



What Kind of Sword Will Your Tongue Be?
Proverbs 18:21 July 23, 2017

I. Introduction:

- A. Words are extremely powerful! Proverbs tells us that the words we speak have “the power of death and life,” they can either tear us down and destroy us or build us up and help us flourish in our lives. And this is true whether they are words that have been spoken to us or by us! Either we are built up or torn down by the words of others, or we build or tear down others by the words we speak.
- B. A good friend of mine tells the story of when he was 10 years old how 2 different things spoken by 2 different people deeply **impacted** him.
 - 1. The good words came from his 5th grade teacher who told him “Michael, I see you doing great things; you have greatness in you!” At that time Mike was chubby and believed he had little to offer especially greatness. But these words came back to him decades later to play a big role in his life!
 - 2. About the same time the hurtful words came from his dad as he overheard him telling his mother over coffee speaking of his weight “I am so ashamed of him, and I do not believe that he will be able to amount to much!”
 - 3. This 2nd message developed within him a deep rooted self-doubt even though he got a football scholarship, was the first one in his family to graduate from college and had a successful career as a teacher, coach, principal. His mind was still harassed with a sense of doubt and helplessness.
 - 4. It was decades later where he finally took his mindset of self-doubt, and at the core he fought it every time it came up with the message of his 5th grade teacher: “I see greatness in you!” and the truths of his new distinctiveness, identity and realities that are his because He is in Christ.
- C. Today’s message is about the reality that every word matters, every word that you speak to others, every word that others speak to you and even every word you speak to yourself and that these words carry the weight of life and death for the soul!

- Turn in your Bibles to

II. Proverbs (on the tongue)

A. Proverbs 18:21 – Read

1. Let me ask my good grammar friends here today “what does ‘it’ used 2 times in the 2nd half of the verse refer to?” Tongue!
2. Many believe that this passage is a warning to those who love to talk. Those who delight in talking need to know you will eat the fruits of what you say!
3. And the top half of the verse tells us what those fruits are – death or life.

B. The whole point of this verse is that every word we speak matters because our tongues are powerful, more so the words we speak are powerful as they can impact another person’s life!

1. We can impact them either for the good or for the bad, either they will be death giving words or life giving words! Either you will adding to people or taking from people with your words, either you will be building up or tearing down!
2. We hold in our mouths the ability to direct another person’s life!

C. And those words can either build one up or tear them down! Listen to some of these other Proverbs!

1. Prv 10:21 – the lips of the righteous feed many
2. Prv 10:31-32 – the mouth of the righteous flows with wisdom; acceptable or perverted
3. Prv 12:18 – either the thrust of a sword into someone’s soul or healing
4. Prv 15:1 – gentle answer turns away wrath, but harsh words stir up anger
5. Prv 15:4 – can be a tree of life or crush the spirit
6. Prv 16:24 – honeycomb to the soul and health to the bones
7. Prv 18:7 – fool’s mouth is his own ruin, and ... snare of his soul
8. Prv 20:15 – more precious than jewels
9. Prv 25:11 – the right thing said at the right time in the right situation is like apples of gold in settings (frame) of silver

D. Let me add 2 New Testament verses that speak to this same issue

1. Turn to James 3:5-10
2. Eph 4:29

III. Life Hack for the tongue

- A. Life Hack #1 – Treat every word you speak as if it matters, because it does matter, it may even be a matter of life and death to someone else’s soul! You hold in your mouth a powerful weapon, a sword, that will either bless people or break people.
- B. Let me just jump start your thinking by telling you some of the kinds of words that bring death to one’s soul and life. The unwholesome words Eph 4 speaks of, the kind of words that are like the piercing of a sword that breaks someone’s soul!
 - 1. False or insincere words or even lies that leads another person to believe something that is not true or to base their life and decisions off things that just are not true!
 - 2. How about gossip or slander behind someone’s back that poisons their reputation and tarnishes the view that other people have of them!
 - 3. How about impure words that pushes people’s imaginations to places that are not healthy for their souls and lights fires in their passions that do not go out easily. It destroys innocence and creates pornography in people’s minds that does not come from pictures but word descriptions!
 - 4. How about mocking words that devalue other people.
 - 5. How about flattery that sets someone up for you to take advantage of in some way.
 - 6. How about unkind words, negative and mean words that just hurt people’s hearts and makes them feel unwelcomed and unloved.
 - 7. How about words that come out of an unforgiving, angry or impatient heart where the tone of our words outweighs the words themselves that works emotional and mental havoc in those who received them.
- C. But on the other hand our words can be healing.
 - 1. True words that people can build their lives off.
 - 2. Words to defend people when they are not there or stop the talk from going any farther.
 - 3. How about pure words that protects people’s minds from porn and their heart from passions!
 - 4. How about genuine sincere words, words that encourage and build people up and keep them from falling under the load this world can bring them.

5. How about kind and loving words that make people feel valued and significant!
 6. How about words that come from a heart that is full of forgiveness and patience that cause people not only to hear your words but allows them to sink deep within.
 7. Finally how about speaking God's words to people, words that are way more powerful and impactful than any words I can come up with, words that are like a double edged sword that pierces as far as the division of the soul and spirit and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart!
 - a) Words that can bring salvation to someone who is lost
 - b) Words that can transform a believer
 - c) Words that can give strength to the weary
 - d) Words that can encourage the depressed
 - e) Words that can give direction to those who just do not know what to do!
 - f) Words that can give hope to the hopeless!
- D. Life Hack #2 – key to changing your words is changing your heart – Read Lk 6:45
1. If your bent is to speak words of life to others, then your need is just to have the Holy Spirit fill and lead you in your speech.
 2. If your bent is to speaks words of death to others or about others, then you need either a new heart, because you do not know Jesus, or if you do know Jesus then you need to open up your inner life for the Holy Spirit to do heart surgery on you, deal with your sin and reorient your heart to bless others!

IV. Application

- A. As you go this week recognize you have a double edged sword in your mouth, one that can break someone else's soul when you speak words of death to them or a sword that can break the hold that Satan, the world or the flesh has on someone when you speak words of life to them!
- B. Memorize – Prv 18:21 and Eph 4:29
- C. Pray daily for an opportunity to be a sword for the Lord
- D. Like the wise man ponder what you are going to say! Read Prv 16:23!
- E. Like we learned in Eph 4:29 speak words according to the need of that very moment

- F. Treat every word you speak as if it matters, because it does matter; it may even be a matter of life and death to someone else's soul!
- G. Clean up the blood your words have spilled!