

PP Heart Talk

Part 1-Ephesians 4:29-30

1/11-12/2020

Dave Branon from *Our Daily Bread* devotional gave the eulogy at the funeral for the managing editor, Kurt De Haan. He said, *'In the 22 years I had known [Kurt], worked with him, and talked with him, I never once heard Kurt say a negative word about any other person'*

What a rare person, and I want to become that person, and I want you to as well

We speak, and we do it in many different ways

Some of us speak a lot, some not so much, but we all speak, and all our words have source all coming from what the bible calls, our hearts

PP *"out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."* (Matthew 12:34), says Jesus

Our words are vehicles for our hearts to express themselves

There are several medical tests that can diagnose the condition of our hearts: Blood tests, Electrocardiogram, Echocardiogram, Coronary angiogram, MRI, etc.

You want to see your spiritual heart health, the Great Physician says pay attention to your words

Our words bubble up from our hearts and travel out of our mouths like a river from a spring, lava from a volcano, smoke from a fire

Yet the bible warns us **PP** *"no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison."* (3:8)

How then can our communication be used for good and not evil?

Do you remember from the movie Bambi, when Thumper said that Bambi doesn't walk well Thumper's mama immediately asked him what his father had told him that morning: *"If you can't say somethin' nice...don't say nothin' at all."*

How many parents have given the same advice to their children only to see it not work

Is taming the tongue that easy, and does that advice really get to the root of the problem?

In this sermon series, we'll see how the power of God can tame our tongues

Today we will see a double-edged command, some insightful counsel, and a sobering concern

PP 1-A double-edged Command

As we get ready to look at **4:29**, look with me at what the Apostle Paul had just written

The Christian, **4:17**, must not live or *'walk'* as Gentiles, or unbelievers do

Unbelievers do not understand because they have never experienced the life of God bringing the light of understanding into their minds, they just will not believe and trust Jesus

But Christians have believed, and God has made each one a new creation, a new self, **4:24**, created to be like Christ

It is this incredible fact, that God has made each Christian a new creation, *'created after the*

likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness’ that makes possible the command in **4:22** to *‘put off your old self’*

Don’t live the way you used to live Christian, live the way you’ve been created to live, like God!
Paul will tell us that one of the clear ways we must live like God is with our mouths!

You may be thinking that Paul has in mind only the worst swear words in the culture of his day
He means much more than that...we are to put away falsehood (**4:25**), with no bitterness or wrath or anger or clamor or slander or malice (**4:31**), no filthy or foolish talk or crude joking (**5:4**), and no empty words (**5:6**)

Think back to yesterday for a moment, and try and recall some of what you said...

Were there crude jokes, vulgar words or phrases, unkind or mean-spirited comments

This kind of talking turns the stomach and they reveal what is in our hearts

Words are the heart talking...windows for us to see what is in us

A juicy, lean in, quiet your voice piece of gossip shows a heart of bitter jealousy

That slanderous comment shows a heart of selfish ambition, the power to destroy another

That vulgar joke reveals the heart pumping out its love of immorality

The profane tirade gives you a view to the anger in your heart, the hatred of being out of control

Those critical words opened up to a view of your heart

The command is to *‘put off your old self...and be renewed in the spirits of your minds.’* **4:22-23**

We do that by putting *‘on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.’* **4:24**

We have new hearts, with new minds, because we have been made new creations...therefore ***“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up”***

PP The word *‘corrupting’*, in Paul’s day was used to describe rotting fruit or fish

I learned it can be a dangerous thing to take a vacation here at Cornerstone

Years ago, while I was away, one of our staff and a couple students thought it would be funny to open a package of squid and hide it in my office

When I came back I couldn’t understand why each day a stench got worse and worse, until I finally discovered this tray of rotting sea life

I threw it out, sprayed my office and went home, but the next day the smell was even worse

I searched my entire office and found, not just another one, but two more hidden packages

‘Corrupting talk’, Paul says, must not come out of the mouth of a Christian for it is rotten fruit that only sickens others

St. Augustine in the 4th century hung a sign on his dining room wall: **PP** *“Whoever speaks evil of an absent man or woman is not welcome at this table”*

Paul commands us to stop any corrupt talk but he also commands us to speak in a way that *‘is good for building up’* **4:29**

PP 2-Some insightful counsel

It would have been amazing to listen to Jesus talk

Look at what was said of Him by the people who had the opportunity to hear Him: **PP** *“And all spoke well of Him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from His mouth.” Luke 4:22*

