

Luke 6:45; James 3:1-10; Proverbs Sunday 4/27/2014

Woody, when he was getting ready to go up and sing, said, "Okay, after we're done, give me like one minute, I've got to go back and turn a microphone on." So Woody is doing it all today. I appreciate that.

I read something funny the other day. It was just a short little story. A little kid was sitting in church and turned to his mom and dad and said, "What does that mean when the preacher gets up there and he takes his watch off and he sits it down on the pulpit?" And Dad turned to him and said, "Usually nothing." So don't get too excited. I have two clocks in front of me. I probably won't pay attention to either one of them, but we'll try. We'll see.

I want to preach to you today a message that is going to be a real practical message. There's not going to be a lot of deep doctrine, not a lot of great spiritual truths today. I'm going to give you something that the Lord reminds me of, something I need to be reminded of on a daily basis. This is certainly something that I need help with every day, and I think it's something that each and every one of us needs help with. I think it's a good message for the kids to be able to be in and hear. It's certainly a good thing for them, but it's good for us moms and dads as well.

What I want to talk to you about today is one of the simplest things in the Bible. It's one of the simplest things about us, yet it's the one thing that causes us more problems than probably anything else in our lives, and that's our tongue. The Bible has a lot to say about our tongue. The Bible has a lot to say about the things that we do say, the things that we don't say, the way that we say certain things, and the kind of trouble that can come as a result of it, and sometimes the good things that can come as a result of it.

To start out with, turn over to Luke 6, and then we're going to go to James 3. We're going to read a couple of verses, a couple of passages here that just kind of set the foundation for us, that are just going to be our overriding verses for this whole message. Then we're going to spend the majority of our time over in the book of Proverbs.

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

Now if you flip back over to James 3, we're going to read verses 1 through 10 here.

My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

Let's have a word of prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, we love You and we thank You for the Lord Jesus. Thank You so much, Lord, for the opportunity to get up here and open up Your Word and share something out of it that You laid on my heart. I pray, Father, that You be with us today, that You be with me, Lord. Let the impurities of my flesh be removed today, Lord, and let Your Holy Spirit just really speak through me, Lord. Give me the words to say that we can take this lesson, this practical lesson about our tongue today, and really learn some things, Lord. Maybe be convicted in some areas that we need to be convicted in, and show us some things that we might need to change about ourselves so that we can serve You better, Lord, and that we can glorify You in all the things that we do and all the things that we say. We'll be careful to give You the honor and glory for all that's said and done today, Lord. We love You and we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

I. The Tongue as a Fire

I think about that verse there where it says, "Even so the tongue is a little member and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth." Some of you have heard this story before, maybe most of you have. It's kind of a funny story, and I'll tell it because it's about me.

A long time ago, when Jamie and I were first married, I think it was our first Christmas that I did the fireplace thing. So this is like 15 years ago. Obviously, we didn't have kids yet, and we were living in a small apartment. I didn't grow up with a fireplace when I was young, but every guy in the world knows how to build a fire, right? It's like in our DNA. We know how to build fires and we know how to grill meat, and that's about it.

So it's Christmas time. We're going to have a nice little romantic night. We did Christmas, and then we're home, and "Let's start a fire." We didn't have firewood, so "Let's go get some firewood." So we run down to the gas station and you buy one of those little things of wood. The first thing about the wood that you get at the gas station is that it's newly cut wood, and it hasn't seasoned, and it's not dry, and it won't burn. But I didn't know that. So we had one of those gas

light fireplaces, which is nice. You just turn the gas on and you light it, and you have like a blowtorch flame coming out of the bottom.

So I put a couple of logs in there, turn that thing on, we get it going, it's all good. Turn it off, and literally five minutes later, it's gone. So I thought, "Well, we need to burn it a little bit more." We turn it on. I wasn't dumb enough to put lighter fluid on it, at least, so that's good. That would have made it really bad. But we tried this two or three times, and eventually I'm like, "Alright, I give up. I can't get this thing to go. It won't burn, we're just going to go to sleep."

