

Letting Jesus Speak:

The power of His Words to Transform Your Speech

When we encounter the word 'corrupt' in the Bible, it essentially means something rotten or spoiled. In the same way, we should view unwholesome language as repulsive, like a rotten apple or bad meat. As followers of Jesus Christ, He calls us to a newness of life, and speaking corrupt words goes against the transformed nature we have received.

God has brought about a radical change in us through our new birth in Christ. We have a new nature. Everything is fresh and different. God continually works in us, transforming us from glory to glory every day. He is still working on us.

Controlling our tongues is a challenge. James says we would be perfect individuals if we could completely control our tongues. Our tongue can cause great harm, just like a destructive fire. James reminds us that the tongue, when unchecked, can defile the entire body and have a far-reaching impact.

So, let us be mindful of the power of our words. Let us strive to speak words that are uplifting, encouraging, and honoring to God. He is at work in us, helping us to bring our tongues under control and allowing our speech to be a source of blessing and grace.

The Power of the Tongue

The tongue is a powerful force. James doesn't hold back when he says it can be set on fire by hell itself (James 3:6). It's a strong statement, but it makes us realize the gravity of the situation. James goes on to say that no one can fully control the tongue. It's unruly and capable of causing great harm, like a deadly poison or a destructive fire. (James 3:8) At some point, we have all said things in the heat of the moment and later regretted it.

In Psalm 39:1, David acknowledges the need to guard his tongue and restrain his words.

I said, "I will guard my ways,

Lest I sin with my tongue;
I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle,
While the wicked are before me.”

He recognizes that a heated heart can lead to burning words we regret later. David struggled with his temper and realized he couldn't overcome it alone. He turned to God, asking Him to set a guard over his mouth and regulate the thermostat of his temper.

The words we speak reveal what's in our hearts. Jesus said, 'For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.' (Luke 6:35) Our words are like deep waters, exposing the true nature of our hearts. They reveal not only what's in our hearts but also what fills our hearts.

We've all experienced moments when unguarded words slipped out, exposing hidden thoughts or feelings. Once spoken, we can't take them back. Words have a lasting impact. Like toothpaste, we can't put them back once they are out. So, we must be mindful of what fills our hearts and minds.

The only way to cleanse our tongues is by immersing ourselves in God's Word. His truth, honor, righteousness, purity, and goodness should fill our hearts and guide our speech. Meditating on these things helps to shape our words and guard against corrupt speech.

Let us be mindful of our words, realizing they reflect what's in our hearts. We need to allow God's Word to shape our thoughts and transform our speech so that our words bring life, encouragement, and blessing to others.

In the Bible, we read about the twelve spies who went to explore the Promised Land. Ten came back with a negative report, but two had faith in the Lord and believed they could conquer the challenges. Let's be like those two spies, having a positive outlook and trusting God's ability to see us through.

This past week our atmosphere has been affected by the fires in Canada. The tongue is like a blazing fire that can change the atmosphere around us. Corrupt and hostile words pollute the environment, suffocating and hurting others.

Our words have the power to either heal or destroy. They can break hearts, cripple spirits, and damage reputations. Our speech holds tremendous influence.

Even if they may not lead to global conflicts like wars, they can still cause harm on a personal level.

Can you go 24 hours without saying anything unkind about someone else? That's a challenge for us to consider. Our words should not betray our new nature in Christ. Let's remember Peter's denial of Jesus, where his cursing and swearing revealed his attempt to distance himself from Jesus. Our words should reflect our knowledge of God and our relationship with Him.

Edifying Words

In addition to renouncing harmful language, God calls us to use pure, helpful, and pleasing speech. Our words should edify and be appropriate and gracious. We must exercise discipline in speaking words that build up, encourage, and uplift others. Even if correction is needed, you can do it constructively.

Do your words build others up or tear them down? Do they convey goodness and helpfulness? Let's strive to speak life and choose words that bring grace to those who hear. May our speech be characterized by edification, appropriateness, and graciousness. When people see us coming, may they feel happy and uplifted.

Appropriate words

Additionally, everything we say should be appropriate for the situation. Not every word has to be profoundly significant or quotable. People don't need to follow you around with a notebook to gather your wisdom every 24 seconds. But our words should always align with the scriptures and contribute constructively to others. When people hear what you're saying, it should inspire them to reach new heights.

Some people like Charles speak less often but say something of great value. Charles was a board member who rarely spoke during meetings. We would talk, cackle, and communicate endlessly, but Charles would remain quiet. And when we were about to adjourn, Charles would speak a few sentences that brilliantly summed up the entire discussion. His words were valuable and could have saved us so much time if he had spoken earlier. Charles knew how to make every word count.

Proverbs 25:11 says, 'A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.' It's a treasure to speak words that are timely and appropriate. Proverbs 15:23 also highlights the goodness of having the right words at the right time.

A man has joy by the answer of his mouth,
And a word spoken in due season, how good it is!

It's a mark of wisdom to know when and how to speak the right thing to the right person or, sometimes, to say nothing at all.

Sometimes, we miss one of these aspects – saying the right thing but in the wrong way or to the wrong person or saying the right thing at the wrong time. To converse effectively, we must aim for the right thing, right way, right time, right person. There's nothing wrong with having nothing to say unless you insist on saying something meaningless. It takes wisdom to recognize when we have nothing of value to contribute and keep quiet.

