

This year we are celebrating that Jesus is the light of the world. He has called us out of darkness, filled us with life and light, and now we are the light of the world as well. We are honored to shine his light into the world and to shine our light on Jesus the bread of life and light. A few weeks ago, we looked at Matthew 5:14-16 and said that their two primary ways we shine bright in the world.

**1) Speak Light** Let your light shine verbally. **And 2) Demonstrate Light** Shine through our actions and deeds. On that day when we talked about speaking light, we were mainly referring to sharing the good news of Jesus with others, which is of utmost importance. But now, for the next few weeks, we want to talk about additional ways to Speak Light into the world of darkness surrounding us.

### The Children of Light Should Speak Light

I think one of the best ways to shine the light of Jesus is with our words, what we say as well as do. We should be speaking light and life in stark contrast to the world that's speaking death and darkness. After all, isn't that what you would expect children of the light to do, to speak light and life.

**Ephesians 5:8-10 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord.**

### Our Tongue Can Speak Light and Life or Death and Darkness

Words can hurt and words can build up. "Words are powerful!" (Say, "My Words are powerful.")

There is the lying tongue (Psalm 5:9; Psalm 109:2; Proverbs 6:17), a deceitful tongue (Psalm 120:2), a flattering, boastful, and proud tongue (Psalm 12:3; 73:9), a perverted tongue (Proverbs 10:31b; 17:20), a destructive tongue (Proverbs 17:4), a mischievous and evil tongue (Psalm 10:7), a sly (backbiting) tongue (Proverbs 25:23).

These all bring darkness. But our tongue can also bring light.

- **Proverbs 12:18 The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.**
- **Proverbs 15:4 The tongue that heals is a tree of life, but a devious tongue breaks the spirit.**

Words can be like a poisonous blow dart gun. Chances are many of you, if you look back over your life, can find times when you heard some crushing words, or you were pierced with someone's hurtful words.

**Casual Comments:** "What did you do to your hair?" "You better marry someone who can take care of you." "Now, why aren't you married yet?" "Still stuck in that one horse town, I see." "Keep your day job!"

**Pointed Comments:** "I found someone else, I never loved you anyway!" "I hate you; you're such a disappointment to me! I wish I never had you!" "Why can't you be more like your brother or your sister?" "I'm leaving you, you're nothing to me!" "You're pathetic!" Words that crushed your spirit.

### Life-Giving Words:

"I believe in you!" "You are so special!" "I'm like proud of you; you are the best of the best!" "I can't tell you how much I love you! I would marry you all over again!" "You are my dream husband!" "You are my dream wife!" "You knocked it out of the park today!" "You are so gifted!" "You are the answer to my prayer!"

Life-giving words.

**Proverbs 12:25 Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up.**

## **The Fruit of Our Mouth Fills Us and Others With Life or Death**

**Proverbs 18:20-21 From the fruit of their mouth a person's stomach is filled; with the harvest of their lips they are satisfied.**

**21 The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.**

Words are powerful! When God created the world, He spoke it into being. Words can create or words can destroy. Words can heal or words can hurt. Words can be life giving, or words can be life taking. Words can bring death and darkness or speak life and light. Let's speak light!

So, what's the problem. Speaking light sounds easy enough, right? I get it, Pastor Scott, *"Let's use our words carefully, watch our mouths, and control our tongues."* That shouldn't be hard to do, should it?

### **Controlling Our Tongue**

**James 3:2 We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.** There are three things James compares our tongue to.

**The Bit - James 3:3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal.** The tongue controls and drives our lives like a bit does a strong steed.

**The Rudder - James 3:4 Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go.**

The small rudder of a ship turns a large ship and drive its direction just like our tongue can turn, drive, and control our lives as well.

How many times have you ever said something that you wish you had not said it, because your words turned or changed the whole situation or environment?

- Your tongue can make things go bad in a hurry.
- On the other hand, your tongues can speak words that breathe life into a situation.

**A Fire - James 3:5-6 Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.**

**6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.**

(An uncontrolled tongue is a hellish thing.)

**Without Jesus, We Will Never Tame Our Tongues - James 3:7-8 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, 8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.** The tongue is hard to tame, but it must be tamed or else it can literally ruin somebody's life and the generations that follow.

### **An Untamed Tongue May Be the Way of the World, But For Children of Light This is a Big Problem.**

**James 3:9-12 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness.**

**10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.**

**11 Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? 12 My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.**

### **Speak Light or Our Religion May Be in Vain**

**James 1:26 Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.**

True religion is not having a loose tongue that says whatever comes to one's mind. A person who can't control his tongue deceives his own heart. This person's acts of religion are useless until they get their tongue under control.

*The one sin that strips the church of power, and the power of God from above, the power of her testimony around the world and within the community is the sin of an uncontrolled tongue.<sup>1</sup>*

### **Speak Light Because Our Words Showcase Our Heart**

**Luke 6:45** 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.

**Matthew 12:33-35** “Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. 34 You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? **For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.**

**35** A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him

### **Speak Light Because We Will Be Held Accountable for Our Words**

**Matthew 12:36-37** But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. 37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” (Not words as we mount a defense in heaven, our words now.)

### **Speaking Light Shows Our Maturity**

**Matthew 5:37** All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

**Matthew 5:44-45** But I tell you, love your enemies and pray (using your words) for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. (Also see Rom. 12:14)

### **Call Out the Guards!**

#### **1. Guard Your Heart.**

You can't control what others say, but you can control what you believe. Keep the poison darts of negative words, words of death and darkness, out of your heart! We can't control what someone says to us or about us, but we can control what we meditate on and what we allow into our hearts.

**Proverbs 4:20-23** My son, pay attention to what I say; turn your ear to my words.

**21** Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart;

**22** for they are life to those who find them and health to one's whole body.

**23** Above all else, **guard your heart**, for everything you do flows from it.

Guard your heart against any words of darkness, don't let them in! Someone says something about you; guard your heart against believing anything that is not true or doesn't match what Jesus says about you.

**EX:** Pastor Scott was told... “I don't think you are called into the ministry.”

“It's probably a good thing that you are keeping your job at Plant Vogtle.”

You are not who other people say you are, “You are who God says that you are!” Don't listen to the words of darkness spoken to you! Only listen to the words of light!

Why guard your heart? “**guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.**” **Proverbs 4:23**  
Remember Jesus said, “**For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of**”. **Matthew 12:34**

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Johnny M. Hunt, The Book of James, (Woodstock GA, 3H Publishers, 2003), p.69

**NEXT STEP: This week I will guard my heart against words of darkness.**

**2. Guard Your Mouth.**

**Psalms 141:3 Set a guard over my mouth, LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips.**

Lord, I'm definitely going to need some help on this one so set a guard over my mouth. Holy Spirit you have my full permission and it's your right to convict me of my words that are not pleasing to you.

**NEXT STEP: This week I will pray Psalms 141:3 and watch my mouth!**

**NEXT WEEK**

- **SPEAK LIFE-GIVING WORDS TO OTHERS EVERY CHANCE YOU GET.**
- **SPEAK LIFE-GIVING WORDS TO YOURSELF AND TO YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES.**