

Speaking Words That Bless

April 24, 2005

James 3:1-18 (NKJV)

My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. [2] For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. [3] Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. [4] Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. [5] Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! [6] And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. [7] For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. [8] But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. [9] With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. [10] Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. [11] Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? [12] Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.

[13] Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. [14] But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. [15] This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. [16] For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. [17] But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. [18] Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Last Wednesday night I announced that I was going to speak on how important it was for us to speak positive words, words that are based on the Word of God, words that bring life and not death. I said that many people are defeated before they even begin because they confess that they can't do the job or that they are dumb or that they are sick or whatever the case may be.

All of that is true and it is important that we speak positive words about ourselves, but when I sat down to write the notes for this sermon, the Lord reminded me that He is not only concerned about what we say about ourselves, but He is very concerned about what we say about our brothers and sisters in the church. As a matter of fact, He changed the direction that I had in mind for this sermon.

In our lists of “sinful things”, we usually list things such as lying, stealing, drinking, smoking, adultery, pornography, homosexuality, etc. Control of the tongue usually doesn’t even make the list. But I have discovered that on God’s list it is at the very top.

James says.....

James 3:2 (NKJV)

For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

James 1:26 (NKJV)

If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

This is not something that we as Christians can ignore. This is something that has eternal consequences.

The Bible makes it clear that all of us have a sinful nature and we all commit sin. That is not an excuse for our behavior, but it is a fact that all of us sin from time to time.

Paul said.....

Romans 3:10 (NKJV)

As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;

Romans 3:23 (NKJV)

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

John said.....

1 John 1:8 (NKJV)

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Solomon said.....

Eccles. 7:20 (NKJV)

For there is not a just man on earth who does good
And does not sin.

The problem we have is that we see the sin in everybody else but we don't see our own. We condemn in others what we justify in ourselves.

That's why Jesus said.....

Matthew 7:1-5 (NLT)

"Stop judging others, and you will not be judged. [2] For others will treat you as you treat them. Whatever measure you use in judging others, it will be used to measure how you are judged. [3] And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? [4] How can you think of saying, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? [5] Hypocrite! First get rid of the log from your own eye; then perhaps you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.

The message of Christ is, "Don't judge others, judge yourself."

If we would spend more time getting our own lives straightened out in stead of using so much energy trying to straighten everybody else out we would be a lot better off.

Our problem is, we judge ourselves by our **intentions** but we judge others by their **actions**. It ought to be the other way around!

I sincerely believe that the majority of us want to do what is right. We want to live righteously. We want to be good Christians. We want to have a good witness for Christ. Unfortunately, we all slip up. We all miss the mark from time to time. We say something we shouldn't say or we do something we shouldn't do.

When we miss the mark we excuse ourselves by saying that we really didn't intend to do or say what we did. Our intention was to do the right thing.

When we see others missing the mark we accuse them of being hypocrites.

It is so human to accuse others and excuse ourselves. But as Christians we must guard what we say about our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Jesus said.....

Matthew 12:36-37 (NKJV)

But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. [37] For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

The Lord takes this thing very seriously. He's got a tape recorder in heaven that records everything you and I say and one day each of us will be judged by what we have said. That's one reason why we ought to be very careful about what we say. God wants us to build one another up with our words. He doesn't want us to tear each other apart.

The old saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words can never hurt me" is not true. It's a lie! Words can destroy people.

Solomon said.....

Proverbs 15:4 (NLT)

Gentle words bring life and health; a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.

James said.....

James 3:5 (NLT)

So also, the tongue is a small thing, but what enormous damage it can do. A tiny spark can set a great forest on fire.

Malicious words spoken by someone, whether they are true or untrue, can destroy a person's reputation.

You can defend yourself against someone who tries to hit you with their fists but you can't defend yourself against someone's tongue. There is nothing harder to deal with than gossip.

Once you say something about someone or repeat something that you heard about someone it is out of your control. You may wish that you had not said it but once it is said you can't unsay it. It will spread like wild fire and once it starts it always gets distorted.

Listen to me. Churches are hurt from the inside far more than they are from the outside. You may not realize it but when you criticize your brothers and sisters you are being used by Satan.

Revelation 12:10 calls Satan the "Accuser of the brethren". It says he accuses us before God day and night. You and I need to leave that job to him and not allow him to use us to do his dirty work.