So Jamie goes to bed, and I think I stayed up and watched TV for a little bit, and I'm ready to go to bed. So I go and I close the flue, the thing that, yeah. So I close it, because I don't know anything about fireplaces, and I'm an idiot. I close the thing because I'm like, "Well, it's going to let all the cold air out of the apartment, and it's winter time." So I'm using my brain at this point. So I close it, we go to bed, and I don't know, about three o'clock in the morning Jamie woke up for some reason. The Holy Spirit woke her up and said, "Your husband did something stupid, you better check things out."

So she gets up, she's got to go to the bathroom, and she's looking around and she's rubbing her eyes. She's like, "Can't see very good." And I'm like, "Well, sometimes your eyes are a little bit blurry when you first wake up." So then she goes out in the living room, and it's even worse. She turns the light on, and the whole apartment's filled with smoke, completely filled with smoke. Next thing you know, I'm out there. We open up the back windows in the apartment. I'm standing at the front door that opens up to 350 highway at three o'clock in the morning in my underwear, swinging the door back and forth, trying to get some air to flow through to air this thing out.

I said all that to say this: that wood wasn't completely out, obviously. When I closed the flue, at some point in the middle of the night that thing sparked back up, and it started burning a little bit more, and it started smoldering, and it started smoking. If I had left the thing open, we'd have been fine, it would have been no big deal. But we almost suffocated because I closed it.

The point is that our tongue, God compares that thing to a fire. He says in James 3:6, "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell." And at the end of James 3:5, "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" It was a tiny little spark that I didn't even know was there in that wood that sparked up and filled our entire apartment with smoke. That's what God says our tongue is like. The things that we say, one little phrase, one little word here that's uttered in the wrong way, or that's said to the wrong person, or that's said with the wrong motive, can kindle a tremendous fire that can cause problems all down the way.

Everybody knows the story about the great Chicago fire. You sing a song about it. When they studied that thing out, it turns out that thousands of buildings were lost. I think over 300 people were killed in this fire, and it was because one animal kicked over a lantern in a barn somewhere. That lit up the entire city and burned it to the ground, destroyed house upon house and building upon building, and killed 300 people. That's what God is telling us here about our tongue.

II. Six Aspects of the Tongue

What I want to do is go through a quick little study in the book of Proverbs. Go over to Proverbs 12. I want to look at six different aspects, six things that God tells us, that God talks about, about our tongue, about the things that we say. Six different areas that we need to be aware of and that we need to make sure that we're guarding our tongue and that we're not falling into these categories.

- A Lying Tongue
- Tailbearing
- Talking Too Much
- Talking Too Soon
- Flattering
- A Quarreling Tongue / Anger

III. Blessings of a Godly Tongue and Conclusion

This message isn't about any kind of deep truths. This message isn't about deep Bible doctrine. This message is about where the rubber meets the road. This message is about, not how much do I know about the Bible, but am I actually even a very good Christian? Do I really serve the Lord every day? Do I really love the Lord like I say that I do? Because it's not in what I know about the Bible. It's in how I live my life, and it's the words that come out of my mouth. That verse that we talked about at the very beginning, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." You can only go so far forgiving yourself for the things that you say, and apologizing for it, before you have to just be honest with yourself and say, "You know what, I have problems in my heart if this is the stuff that keeps coming out of my mouth." You can only apologize to yourself, over yourself, for yourself so many times before you at some point have to get honest and say, "I need to start figuring out what's going on inside my heart that's causing me to say the things that I'm saying, causes me to talk the way that I talk," because it's not biblical and it's very simple. It comes right out of my heart. It's not that I'm choosing to do this or I'm choosing to do that. "Oh, it's okay. I can talk like this because I'm at work." When you're at work, you can talk like that. You can have that kind of a mouth at work, and then as long as you're at church, you talk this way, and it's okay. No. What's in your heart is what's going to come out of your mouth.

Now, I'm going to close with this final thought. I don't want to leave on such a negative. Let's talk about the blessings really, real simply. We're not going to turn any of these verses. If you want to write them down, you can. But there's some blessings that God talks about, some things that should come from a godly tongue. You shouldn't spend the whole time talking about the six things about how evil and wicked our tongue is, which it is, without talking about what our tongue should really be used for and what should really come out of having a godly tongue.

- Proverbs 10:20 says it's like valuable silver.
- Proverbs 15:4 says it's a tree of life.

