sing is this, is let's fix our eyes on Jesus.

You see Providence, when we recognize that we should have been torn down and yet Christ built us up, we will find motivation to use our words to build others up. Isn't it amazing what Christ did for us. He came to this earth, and in spite of our sin, he came to rescue us from it. He knew what we talked like. He knew what was in our heart. And he wanted to amend all of it. He wanted to renovate all of it and so he came and he died for us. Isn't that amazing news. For those of us who know him and love him, we have the spirit of God within us. We have the privilege now to use our tongue, our mouth, and our words in order to build people up. So let's pray. Amen. Let's put that to practice. Okay?

Father in heaven, we thank you for your love for us. We confess to you God that we have indeed sinned with our mouth. We have brought other people down. We have been dishonest. We have been sarcastic. We have been corrupt. And we've allowed corrupt words to escape. God we ask that you would forgive us. We ask that you would cleanse us. We ask that you would purify our heart. God I pray now that as we even have a moment of even time or to think about this, I pray that you would open up our eyes to help us to see what you're saying to each one of us. But thank God, as we have the opportunity to sing to you. I pray God that you would fill our heart with hope, knowing that even in our sin, that you are here to build us up, and that it would motivate us to use our tongue to bring life. So God, we love you. We're grateful for your Word. And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.



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