God has given us the job of encouraging each other.

Paul said....

Ephes. 4:29-32 (NLT)

Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

[30] And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he is the one who has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

[31] Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of malicious behavior. [32] Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

Hebrews 10:24-25 (GW)

We must also consider how to encourage each other to show love and to do good things. [25] We should not stop gathering together with other believers, as some of you are doing. Instead, we must continue to encourage each other even more as we see the day of the Lord coming.

Did you get that? The Bible says we **must encourage each other**. It says don't stop coming to church. Some people get their feeling hurt and stop coming to church. That's exactly what Satan wants them to do. If he can get you to stop coming to church he has got you right where he wants you.

So rather than being the person who causes hurt feelings you need to purpose in your heart that you will be the one who will encourage those who have allowed themselves to be hurt.

Proverbs 18:21 (NKJV)

Death and life are in the power of the tongue,
And those who love it will eat its fruit.

The tongue can bless or curse. As Christians we must purpose in our hearts to speak only words that bless.

That is true in the church and it is also true in the home.

Why is it that you are critical of your wife or your husband or your children?

Why do you say things about them or to them that hurt them?

If you constantly criticize your children you will break their spirit.

Proverbs 15:4 (Msg)

Kind words heal and help;
cutting words wound and maim.

If all you do is tell your children how worthless they are and how lazy they are and what a problem they are, you are doing a lot of harm. How can you expect them to have any kind of self-esteem if you are always putting them down?

Your words are affecting your children's future whether you realize it or not.

Yes, you must discipline your children when they disobey you and lovingly correct them when they make wrong choices. But you must not constantly criticize them.

If you continually speak words that discourage and dishearten them, before long you will destroy their self-image. And you will open the door for Satan to bring all kinds of insecurity and inferiority into your child's life.

Millions of adults are suffering as a result of the negative words their parents spoke over them as children.

When you constantly speak negative words over your children, you are cursing their future.

God has given you the responsibility as the spiritual authority over your child to make sure that he feels loved and accepted and approved.

Remember, you have the power to either bless or curse your children. You do it with the words you speak over them.

I make it a point to tell my wife and my children and my grandchildren and my daughter-in-law and my sons-in-law how much they mean to me. I tell them that they are special. I tell them how much I love them. I tell them how proud I am of them.

If they play a baseball game or a basketball game I tell them what a great job they did. If they drop the ball or strike out or miss the basket I tell them that they played hard and that they will do better the next time.

If they play in a band concert or sing in a choir concert I'm there to hear them and to encourage them.

I can't remember any concert or ball game or program that our kids were involved in that Janet and I did not attend. And we still attend as many of the programs that our kids and grand-kids are in that we possibly can.

I missed Stacy's choir contest this year because we were in New Orleans but Janet and I are usually there for all the contests and the concerts. And we always hang around to tell Stacy that we enjoyed it and that it was great.

When my son or my daughters sing in church I tell them what a great job they did. When my grandkids sing or perform on a program I tell them how great they did.

They need to know that I love them. They need to know that they are special to me. I want them to know that I am their friend. I want them to know that they are smart. They are intelligent. They are talented. There is nothing that they can't do. God has a wonderful plan for their lives. He wants them to prosper. He wants them to succeed. I want them to prosper and succeed.

What are you passing on to your children and grandchildren?

It's not enough to think it; you must say it. A blessing is not a blessing until it is spoken. Your children need to hear you say to them words such as, "I love you. I believe in you. I think you're great. There's nobody else like you. You are very special. They need to hear your approval. They need to feel your love. They need your blessing.

And by the way, that is equally true of your husband or your wife.

If you are always finding fault in you wife or always finding fault in your husband and always putting them down you will reap big problems in your marriage.

If you want to see God do wonders in your marriage, start praising your spouse.

Wife, brag on your husband. Tell him how much you love him. Tell him how special he is. Tell he how much you appreciate him.

Husband, brag on your wife. Bless her with your words. Tell her that you love her. Tell her how beautiful she is. Tell her how special she is.

She needs to hear it again and again. Every single day you need to tell each other, "I love you. I appreciate you. You're the best thing that ever happened to me."

If you will do that your relationship will immensely improve!

Give Invitation!