

Words that Work

Message Notes

Intro

- Continuing in series “Wisdom that Works”
- Today we are talking about a super important topic related to wisdom.. Our WORDS!

Message tension:

- Words are one of the most important areas of wisdom. It's like money and time, you have the power, and it's truly creating your world.
- Certain phrases ring through all of history (for this point I will quote half the phrase and let the audience finish the other)
 - “Mr. Gorbachev tear down this wall” - **Reagan**
 - “Ask not what your country can do for you- ask what you can do for your country” - **JFK**
 - “I have a dream” **MLK**
 - “No greater love has any man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” - **Jesus**
- You see words matter, words live on forever.

Main Text

James 3:2–12 (NLT) — 2 Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way. 3 We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. 4 And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. 5 In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. 6 And among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself. 7 People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, 8 but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. 9 Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. 10 And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right! 11 Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? 12 Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring.

Comments on Text

- The tongue is pivot, a hinge on a door, a steering wheel.
- The potential is deadly
- It's a whole WORLD of wickedness - its the doorway to an insane amount of sin.
- It is a vessel of darkness
- It's impossible to tame.
- It has poison. Like a snake. The teeth is not what hurt you, it's the residue it leaves behind!
- The sad reality, both come from our mouths.
- The goal is that you get fresh water only.

Body

1. Our Words are Steering Our Lives

- **They are steering our lives like the bit in a horse's mouth.**
 - When the serpent spoke to Eve, it used words. Words shape thoughts and lead somewhere.
 - Angie talking about Savanna being her little Cello player
- They bring things to life or put things to death.
 - Proverbs 18:21 (NLT) — The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences.
 - Jesus used his words to curse the fig tree, he used his words to call Lazurus from the grave.
- You must learn to respect your words
 - Atoms are the smallest particles of matter, yet they have the ability to be the most powerful weapon in the world
 - You'll give an account for every idle word
 - Matthew 12:36–37 (NLT) — And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak. The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you."
 - Like a kid being allowed to drive a vehicle is humans with the ability to speak.
 - Next to free will, speech is one of the greatest gifts God gives to humans.
- *"The greatest contribution to the success or failure of your life will be your words."*

2. What's down in the well, comes up in the bucket

- God's Word is a mirror of His heart
 - When we stare at His Word, we become transformed into his image

- Jesus said
 - Luke 6:45 (ESV) — 45 The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for **out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.**
- Your words come from whatever is abundantly dwelling in your heart
 - *Whatever you are holding on to* - Things like unforgiveness, bitterness, animosity
 - *Whatever you are obsessing over* - Whatever your stewing over
 - *Whatever you are receiving in* - like a kid going to college and deconstructing everything in their life, just speaking out what is being spoken to them.
 - Whatever sin you tolerate - the heart is like a garden that needs to be weeded frequently.
- **Pressure squeezes out whatever is inside** -
 - Like a tube of toothpaste
 - Someone screaming out a curse word after jamming their finger.

3. We're Either Building or Bulldozing

- A hammer can either drive a nail, or tear down a wall - During hurricane Isaac I was able to use a sledge hammer, and boy it was fun! It was wild, careless, crazy, passionate, and DESTRUCTIVE.

Words that tear down:

1. Careless — stabbing in the air, just hoping to cause some damage!
 1. "There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts" (Proverbs 12:18 ESV)
2. Harsh — a wounding word, or one that causes pain.
 1. "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." (Proverbs 15:1 ESV)
3. Deceptive — manipulative, deceptive, intending to deceive.. People lie like crazy! Determine in your heart not to speak lies, because anyone who can speak lies, can live them.
 1. "Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but in those who act faithfully he delights." (Proverbs 12:22 ESV)
4. Negative — God's judgement was so harsh on the Israelites because of their grumbling tongues. So much of what we call "keeping it real" is really just grumbling.
 1. "How long shall this wicked congregation grumble against me? I have heard the grumbings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against me." (Numbers 14:27 ESV)
5. Corrupt — rotten, unwholesome, spoiled, distasteful. This is where most of the world lives!
 1. "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear." (Ephesians 4:29 ESV)

Words that build up:

1. Healing — offering words to someone that binds up the wound, helps bring healing.
 1. "Gentle words are a tree of life" (Proverbs 15:4 NLT)
2. Honest — this is a tough one, because we must speak the truth. Make sure when you speak the truth, it's not from a polluted well.
 1. Ephesians 4:15 (NASB95) — 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,
3. Gracious — What this means is that your words carry favor, kindness, and generosity. This is really about encouraging.
 1. "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt" (Colossians 4:6 ESV);
4. Timely — Not every moment is the right moment to say a thing!
 1. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver." (Proverbs 25:11 ESV)

4. Restrain and Release

- Image of a dam - It holds immense power, if all the water fell immediately it would cause great destruction, but if it releases it intentionally, it can produce power!
- Wisdom knows how to exercise restraint!
 - Riding a horse and understanding how powerful that beast is beneath you.
 - James 1:19–20 (NASB95) — 19 This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.
 - Before you speak - LISTEN
 - After you listen - BE SLOW TO SPEAK
 - In music, the skill of the artist is seen in what they DON'T play as much as what they do play. The better the musician, the less they play!
- Wisdom knows how to release
 - When the time comes to release your words, several things are important.
 - Is it TRUE, is it NECESSARY, is it EDIFYING, is it KIND

Closing

- The early Christians lived and died upon their confession!
- They had to say "Ceaser is Lord" or die.
- They uttered the words "Jesus is Lord" and lost their life on earth but gained it for eternity.
- I want us all to say out loud the phrase "JESUS IS LORD!"