

Message: “Speak Life”, presented by Reverend Kristen Lowe on 10-08-2017 at Crossroads United Methodist Church, Waunakee, WI.

God spoke... and the world came into being. Words have enormous power. Words can create life. Words can murder the spirit.

James 3:2-11 tells us:

“Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters,^[d] this ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water?”

There is much written about the power of words and how we are required to manage the way we speak.

1 Thessalonians 5:8-11 tells us:

“But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.”

The word of God to the people of God. Thanks be to God!

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Our words have power. In the beginning, the bible says, God spoke, and the world was formed.

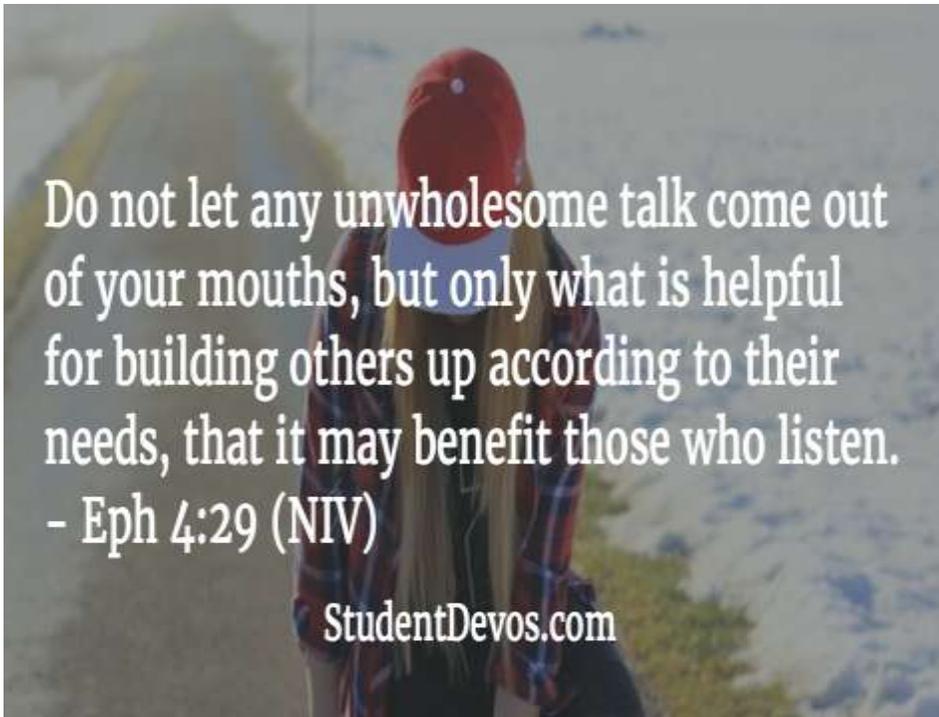


In the beginning was the word. The power of the written or spoken word can create, destroy, cause kingdoms to rise and fall.

A woman went to the doctor's office, where she was seen by one of the new doctors, but after about four minutes in the examination room, she burst out, screaming, as she ran down the hall. An older doctor stopped her and asked what the problem was, and she told him her story. After listening, he had her sit down and told her to go relax in another room. The older doctor marched down hallway to the back where the first doctor was and demanded, "What's the matter with you? Mrs. Terry is 63 years old, she has four grown children and seven grandchildren, and you told her she was pregnant?" The new doctor continued to write on his clipboard and without looking up said, "Does she still have the hiccups?"

Paul wrote to the Christians at Ephesus in Chapter 4:29 "Watch every word you say. Don't let negative words come out of your mouth. Say only what helps, each word a gift."

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Our words have a tremendous ability to heal and bring peace or to destroy and hurt others. We speak life or death with our words.

The bible tells us:

"No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of." (Luke 6:43-45)

That a tree is recognized by its fruit. If you see lemons, what kind of tree is it? Etc...

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You get the picture right? A tree is recognized and identified by its fruit.

So how would your speech identify you?

Would it identify you as an encourager? Would it identify you as someone who is in love with Jesus and people? Or would it identify you as someone who knows the word of God?

On the other hand, speech can identify someone as a gossip or rumor-monger. Speech might identify a person as a self-proclaimed judge of others or a hypocrite? Or... even a whiner or complainer? The power of the word can cause division in families or even among the church.

Because whether we like it or not, and whether we realize it or not, people hear what we say and even how we say it... and they identify us by it.

Our speech reveals the condition and contents of our hearts.

By their Fruit

You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.

Matthew 7:16-18

In the book of Luke, Jesus points out that “For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.”

If my heart is filled with good, my words and actions reflect that. If it's filled with bad, my mouth reflects that. It's pretty simple. I remember a coworker of mine once said, “Garbage in, garbage out.” In other words, if we choose to fill ourselves with that which is not spiritual or holy, guess what's going to grow inside of us and come out of us?

