

Words Determine Destiny



Does Your Tongue Need Healing? (Part 6)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you Keys to Successful Living which God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry.

This week I'll be continuing with the theme that I commenced last week: Does Your Tongue Need Healing?

But first, let me say thank you to those of you who've been writing to me. Before I finish this talk, we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you. So please take time to write—even if it's only a brief personal note.

Now back to our theme: Does Your Tongue Need Healing?

In my talks last week I shared with you a number of different pictures that the Bible uses to illustrate the function of the tongue in our lives. There were four particular pictures that I referred to. First, the bit in the horse's mouth; second, the rudder in the ship; third, a spark that starts a forest fire, and the fire for that spark originates in hell; and fourth, a source of poison that corrupts the whole life stream.

The essence of all those illustrations is the same: The tongue is something small in itself, but capable of causing incalculable harm, and harm that can never be undone.

None of these illustrations shows the tremendous potential of the tongue—for good or for evil—better than that of the rudder in the ship. You see, the rudder is just visually a small part of the ship and it's down below the surface, and you don't see it when you look at the ship sailing on the surface of the water, and yet that small part that's not visible to the normal eye determines the direction of the ship. If the rudder is used aright, the ship will make it safely to its destined harbor. But if the rudder is misused, almost certainly the ship will suffer shipwreck. So the rudder determines the course and the destiny of the ship. And the Bible says the tongue is like that in our body. It's apparently small. When we look at the person from the outward appearance we don't even see their tongue normally and yet that small, unnoticed member is just like the rudder in the ship. Its use determines the

course of the person's life. It determines their destiny.

Today we're going to look at an example from the history of Israel in the old Testament that drives home this lesson with inescapable clarity—the lesson that men determine their own destiny by the way they use their tongues.

The incident we're going to look at is found in the Book of Numbers, chapter 13 and 14. Briefly I'll fill in the background.

Israel were in the wilderness. They'd come out of Egypt. They were on their way to the Promised Land, and God arranged with Moses to send twelve men ahead of them into the Promised Land as spies to spy out the land, to find out its general character, the nature of the inhabitants, the kind of cities, the kind of fruit, and to bring back a report. So, one leader was chosen from each of the twelve tribes to go ahead into the land. They spent forty days walking to and fro through the land and then they came back with their report. And this report that they brought back is given to us in Numbers, chapter 13, verses 26 through 28.

> "And they [that is these twelve spies] went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land. And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. [And the fruit was so heavy that it took two men to carry one bunch of grapes on a staff between them. But, listen to what they say next:] Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak [that's the giants] there." (KJV)

When God gives you a promise, are you going to accept the promise at its face value, or are you going to accept it and then say, "Nevertheless?" That was a fatal word that they used "nevertheless." Well, the people were disturbed and distressed, but two of the spies, Caleb and Joshua, refused to go along with this negative attitude. And so, in Numbers 13, verses 30 and 31, we read this:

> "Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we." (KJV)

I want you to notice the words that were used. Caleb said, "We are well able to overcome it." The other ten spies said, "We be not able." One set of spies said the positive, "We are able." The other said the opposite, "We are not able." And as you follow the story, you'll see that each group got exactly what they said. Each group settled their destiny by what they said. God was so angry with the spies and the people that he wanted to destroy them, but Moses interceded for them and God said He would spare them. Then we go on in Numbers 14, verses 20 through 24:

> "The Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word: [that He said to Moses] But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. [God said, 'I've got a program and that program is going to work out. You can either get in with my program and by faith and right confession be associated with it, or you can miss it, but my program is going to go through.] All the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it. But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.'" (KJV)

Caleb, by his positive confession, settled his destiny for the positive. And then the Lord went on speaking to Moses, verses 26 through 32:

> "The Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel which they murmur against me. Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: [Notice those words, 'As you have spoken in my ears, so will I do to you.' 'You've settled what I will do to you,' God says, 'by the words that you've spoken.'] Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me. Doubtless ye shall not come into the land,

> concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness." (KJV)

They settled their destiny by their words. And then we read a little further:

> "The men, which Moses sent to search the Land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land, Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the Lord. [They settled their own death. They spoke words of death and death was the outcome.] But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of the men that went to search the land, lived still. [because they spoke positive words.]" (KJV)

Death and life are in the power of the tongue. How more clearly could that be illustrated. The men that spoke negatively settled for death. The men that spoke positively received life. They settled their own destiny by what they spoke. The ones that said, "We are not able," were not able. The ones that said, "We are able," were able.