Christian, it is the goal of the Holy Spirit that we speak similarly and Paul gives us some wonderful counsel to help us do that very thing

“as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear” 29

Before you buy something off of fb Marketplace, or Craigslist, you check to see the market value

Before you buy something off the rack at Kohls, you look at the price tag, and then try it on

Before you order something off a menu, usually you look at the price of the entree

We examine and determine value all the time, and Paul counsels us to do this with our words

Build up with your words as the occasion, the need, the situation warrants

Paul tells us we should examine our words before we say them, to see if they are good, helpful

Nobody just takes a pile of construction supplies and starts throwing it together to build a house

We must learn to speak wisely, with discernment, as we discern clearly what a person needs

A friend is struggling in marriage, we must truly discern what truth that person needs to hear?

Someone wants to share gossip with you, what should you say that is fit for that occasion?

PP *“Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips!”*

Psalms 141:3

Pause, discern, speak less and listen more

PP *Seek first to understand, then to be understood*

I have so often spoken before understanding and my words proved embarrassingly off target

I don't recall ever meeting someone named Agatha, but the name is beautiful, for it means *good*

PP It comes from this very Greek word that gives us *‘good’* in our text...*agathos*

It means profitable and beneficial for others

That is how we are to evaluate the worth of our words...are they helpful to others, *‘building others up’*?

Paul doesn't leave the notion of ‘good’ up for interpretation, he clearly explains it: *‘That it may grace to those who hear’*

This is how to discern if our words are *good* whether spoken or written: **PP** *Are my words a channel of God's grace to those who hear?*

It's as if God Himself can speak to someone through our lips...and that is indeed the thought here

The way this looks in relationships, or life is when we are the receiving end of corrupt words, rotten words, harsh words, we must as new creations respond back with the grace of God

Not with hurtful words, but with love and forgiveness and kindness

We pause, evaluate our words before they escape our lips, are they gracious, will they build up the person?

If so, speak them as fits the occasion, and if not, take them off, don't let them pass the lips

How are you doing with your words toward your spouse?

Have the words that have come out of your mouth to your parents been gracious?

Toward your children, friends, coworkers?

Have you even begun the discipline of weighing your words, evaluation them before speaking?

Our hearts speak throughout the day...so let's evaluate them, because to speak in a corrupting, rotten way impacts, affects God Who dwells in us

PP 3-A sobering concern

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” 30

It might not be necessary to say, but the word ‘**And**’ connects verse 29 to verse 30, but also to not

speaking lies, verse 25, and not only onto anger, verse 26, and not stealing, verse 27

The Spirit of God is grieved when a Christian lives no differently than an unbeliever

Christian, we have been given new hearts, and as new creations we are to live in a way that is like Christ, and our heart talk can give overwhelming evidence of the work of Christ

Like many of you, I have heard so many people give the reason they do not go to church being that they see the lives of churchgoers being much different on Sunday than the rest of the week

We can give all kinds of responses to that accusation, but the fact is many church goers are singing songs to God with the same mouths that are spewing filth rest of the week

I would ask, is that you?

This is important that we soberly see this for Jesus said, **PP “I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak” Matthew 12:36**

The focus of Paul here is especially on how we use our mouths in the body of Christ, the Church Paul has been carefully explaining that God is building up His church as His dwelling place

All Christians are ***“saints and members of the household of God...in [Christ] the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.” Ephesians 2:19-22***

To build His dwelling place He has ***“apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of***

Christ” Ephesians 4:11-12

And when each Christian is functioning properly in God’s church, it ***“makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” Ephesians 4:16***

The Spirit of God desires to build up the church, and when we in the church speak with rotten heart talk, we tear down rather than build up, opposing the work of the Spirit of God

He grieves over this, and that is an incredibly sobering truth...the way we talk can grieve God!

The Spirit has put His seal on you, you belong to Him, and

The question you want to be asking yourself is not merely *Am I avoiding dirty words?*

The gospel question is this: **PP** *Is my heart talking in a way that is building people up, or tearing others down?*

Make it a habit to hit the pause button, giving time to evaluate the motivation behind your words

If that motivation is corrupt, rotten, take it off, and by the power of God get it out of your heart by confessing it to God and repenting

If the motivation is for building others up, as fits the occasion, channeling God’s grace, then speak

Amen?

Pray