

Diseases of the Tongue (Part 1)



Does Your Tongue Need Healing? (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we continue with our theme which challenges every one of us to a fresh evaluation of our spiritual condition, myself included. The theme: Does Your Tongue Need Healing?

In my previous talks this week I've confronted you (and also myself) with some very searching passages of Scripture on this theme. For instance, Matthew 12:34:

> "Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks."

What comes out of the mouth indicates the condition of the heart.

And then, James 1:26:

> "If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless." (NIV)

The misuse of the tongue renders all other religious practices valueless; they're not acceptable while the tongue is being misused.

We also looked at a number of different pictures that James uses to illustrate the function of the tongue in our lives. We looked particularly at the following four pictures: first, the bit in the horse's mouth; second, the rudder in the ship; third, the spark that starts a forest fire—a fire that originates in hell; and fourth, a source of poison that poisons our whole life stream. The essence of these illustrations in each case is the same. The tongue is something small in itself but capable of causing incalculable harm and harm that can never be undone. Once that forest has been burned up there is no way ever to put that forest back again. And I want you to know that there are many, many churches and religious groups where one tongue set a spark that burned up the whole thing and it could never be restored.

Today I'm going to diagnose for you certain specific diseases that affect our tongues. I'm going to speak today about three

diseases.

Number one, can you guess what it's going to be? Excessive talking, and that's a disease which is so common that people take it for normal, when it isn't. Proverbs 10:19:

> "When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise." (NIV)

Another version says:

> "When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable." (NASB)

In other words, if you say too much, you're bound to say something wrong. There's no alternative.

We're also warned in the Bible not to use too many words toward God Himself and I think this is a warning that most of us really need to hear. It's found in Ecclesiastes, chapter 5, verses 1 through 3:

> "Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong. [The sacrifice of fools, as we'll see in a moment, is saying a lot of words to God that we don't really mean. The next verse says:] Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few." (NIV)

Oh, what sound advice that is. Somebody said to me once, "Remember, it's just as much a sin to sing a lie as it is to tell a lie. I've heard people sing hymns of total consecration and surrender to God, "All To Jesus I Surrender." When the offertory plate comes around, they drop in a quarter. The two actions are not consistent. If you're not going to give your life to God, don't tell Him that you're surrendering all, because God is going to hold you to account for the words you speak in His presence. I'm going to read those words again. "Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few."

A little further on in the same chapter the Scripture indicates that the angel records what we say when we're speaking or praying or worshiping. And one day we're going to be confronted by that angel and the record of what we've said. And then the Bible says it will be too late then to say, "I didn't really mean it," because we'll be held accountable for that which we've said in church—the hymns we've sung, the prayers we've prayed, the sermons we've preached—one day they're all going to be held up before us and we're going to have to answer for them if we've been insincere and have not really lived according to the things that we've said.

And then, the next verse of Ecclesiastes, chapter 5, verse 3 says this:

> "As a dream comes when there are many cares, so the speech of a fool when there are many words." (NIV)

So to use too many words is the signature mark of a fool. The King James Version of that is even more blunt. Ecclesiastes 5:3 in the King James Version:

> "For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words." (KJV)

In other words, when you hear a person continually talking, you don't need any other evidence, that person is a fool. "A fool's voice is known by a multitude of words." What is the root problem? I believe it's restlessness. Compare what James says in James 3:8:

> "No man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison." (NIV)

People who are always talking are restless people. And our contemporary culture is just filled with restless people. Have you ever been with somebody who made your head swim just by all the words that came out of his mouth, or it could be her mouth. What's the root problem? Restlessness. Excessive talking is a sure indication of someone whose heart is not at rest.

Disease number two: idle or careless words

Matthew 12:36 Jesus says this:

> "But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken." (NIV)

See, every word we've spoken we're going to have to answer to one day. And words that we've said that were idle—that were insincere, that we didn't really mean, that we weren't prepared to stand behind, that weren't worked out in our lives—we're going to have to answer for them.

In the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew, chapter 5, verse 37, Jesus says this:

> "Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No;' anything beyond this comes from the evil one." (NIV)

That's an astonishing statement. If we say more than we mean, then that exaggeration, that unnecessary emphasis, that overdoing in our speech, comes from the evil one. Let me sum it up in just one simple word of advice. If you don't mean it, don't say it. If you will follow that one rule, I promise you, it will change your whole life. You'll be a different person. If you would keep that rule for one year from today, I promise you, a year from now, you will be a different person and a much better person.