- Proverbs 10:11 and Proverbs 18:4 compares it to a refreshing well of water.
- Proverbs 12:18 says it's a healthy dose of medicine.
- Proverbs 15:1, it brings peace to men.
- Proverbs 25:12, it's wise reproof to the erring.
- Proverbs 15:7, it teaches the Word of God.
- Proverbs 25:25, it's preaching the Gospel to the lost.

That's what our mouth should be used for. If you want to boil it down, what we do use our mouth for versus what we should use our mouth for. What usually comes out of our mouth is slander, flattery, lies, talebearing, all these things that we talked about. Yet if we boil it down to what it should really be used for, it should be used to praise God, to witness to people about God, and to help lost people get saved, and to minister to people that God puts in our lives and give them the truth and help them with problems that they might have, and give them something that's going to edify them, something that's going to encourage them, something that they can actually use.

What scares me, and Bob has said this before, and I believe it to be true, and it's a frightening thing. When you study the physics of sound, we know that the sound, the words that come out of our mouth, they're in sound waves, and they go, and they travel to a certain point and you can't hear them anymore, but the waves are still going. They still go out there, it's just that the human ear can't detect them at that point. There was a movie a few years back where the idea behind it was that we send radio signals out to outer space, we're looking for intelligent life on other planets, and we're hoping at some point somebody will send some kind of response back to us. So there's this movie, it's called *Contact*, where they did that. They send radio signals out and then somebody caught the signal and they sent it back to us. And we're like, "Oh, it's great. There's life on other planets," and Jodie Foster was in it, and it's awesome.

But what if all the words that we say throughout our life are just traveling out there in eternity, traveling out there through the universe, and someday when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, God, in the way that only God could, has the ability to take all of those sound waves, all those words that we've ever said our entire life, and bring them back and play them through His boombox up there that He has? It's next to Jesus, it's not on His lap, but it sits right up there on the throne. And everything that we've ever said in our whole life gets played before us again. We all hear about how we're going to have to answer, we're going to be accountable for the way we lived our lives and what we did for God. But what if we get there and for the first time in our lives, we actually follow the principle, He forces us to just sit there quietly, and He shuts our mouth for us, and He says, "I actually don't need you to say anything." We get up there and say, "Alright, Lord, what do you want to know? What do you want to know? You want to know how great I was? You want to know what a preacher I was? You want to know, what do you, you want to talk about who I led to the Lord? You want to talk about who I disciplined? What do you?" And He says, "Nope, I don't need to hear anything. We've actually, we've got that taken care of," and tunes it to the right station, and every word that you ever uttered in your entire life gets played out in front of you, and you have to sit there and listen to it.

That's the question that we have to ask ourselves, is what really comes out of our mouth? Is it the praises of the Lord? Is it witnessing to people about the Lord? Is it talking about this book that

we know is the center for Him? We know that His truth is the most important thing to Him. There's nothing that He wants to talk about more than this, which means that if we're really Christians, if we have Christ living inside of us, and we're conformed to His image, which we're supposed to be, there should be nothing that we like to talk about more than this book.

That's a scary thing. That's scary for me anyway. I don't know about you guys, but it's scary for me to sit and think about going up there someday and finding out how much I actually talked about this book and His truth versus how much I talked about other things, stupid things, things that I was mad about, things like KU basketball that's completely insignificant. The dumbest of the dumbest of the dumb things that we waste our time with and we occupy ourselves with.

I'm going to leave you with that, guys. I'm sorry for going so long today, but I hope that that gives you something that you can use. I know, like I said at the beginning, this message is for me as much as it is for anybody else. We all struggle with our tongues, and it's something that we need to be reminded about and we need to think about the things that we say. He says, "Study to answer and study to be quiet." That's the best advice that we could give ourselves is learn sometimes just to shut up and stop talking and think before we speak and think about the things that we say. Is the things that I'm getting ready to say, is it going to bring glory and honor to God or is there going to bring some sort of glory and honor to myself? If we can do that, there's no telling what God can do with us and how He can use us in people's lives. It would be amazing if we could start going through life actually putting out fires instead of just pouring gasoline on everyone that we see.

Alright, let's go to Lord in prayer and we'll be done for the day.