

By Thy Words

Matthew 12:34-37

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FOCAL Read Responsively Matthew 12:34-37 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. {35} A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. {36} **But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. {37} For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.**

I was at the hospital the other day and saw the letters **NPO** on a sign hanging on a patient's door. I asked a nurse what **NPO** meant, and she told me that it meant "**Nothing By Mouth**". I asked her then why the initials weren't **NBM**, and was told that **NPO** is an old Latin medical phrase.

When we think about the most important parts of our body we think of our eyes, our hands, our feet - but we don't often think of the mouth first. The mouth is a very important part of our body. Though the body can be given nourishment intravenously (as in, *through a needle*), it's not nearly as satisfying as getting your nourishment through your mouth. We eat and drink through our mouths. We breath through our mouths. We snore at night through our noses and mouths. We kiss our sweethearts with our mouths.

Our mouths do something else: they reflect the *aroma of our souls*. What we speak says more about us than what we wear, where we go, or what rituals we may have observed in our religious lives. The Pharisees were

meticulous in their religious observance. They gave money to the poor. They were careful to pray numerous times throughout the day. They were careful in what they wore, and very careful with whom they associated. The Pharisees kept the Mosaic Law to the highest degree. They were doctrinally conservative, and highly orthodox. And yet Jesus said to these outwardly upright men:

"O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh"

Look at how Jesus addressed these men. He called them "generation of vipers". A "viper" (*εχιδνα*, pronounced *ekh'-id-nah*) is literally "a poisonous snake". What's the difference between a *rattlesnake* and a *garter or garden snake*? To some of you there is no difference. I sympathize. I often hear people say how you can tell the difference between a poisonous and a non-poisonous snake. They tell me that you can - if you look closely - see that a poisonous snake has a triangular shaped head and catlike eyes, whereas a non-poisonous snake has a rounded head and rounded eyes. The key to that whole statement is "if you look closely". Frankly, I don't plan on getting that close to any snake, much less a poisonous one. They both look the same to me - long and creepy.

What's the difference between the *rattlesnake* or the *garter snake*? **One has poison in its mouth, and the other doesn't.** When Jesus called the Pharisees "vipers" what He was saying was **"your mouth has poison in it. You might be dressed up, and you might look holy**

and good and honorable, but what's in your mouth reveals what you really are. You are vipers. Your mouth does not hold the ability to bless, but it curses and kills. What fuels your poison is the *abundance* (*περισσευμα*, pronounced *per-is'-syoo-mah*) - the overflow of your hearts."

When God saves a soul He saves them from the heart outward. When the heart is cleaned up, the mouth is cleaned up. When a soul is focused on the Lord Jesus Christ then, as the proverbs says:

Proverbs 10:20 The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth.

Those who have been **justified** by faith in Christ are made into new creatures. The new creature does not use the old mouth. As Jesus said:

FOCAL Matthew 12:34-35 out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. {35} A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

The clean heart overflows to a clean mouth. The filthy heart overflows to a filthy mouth. You can put a suit on a mule, but it will still be a mule - and you will know it by its bray! It is not the suit nor the setting that matters in the eyes of God, but it is the heart that has been forgiven because it has called on the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.

And if you have been saved, hang a **NPO** on your life, and let it stand for **nothing ugly by mouth**. The world is watching the Christian. Live – and speak – like you have been saved!

1. Words Matter

In our society today people act as if words do not matter. I sat at the hospital and watched a show called *The View*®. This is a show where several confused people sit around a table and give their opinions about everything. They obviously thought their opinions mattered because they were famous. Quite frankly, if I were an agent with the CIA, I wouldn't use *water boarding* to get information from a terrorist. I'd make them sit and watch “The View” for about an hour. I know it made my head hurt!

Words matter. They matter to God. The Bible tells us that **One of God's Names is “The Word”**.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

When we come together, we are not here because we want to be entertained. If you want to be entertained go watch the children playing ball. Go fishing, or hunting, or go home with someone and have a *conversation*. We come to Church to *listen to the Word of God*. We believe that God has a Word for us, and will comfort and direct us through His Holy Word, the Bible.