The third disease - gossip

Leviticus 19, verse 16, says this:

> "Do not go about spreading slander among your people..." (NIV)

Going about spreading slander, idle, untrue, exaggerated, malicious talk—that's a gossip. Now, the very title of Satan in the New Testament—the word that in English is rendered devil, in Greek, diabilos—means a slanderer. That's its root meaning. So the main description of Satan in the Bible is a slanderer. And I have to say this, I hope it won't hurt you—if you go around as a gossip, telling tales, you are actually doing the devil's work for him. You are a representative of Satan. But not only must we be careful not to give out gossip, we also have a responsibility not to receive gossip. Proverbs 18:8:

> "The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost part." (NIV)

How true that is of human nature. When we hear something about someone that's bad, that shows them up in a bad light, there's something in the human heart that kind of rejoices. Those words of a gossip are like choice morsels. We swallow them down. We're not very careful. Be careful, when one of those choice morsels of gossip is placed in front of you, that you don't swallow it because, I want to warn you, they're poisoned. They taste sweet but they poison us. And is we receive them into our hearts, our lives will become poisoned by those morsels of gossip.

Proverbs 20:19:

> "A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much." (NIV)

You see how closely these various diseases are related. We've spoken already about the disease of excessive talking. You see, if you listen to a gossip, you become an accessory after the fact, just in the same way as if you receive somebody who's stolen something and you accept those stolen goods from them, then in legal terms you become an accessory after the fact. So, if you entertain a gossip, listen to their words and receive them, you become an accessory to the gossip.

Listen to what God says in Psalm 15, verses 1 through 3:

> "O Lord, who may abide in Thy tent? Who may dwell on Thy holy hill? He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart. He does not slander with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend." (NASB)

There are various requirements for access to God's presence, to dwell on His holy hill. We must walk with integrity. We must work righteousness. We must speak the truth in His heart.

Then there are three things we must not do. We must not slander with our tongue. We must not do evil to our neighbor, and we must not take up a reproach or receive a reproach against our friend. See, it's not enough that we do not slander; we must not receive the slanderer. We must not take up a reproach against someone whom we know. We mustn't eat those choice morsels of the gossip because they're poison and many relationships are poisoned by eating those choice morsels of the gossip.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll continue with this theme: Does Your Tongue Need Healing?

I'll be diagnosing some more diseases that affect our tongues.

Radio Program

Transcript: TS-R085-104-ENG
Last Updated: 13 Apr 2023
Website: derekprince.com

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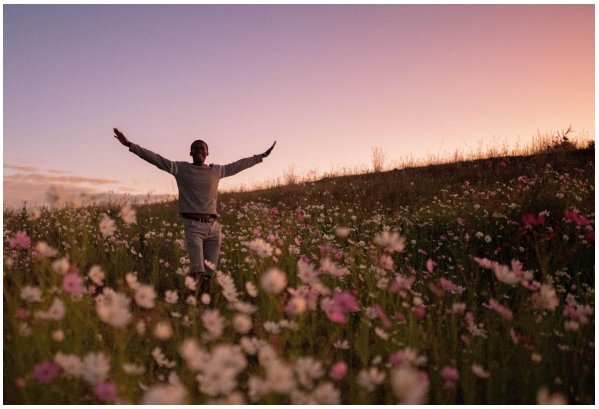

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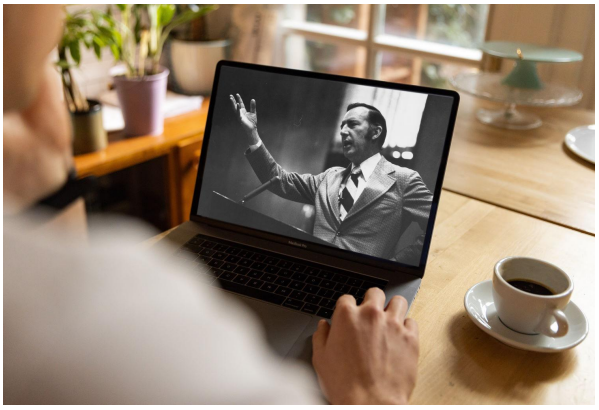

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