Albert Einstein once attended a dinner where he was asked to speak. He got up and said, 'Ladies and gentlemen, I am very sorry, but I have nothing to say.' After a brief pause, he added, 'But in case I do have something to say, I'll come back.' Six months later, he sent a message saying he had something to say and made his speech at another dinner. Einstein's honesty and self-awareness were commendable.

Gracious Words

Thirdly, speaking in a way that brings grace to those who hear us is essential. This means that as mature Christians, we not only speak the truth, but we also express it with love. It's worth noting that even if something is true, we don't always have to say it immediately. Sometimes, it's better to wait for the right moment to communicate the truth. This idea aligns with what I mentioned earlier: we are saved by grace and continue to be sustained by it. Therefore, our way of living and speaking should reflect this grace.

Consider this: Jesus always demonstrated graciousness in his words and actions. So, when we are about to speak, we should pause and ask ourselves if what we are about to say aligns with how Jesus would have spoken. Can we imagine

Jesus saying the things that just came out of our mouths? Would he think negatively about others in the same way we do? As followers of Jesus, we claim that he lives within us, and we strive to become more like him daily.

Have you ever wondered what would happen if Jesus read a script of everything you said yesterday and acted it out today? Would his words and actions align with what you said? In the book of Isaiah, there is a description of the beautiful way in which Christ speaks. It says, "The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary" (Isaiah 50:4). These words were spoken about the Messiah, emphasizing the importance of speaking timely and comforting words to those who are tired and burdened.

There is a vast world out there full of weary individuals. Many people can talk, but only a few truly know how to speak. Think about that distinction. I desire to have the ability to speak like the Lord, providing words of encouragement and comfort precisely when someone needs them the most.

When encountering someone who is beaten down and emotionally bruised, I want to know what to say at that moment. So, I pray to the Father, asking Him to teach, help, and sensitize me to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I want the words that come out of my mouth to be like refreshing rain on dry soil, making a positive difference in their lives. I desire my words to bring healing, hope, and restoration to the weary soul.

In one instance, Luke recorded people's responses to the words of Jesus in Luke 4:22. He writes, "So all bore witness to him."

Take a moment to consider what captivated people about Jesus. They marveled at the gracious words that came out of his mouth. Everything he said was filled with grace, not coated in sugar. It's interesting to note that in the same passage, Jesus delivered a powerful message on the judgment of God and the House of Israel. Yet, the people were still edified because even in that message, grace was present.

Now, let's think about the Church today. If you were to ask people in the world about their perception of the Church, would they describe its words as gracious? Do the words spoken by the Church reflect kindness, helpfulness, and edification? Of course, we preach the gospel and stand firm in our convictions, upholding a standard. But are our words accompanied by grace?

Jesus, in his fiery messages, would still have a smile on his face. You could see his love and care for the people. Sometimes, we need to discipline and correct our children out of love, but our words should always lift them up, not beat them down when they're already low. Our words should minister grace and draw people closer to Christ.

As Christians, our speech should always be filled with grace and seasoned with salt, as mentioned in Colossians 4:6.

Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

We should know how to respond to each person with grace and wisdom. In a world that often opposes Christ, people are observing us, listening to us, and seeking answers from us. Our words should be a preservative, retarding the moral and spiritual decay around us.

The gracious words we speak and the glorious gospel we preach can create a thirst for God in others. Just like eating saltines can make one crave water, our words should leave souls thirsting for the refreshing presence of God. Our witness should create a longing in others to know Him more.

We should consider our words as sacrifices offered to God, as mentioned in Leviticus 2:13.

And every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt.

We should consider our words spiritual sacrifices, just as we offer praise and worship. Adding salt to the sacrifice of our words ensures that they are pure and properly seasoned.

Using Jesus' Words

Let's keep in mind that our words are offerings to God. We should seek God's guidance and ask Him to guard our lips so that we respond, not from our old nature, but with the words Jesus wants to speak through us. Perhaps, we should talk less and allow Jesus to speak through us more.

Sometimes it's best to pause and let Jesus speak through you lovingly and kindly. Allow Him to say what He wants to say. I recall a story about a pastor who left a hospital after visiting a patient. He noticed a woman sitting by the door, crying. The Lord prompted him to go back to her and say something. This is the heart of God, the way Jesus operates. When we encounter people in distress, Jesus wants to speak to them. Isn't that wonderful? So, the pastor returned and said, "Excuse me, I just felt like I needed to stop and say something. Can I pray with you?" He prayed for the woman and offered words that he believed came from the heart of God, not his own thoughts. This story illustrates how Jesus cannot simply pass by hurting, weary, and broken people without taking action. He provides comfort, care, and healing.

We encounter fellow hikers of life everywhere, at work, during daily routines, at the grocery store, and beyond. We are all hikers on this journey. Thankfully, one day we will take our final step and find ourselves in heaven, which is far better than any earthly destination. Praise be to God!

In the Christian walk, our words and actions must align. When our character, conduct, and conversation align, this harmony creates a powerful witness. Oh, the unity of a passionate heart for God! The devil will try to set us ablaze, but we don't want to blaze for the enemy. We want to be on fire for the Lord. We desire the heavenly fire to fall upon us, to shine brightly for the Lord, right?