We've looked at the experience of Israel entering the Promised Land in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, our experience as Christians is directly compared to that of Israel in the Old Testament and we are warned that the same lessons apply to us. For example, in Hebrews, chapter 4, verses 1 and 2, the writer says this:

> "Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. [The same promise that God gave to Israel still stands for us, a promise of entering into the rest of God, but we have to be careful that we do not fall short of it in the same way that they did in the Old Testament.] For we also have the gospel [the Good News] preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard it did not combine it with faith." (NIV)

That was their problem. They heard the message; they heard the promise, but you remember, they added that one fatal word, "Nevertheless." "God said it but, there are giants, there are walled cities, there are problems," and instead of focusing on the promise of God, and boldly confessing their faith in God's promise and God's power, they focused on the negative. They looked at the giants, the walled cities, and they said, "We are not able." Thank God for two men that had the faith and the courage to say, "We are well able."

When you face God's promise and then you look at the situation concerning which the promise was made, what are you going to do with your tongue? Are you going to give assent to the promise of God, identify yourself with the promise of God, say "God said it; I'm able," or are you going to be one of those who say, "Nevertheless, look at all the problems; God said it, but somehow I don't feel able." Remember, that just as those spies settled their destiny with their tongues by the words that they spoke, so you and I who have heard the gospel, likewise, settle our destiny by the words that we speak. The same lesson applies.

Let me close, once again, with those words I've used several times: Death and life are in the power of the tongue. Use it aright; it's life. Use it wrong; it's death. The wrong use of your tongue pronounces your own death sentence.

Well our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow, and for the rest of this week, I'll be explaining the provision God has made for the healing of our tongues.

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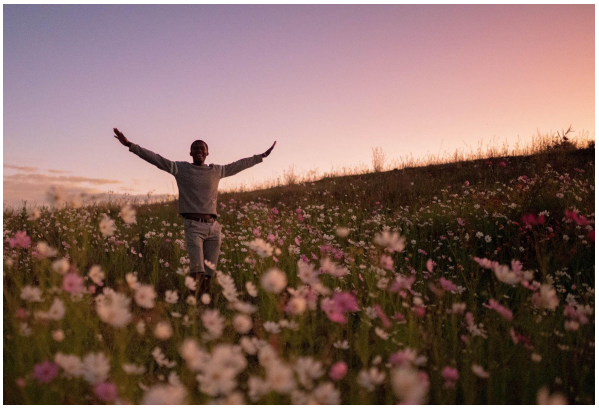

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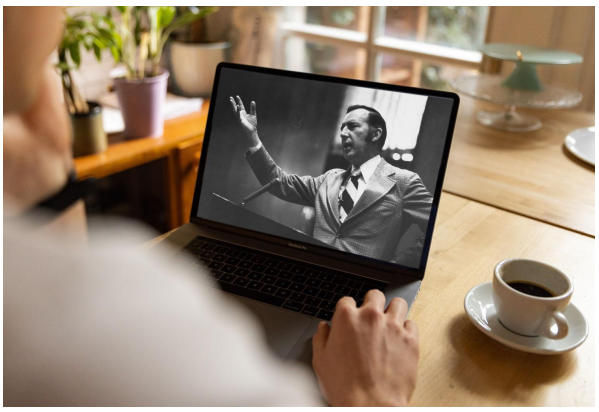

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