

1. Introduction

- A. In Isaiah, when he sees God, he immediately becomes aware of his mouth, his unclean lips.
- B. I wonder if it would be the same for you and I as Americans. If we stood in the presence of God, what would be the first "broken" part of us that we'd be aware of?
- C. If you think about America, or Americans, what icon comes to your mind?
  - 1) Red, white and blue? Stars and stripes, bald eagle, almighty dollar?
  - 2) I think if I could choose any icon for Americans it would be a gigantic mouth.
- D. Americans are talkers. We talk quickly, we talk to everyone about everything and we talk A LOT.
- E. In the book of Proverbs, there are multiple, multiple warnings about the mouth, about how we use speech, about the havoc caused by the foolishness of our mouths.
  - 1) But if the problem was big THEN, think of how much worse it is now.
  - 2) In a day and age where what used to be confined to the spoken word and letter writing is now extended to digitally instant and global communication.
  - 3) So, in today's America, Scripture's warnings concerning the mouth are not confined just to the audible words that come out of our mouths. These warnings are directed at every medium of communication we employ: Texts, instant messages, emails, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube comments, blog posts, and for all you shady people, even Snapchat, along with everything that actually comes out of our mouths. All these avenues are extensions of our mouths. They're mouth minions.
  - 4) You, as an American, have a historically unprecedented opportunity to cause mass destruction with your mouth and all of its digital communication minions.
    - a) Whether or not there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq will be argued about for decades, but I can tell you without a doubt where the WMDs actually are:
    - b) Right here, in this room - several hundred of them - located right below your nose.
- F. As I look through Proverbs, the three main issues I see with the mouth are Content, Company and Quantity (even though I hate alliteration). All three of these stem from issues of the heart
  - 1) Wicked Content, Inappropriate Company and Ridiculous Quantity
  - 2) The What, the Who and the How Much
    - a) The evil content of our words is fueled by the evil condition of our hearts.
    - b) The inappropriate company of our words is fueled by the unloving divisiveness of our hearts.
    - c) The ridiculous quantity of our words is fueled by arrogance of our hearts - an unhealthy appraisal of the brilliance of what we say.

## 2. WICKED CONTENT

### **Proverbs 10:11**

The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.

- A. This is a rather simple idea that provides a profound mirror for us to look into.
  - 1) The mouth of a righteous person brings life. It builds up.
  - 2) The mouth of a wicked person brings destruction. It tears down.
    - a) Imagine a container with a cover. When the cover opens, the content pours out, and in the case of a wicked person, their mouth opens and “violence” or destruction pours out.
    - b) A destructive mouth is the lid to a violent heart (“conceals” violence)
    - c) This is our first clue that the problem goes deeper than *what we say*. The problem is *who we are*.
    - d) We *are* wicked so our mouths pour out destructive things.
- B. So let’s get right to application: by this measure, are you righteous or wicked?

## 3. INAPPROPRIATE COMPANY

### **Proverbs 16:28**

A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends.

- A. Who is this mysterious “Whisperer”? This is a gossip. A person who says things in the company of people who have no business hearing it.
  - 1. And you gossips thought you were safe.
  - 2. This is one of the “good” sins, isn’t it? After all, what’s the harm?
- B. The harm is that you *separate close friends*, and in God’s book, that lands you squarely with the identity of the “wicked fool.”
- C. If gossip is something you enjoy, you have to ask yourself “why?”
  - 1) You see the strife and destruction it causes. Why do you enjoy this?
  - 2) Are you bored? Do you like the power? Are you insecure that people like other people and you won’t be happy until they hate them?
  - 3) No matter where your gossip comes from, it’s desperately evil. Separating people who love each other against their will is not innocent. It’s KIDNAPPING.
- D. And yet again, the trail of breadcrumbs starts at the mouth, but is leading somewhere much deeper, much darker. The heart. If you gossip, it comes from a wicked heart.
- E. Do you gossip? Yes. So, do you have a wicked heart? Yes.

## 4. RIDICULOUS QUANTITY

### **Proverbs 29:20**

Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

- A. A person who talks without thinking and talks a lot: worse off than a fool.
- B. Solomon is saying, “Hey guy who talks too much: if you really try hard, maybe one day you’ll climb the latter to the epic level of being a ‘fool’.”

- C. And I think we can assume that this person also fails in the first two issues: Wicked Content and Inappropriate Company
- D. But in this Proverb, Solomon doesn't explain *why* this person is worse off than a fool. But there's another Proverb that helps us see why.

### **Proverbs 18:2**

A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.

- E. Foolish people are so busy saying what they *think*, they have no desire or ability to *grow*.
    - 1) If you are always talking and never listening, then you're worse off than a fool because you'll never gain any wisdom.
    - 2) I have to admit that this Proverb was, personally, a very painful one to read. So painful that I put it on my phone as a recurring reminder, every morning at 9 am.
  - F. As Americans, we just talk too much.
    - 1) Kyle Belden ... last served in Canada ... teasing him about living in America's hat.
    - 2) He jokingly teased back, "Ya, those horrible Canadians who actually think before they speak, and say things of substance."
    - 3) And while misuse of the mouth isn't only an American thing, we sure have cornered the market on it.
  - G. I think this would be a good time to move from talking about the mouth in general to talking about the American Mouth. You are a product of your culture, both the good and the bad and we have to be willing to submit all of it to Jesus.
5. Cultural Contrast
- A. 1st Amendment of the Bill of Rights. To you, freedom of speech is normal. More than normal, you feel entitled to it because the Constitution irrevocably gives you this right.
  - B. In American culture, what comes out of your mouth is driven by independence.
    - 1) In America, to speak one's mind is almost an act of loyalty to the founding principles. To some, freedom of speech—to say what I want, to whomever I want, whenever I want—is almost an act of worship to the freedom deity.
    - 2) And the freedoms we enjoy are both good and, I believe, necessary for human dignity. But having this freedom and exercising this freedom indiscriminately are not the same.
    - 3) Isn't it interesting that the impetus for freedom of speech was to elevate the value and dignity of every human being.
      - a) But this right, to speak freely, is the very tool that we most often use to degrade the value and dignity of each other.
      - b) This is so similar to what happened with the Old Testament law. It was meant to show God's holiness and our need for Him so that mankind would draw near. But by the time Jesus came, it had been distorted into a legalistic "who's who" game of earning God's favor and establishing human power.
    - 4) It is not noble to say anything and everything I want. Nobility is shown when someone exercises their freedom within the constraints of what is good, honorable

and beneficial to others. This is called being meek: reserved strength. Immense strength under control.

C. In Kingdom culture, what comes out of your mouth is driven by dependence.

### **6. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20**

You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

1. The Heart of the Matter: Surrender
2. You think you own the rights to your mouth. But here again, YOU THINK WRONG.
3. You were bought with a price. That includes everything you are, do and have rights to. Your rights may be assigned to your name, but the deed to your life belongs to Jesus.
4. Thinking about what comes out of your mouth is important and good. But even more significant than that is asking God if your life is characterized by surrender. If it is not, according to Proverbs, you are, by definition a fool.