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In Matthew 12:36-37 Jesus warns us, "...that for every idle word you speak, you will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

I think about that sometimes. You know, it's not like some people die. We all will... and we will someday have to give an account. It's something to consider.

Our words are so much more powerful than we realize.

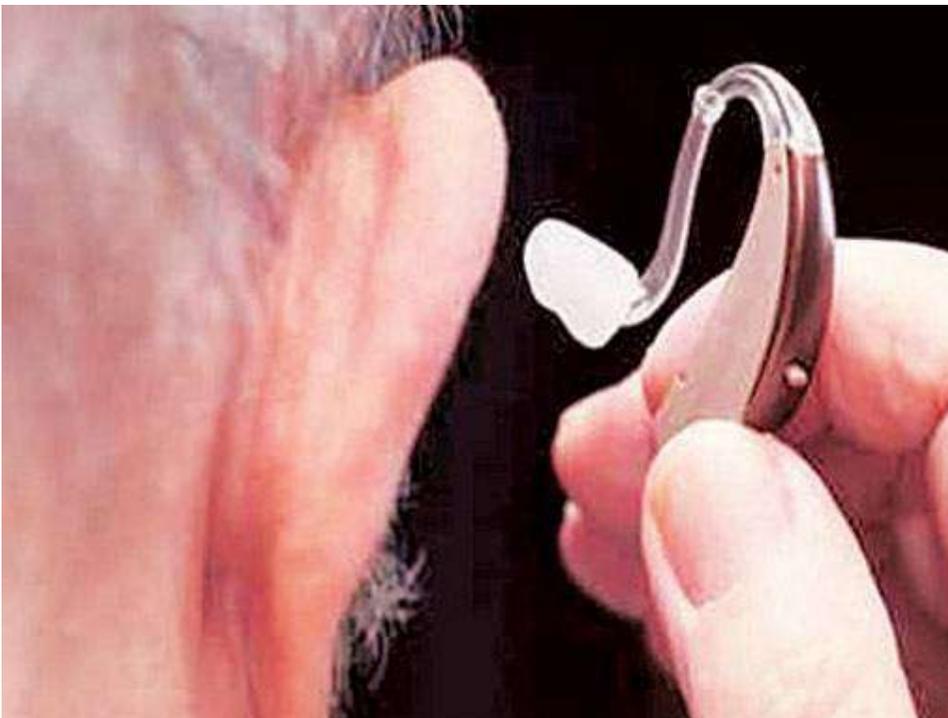
If we say something that does not build someone up... if we say something that harms another human being, it will create a wound deeper than a physical injury.

How many of us have heard something someone else said about us and took it to heart? Those words stick.

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When I was in middle school I was teased relentlessly and called bozo because of the color of my hair and because of the texture. Humidity was not my friend. I started coloring my hair and straightening it. The words hurt.



There was an elderly man who had a serious hearing problem for a number of years. His family tried again and again to convince him to get a hearing aid. Finally, he relented. He went to the doctor and was fitted for a set of hearing aids that allowed him to hear 100 percent.

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A month later he went back to the doctor. The doctor said with a smile, “Your hearing is perfect. Your family must be really pleased that you can hear again.”

The old man replied, “Oh, I haven’t told my family yet. I just sit around and listen to their conversations. I’ve changed my will three times!”

What we say reflects the contents of the heart.



Like a treasure chest, each soul stores up ideas, attitudes, wishes, and agendas. From this storehouse of feelings, emotions, and ideas, we pour forth our words. As a man thinks in his heart, so is he. What kinds of things come from your heart and out your mouth?

If we slander others, what does that say of our heart? We unfortunately have the capacity to speak death. When we hurt someone with our words, essentially we are killing their spirit. We are crucifying their self esteem. We can essentially crush and destroy another human being with our words. We’re not perfect, but once we understand that the words we speak into being come from somewhere deep inside, we begin to understand our deep and desperate need for God to work in and through us.

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"Death and life are in
the power of the tongue..."
(Proverbs 18:21)

SPEAK LIFE!

What we say can build people up. Our words can heal, encourage, edify, and give hope. Our words can be like cool water in the desert heat. They can bring relief and respite. When people hear what you have to say, do they have a better day? Do your words move people to become more hopeful and trusting of God?

We want to grow our church. We want people to find Crossroads so they can develop a life transforming relationship with Christ.

What we say can draw others toward Christ. Paul urged people to let their speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt. Such speech conveys concern and kindness and respectfulness. It makes people want to hear more.

As you speak today, picture in your mind that you have the capacity, the ability to choose with each word to build or to destroy. Today, dear friends, speak life. Amen.