How is a person *saved*? Is he saved *by works*, or *by words*? What does the Scripture say? We read:

Romans 10:8-11 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; {9} That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. {10} For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. {11} For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

We who are Christians **preach a word of faith**. What does the **word of faith** demand? It's very clear. **The word is near to you – in your mouth and in your heart**. The Apostle says “salvation is in the spoken word – speak it!” What should you speak? **The Word of faith**. What **word of faith**? “**If thou shalt CONFESS WITH THY MOUTH the Lord Jesus**”. How are we saved? *By saying or confessing (Greek ομολογεω (Pronounced: hom-ol-og-eh'-o), to verbally agree with God, to make a verbal covenant with God that Jesus is YOUR LORD. And shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead. THOU SHALT BE SAVED. The Apostle goes on to say, “**with the heart man BELIEVETH unto righteousness, and WITH THE MOUTH confession is made unto salvation.***

A person is saved – not by works, but by WORDS.

How was the Apostle Paul saved? Was he saved by works? He was circumcised, a prominent Jew, a member of the ruling counsel of Jews. The Apostle said that

Philippians 3:5-6 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; {6} Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

He kept the Law perfectly. He was **blameless**. Is this what saved him? No, for we see in his testimony that Ananias led him to the Lord, saying:

Acts 22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, **calling on the name of the Lord.**

What did **Peter** tell the converts of the early Church on the day of Pentecost?

Acts 2:21 And it shall come to pass, that **whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**

By our words we shall be justified or declared innocent. The Gentile **Cornelius** was a good man, and yet the Angel of God told him:

Acts 11:13-14 ... **Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; {14} Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.**

Peter had to **tell Cornelius words** by which he could be saved. Words matter. Words will save you, if they are the right words. What are the right words?

Romans 10:13 For **whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.**

Our words must point to Jesus. If our words do not point to Jesus – but point away from Jesus – then we condemn not only ourselves, but our listeners. Jesus told the Pharisees:

FOCAL **Matthew 12:34** **O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.**

What led up to this terrible condemnation from Jesus?

Jesus and His disciples were minding their own business, which happened to be the Father's business. The Bible tells us that:

Matthew 12:1-2 ... **Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were hungry, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. {2} But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.**

“**Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh**”. A person who is lost in his sins only knows how to judge others so as to puff himself up. The disciples were following Jesus, the Giver of the Law. He responded to the Pharisees:

Matthew 12:3-5 **But he said unto them, Have ye not**

read what David did, when he was hungry, and they that were with him; {4} How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests {5} Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless

When King David was running from his enemies the priests of the Temple gave him **shewbread** to eat. The **priests** themselves work on the Sabbath. The Pharisees, rather than judging the disciples, *should have been following Jesus just as the disciples were following Jesus*. As Jesus said:

Matthew 12:6-8 But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple. {7} But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. {8} For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

Rather than standing off like a Pharisee and judge others, *follow Jesus*. Follow Him though He lead you through a corn field. Speak of Jesus, follow Jesus, let His shadow always be on you, and always walk in His footsteps.

When a person decides to walk apart from Christ he covers his apartness with a judgmental mouth! The small man always feels taller when he's standing on someone else's back.

Jesus went into the Synagogue, and

Matthew 12:10 And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.

The Pharisees were cloaking their intents by their words. They asked their question, “**Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days?**” not because they were curious or wanting to be trained. They did this **that they might accuse Jesus**.

Here is the danger of misusing the tongue. The Pharisees started out criticizing the disciples for eating raw corn on the Sabbath. When corrected, they did not look to Jesus, but *looked for flaws in Jesus*. Their self righteousness and open mouth has blinded them to the fact that this Jesus is the Messiah. Though He has the capability to heal – a supernatural act of God – they wish to indict God for healing. The Bible says:

Proverbs 18:6-7 A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes. {7} A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.

Jesus replied to the Pharisees:

Matthew 12:11-12 What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on

it, and lift it out? {12} How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.

A man is more important than a sheep. It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath. The Pharisees – rather than seeking to hurt Jesus by their sins of the tongue – should have been listening to Him.

