
S P E E C H

Ephesians 4:29

TODAY'S VERSE:

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

ROTTEN WORDS? *Two simple questions:*

▶ Are these words **shameful**?

▶ Are these words **hurtful**?

HELPFUL WORDS? *Two simple questions:*

▶ Are these words **helpful**?

▶ Do these words offer **grace**?

BEFORE YOU SPEAK: FIVE PROFOUND QUESTIONS

Proverbs 10:11 & 19/ Proverbs 15:28 & 29:11

❶ Is this **true**?

1 Thessalonians 2:5/ Proverbs 29:5

❷ Is this **appropriate** for THIS **situation**?

Proverbs 10:32/ Proverbs 12:25 & 25:20/ Proverbs 16:21/ Proverbs 11:12 & 29:11/ 1 Timothy 5:1

❸ Will these words be **heard**?

Proverbs 9:8/ Matthew 7:6/ Proverbs 25:11-12

❹ Is my motivation to **help** or **hurt**?

Proverbs 12:18/ Proverbs 27:5-6/ 1 Peter 3:9 & James 3:9-12

❺ Is this my **responsibility**?

Proverbs 26:17 & Leviticus 19:17/ Luke 17:3/ Proverbs 24:11-12

Growth Group Homework

For the week of May 15, 2005

QUICK REVIEW

This weekend we focused on our speech and how it can be used for good or bad. Looking back over your notes and Ephesians 4:29, what did you find most helpful, challenging or interesting in this week's teaching?

MY STORY

1. Words are powerful and their impact can stick with us long after the actual words were said. Can you think of any conversations from the past that still have power in your life for good or for bad?
2. If you could go back in time and use your words to encourage someone, who would it be and what would you say to them?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. The Apostle Peter is a great case study on the use and abuse of words. Through his words he benefited many and, at other times, did some serious damage to himself and others. Read the following passages and make a note of any lessons you can learn from Peter's successes, failures and his teachings about our speech.

Matthew 16:13-23

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

[14] They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

[15] "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

[16] Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

[17] Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. [18] And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. [19] I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." [20]

Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

[21] From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

[22] Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

[23] Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." [NIV]

Matthew 26:69-75

Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said.

[70] But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

[71] Then he went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth."

[72] He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!"

[73] After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away."

[74] Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!"

Immediately a rooster crowed. [75] Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly. [NIV]

Acts 2:36-41

"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

[37] When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

[38] Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. [39] The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call."

[40] With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." [41] Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. [NIV]

1 Peter 3:8-18

Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. [9] Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. [10] For,

"Whoever would love life

and see good days

must keep his tongue from evil

and his lips from deceitful speech.

[11] He must turn from evil and do good;

he must seek peace and pursue it.

[12] For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous

and his ears are attentive to their prayer,

but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

[13] Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? [14] But even if you should suffer for what is

right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened." [15] But in your hearts set apart

Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for

the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, [16] keeping a clear conscience, so that

those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. [17]

It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. [18] For Christ died for sins once

for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made

alive by the Spirit, [NIV]

How did Peter's awareness of the impact of his words change over time? What hope does that give us? And what do you think it takes to become truly aware of the impact of our words?

Jesus exposed Peter's rough edges, restored him when he blew it and worked through him in many ways. When it comes to your speech and communication, are you aware of any rough edges or areas where you need to make some changes? What would they be?

2. Our words are often a reflection of what is going on inside of us. The Bible speaks of our words as being the overflow of our hearts and our minds. Likewise our tongue can get our whole body in trouble if it's not guarded well. What do these passages tell us about the relationship between our heart, mind, mouth and speech?

James 3:5-12

Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. [6] The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. [7] All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, [8] but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. [9] With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. [10] Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. [11] Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? [12] My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water. [NIV]

Matthew 15:8-20

"These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

[9] They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men."

[10] Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen and understand. [11] What goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean,' but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean.' "

[12] Then the disciples came to him and asked, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?"

[13] He replied, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. [14] Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

[15] Peter said, "Explain the parable to us."

[16] "Are you still so dull?" Jesus asked them. [17] "Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? [18] But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' [19] For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. [20] These are what make a man 'unclean'; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him 'unclean.' " [NIV]

1 Timothy 6:3-5

If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, [4] he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions [5] and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. [NIV]

3. God cares deeply about the way we speak to each other. But He is also concerned about the way we communicate with Him! Read Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 and write down as many guidelines as you can find about our communication with God.

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong.

[2] Do not be quick with your mouth,
do not be hasty in your heart
to utter anything before God.

God is in heaven

and you are on earth,

so let your words be few.

[3] As a dream comes when there are many cares,
so the speech of a fool when there are many words.

[4] When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow.

[5] It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it. [6] Do not let your mouth lead you into sin.

And do not protest to the temple messenger, "My vow was a mistake." Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands? [7] Much dreaming and many words are meaningless.

Therefore stand in awe of God. [NIV]

Why do you think we are told to let our words be few?

TAKING IT HOME

1. Pastor Larry pointed out that showing "grace" with our words means using kinder and more helpful words than people might otherwise deserve. In other words, offering others the same "grace" or unmerited favor that God gives us. Do you have any current relationships where you need to be more intentional about showing actual "grace" with your words?

What would that look like in a practical sense?

2. Thinking about our words before we speak and evaluating our conversations afterward can have a profound impact upon our relationships. This weekend, Pastor Larry gave us five questions to ask ourselves before we speak. Which of the five would be most important for you at this point in your life?