

MESSAGE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



THE POWER OF WORDS // AUGUST 16, 2020

This weekend, Andy Rauschkolb talked about something all of us need to give some attention—our mouth and what comes out of it. The importance of our speech is evident in the time and number of words spent discussing it in the Bible. God thinks it is important; therefore, it is important.

The saying “the tongue is mightier than the sword” is as true today as ever. Words can encourage or dishearten, praise or condemn, build up or destroy. Words can show love or hate, can be truthful or deceitful, and can join people together or tear them apart. As a weapon, words are sharp, cutting, stabbing, and deadly. In contrast, the words you give voice to, expressions of love and compassion, can also be the balm that begins meaningful healing.

James uses beautiful and explicit imagery to teach about the tongue and its wide-range affects. James chose his words carefully as he counseled us to do the same.

James 3:2b-10 NLT

For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way.

We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. 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. 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.

People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right!

Ephesians 4:29 NIV

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.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION

1. What do you learn about the power of the tongue (our words) from the metaphors James uses?
2. Why do you think the tongue is so difficult to gain—and maintain—control over?
3. What situations tend to bring out the worst in people in regards to their words?
4. Read Ephesians 4:29. Considering our current circumstances, political culture, and the emphasis on societal differences, how can you use your words in a productive, not destructive, way? How can this point others to God?
5. How can we pray for you? (If you are comfortable with it, you can pray out loud for one another as a way to use your words to build each other up.)

PRAYER

Pray to join the Holy Spirit in his work in your life to use your tongue for good, encouraging, loving ways. Pray to be slow to speak and to be thoughtful when you do speak. Ask God to search your heart, and then pray for healing words where they are needed.