2. Words Reveal Who We Are

Words not only matter to God and to you, but words reveal who you really are. When God saves a person He saves them from the inside out. God starts with the heart, and then cleanses to the outside. Jesus said:

FOCAL Matthew 12:34-35 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. {35} A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

When Jesus speaks about bringing forth in this text He isn't talking about the works of our hands but *the works of our mouths*. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things. If a person has been saved by faith in Christ Jesus then the Bible teaches that God lives inside them. Listen to how the Bible contrasts the *unbeliever* to the *believer*. The Scripture says:

1 John 4:4-8 Ye are of God, little children, and have

overcome {the spirit of antiChrist}: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. {5} They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. {6} We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. {7} Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. {8} He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

How do we know the difference between the saved and the lost? Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Who are the worldly, those who are antiChrist? Look at verse 5 above. "They are of the world, therefore SPEAK THEY OF THE WORLD, and the WORLD HEARETH THEM. The saved speak like they are saved. The lost speak like they're lost.

ILLUSTRATE A police dog responds to an ad for work with the FBI. "Well," says the personnel director, "You'll have to meet some strict requirements. First, you must type at least 60 words per minute." Sitting down at the typewriter, the dog types out 80 words per minute. "Also," says the director, "You must pass a physical and complete the obstacle course." This perfect canine specimen finishes the course in record time. "There's one last requirement," the director continues; "you must be bilingual." With confidence, the dog looks up at him and says, "Meow!"

Those who have received grace from God are gracious in

their speech. Those who are without grace may speak swelling and religious words. They may be well dressed, and go to all the best and most religious places. But, in time, their lips reveal what is in their hearts. Like the Pharisees their tongue betrays what is in their hearts. Jesus said:

FOCAL Matthew 12:35 ... **A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.**

A good man has good treasure in his heart, for he is saved by the grace of God. He has called upon the Name of Jesus and has been saved. Like the Psalmist the Christian seeks to keep his tongue from evil.

Psalms 57:7 **My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.**

The evil man, on the other hand, rejects Christ and refuses to ask God for salvation.

Psalms 50:19-23 **Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. {20} Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. {21} These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. {22} Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. {23} Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that**

ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God.

Words reveal what our hearts contain. Out of the Christian should flow springs of living water. Our tongues should speak of Jesus, our songs should praise Him. To those who have received grace should be graciousness.

3. Our Words Shall Judge Us

FOCAL Matthew 12:36-37 ... **I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. {37} For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.**

The basis of our salvation or our damnation is our words. Evil words contaminate the vessel. Evil words contaminate us. Jesus said:

Matthew 15:11 **Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.**

Matthew 15:17-20 **Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? {18} But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. {19} For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: {20} These are the things which defile**

a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

What defiles people is not what they eat, but what they say. Evil words always proceed evil actions. Evil spoken hardens the heart. When Jesus healed the multitudes the people said, **“Is this not the son of David?”** They saw the works of God in Christ and responded to this. What about the Pharisees? The Bible says:

Matthew 12:24 But when the Pharisees heard {Jesus was healing people}, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

By their words they would be condemned. The evil they spoke out of an evil heart blinded them to the Grace of God. These men would die in their sins, and go to a devil's hell. Why?

Because of their tongues. Oh that God would convict us all to leave the sins of the tongue alone!

Matthew 12:31-37 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. {32} And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. {33} Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is

known by his fruit. {34} O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

May God save us from the sins of the tongue!

FOCAL Read Responsively Matthew 12:34-37

O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. {35} A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. {36} **But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. {37} For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.**

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1. Words Matter

John 1:1; Romans 10:8-11; Philippians 3:5-6; Acts 22:16; Acts 2:21; Acts 11:13-14; Romans 10:13; Matthew 12:34; Matthew 12:1-2; Matthew 12:3-5; Matthew 12:6-8; Matthew 12:10; Proverbs 18:6-7; Matthew 12:11-12 _____

2. Words Reveal Who We Are

Matthew 12:34-35; 1 John 4:4-8; Matthew 12:35; Psalms 57:7; Psalms 50:19-23 _____

3. Our Words Shall Judge Us

Matthew 12:36-37; Matthew 15:11; Matthew 15:17-20; Matthew 12:24; Matthew 12:31-37 _____

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

