

**Words Matter:**  
**The Problem with Our Tongues is Not Our Tongues**  
**Luke 6:43-49**

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**Text Introduction:** We are focused this month on our words. I hope that by now you have been convinced and convicted that our words matter. We have looked at the power of our words in a general sense. James was our teacher. James used some word pictures to help us to understand the power of our words. He used the pictures of a bit in a horse's mouth and a ship's rudder to talk about the control of our tongues. He used the pictures of forest fires and the human body to describe how small things often lead to out of control disasters. James then used the pictures of springs and trees to attest to the truth that contradictions should not proceed from the mouth of the believer.

Then, we talked about some Proverbs about our words—God's general and practical word about our words.

Last week, we drilled down a little bit more on this subject to isolate a very specific application. We considered a Gospel perspective about our words. We said that our words matter in preparing people to hear the Gospel, and our words matter in presenting the Gospel. In short, we do not want our words whether in everyday conversation or intentional Gospel conversation to be that which prevents someone from responding to the Gospel.

Today, I want us to look at one more text—this week from Luke.

**Text:** <sup>43</sup> "A good tree doesn't produce bad fruit; on the other hand, a bad tree doesn't produce good fruit. <sup>44</sup> For each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs aren't gathered from thornbushes, or grapes picked from a bramble bush. <sup>45</sup> A good man produces good out of the good storeroom of his heart. An evil man produces evil out of the evil storeroom, for his mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart.

<sup>46</sup> "Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and don't do the things I say? <sup>47</sup> I will show you what someone is like who comes to Me, hears My words, and acts on them: <sup>48</sup> He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. When the flood came, the river crashed against that house and couldn't shake it, because it was well built. <sup>49</sup> But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The river crashed against it, and immediately it collapsed. And the destruction of that house was great!"

**Introduction:** Supposedly in the town of Hatfield, Massachusetts, there is a grave marker that reads: "Here lies Arabella Young, who on the 21st of May, 1771, began to hold her tongue." We need not have to wait that long. We must not wait that long.

We have considered James' words, the wisdom of Proverbs, and Paul's words about our words. Today, we will examine Jesus' words about our words. The One who was called the Word (John 1: 1) and the Word of Life (1 John 1:1) and the One who speaks words of eternal life surely is our best teacher about our words.

Our text is Luke's version of Matthew's recorded Sermon on the Mount. Certainly in the background of Jesus' teaching are the false religious leaders and Pharisees of Jesus' day. His teaching provides several principles for us to think on as we continue to address the power of our words.

**The tongue usually reveals the overflow of what is in your heart.**

Jesus presented a parable and then gave the principle. We are familiar with the parable. James used something of the same word picture. A tree is going to produce the kind of fruit according to its kind. If we plant a satsuma tree in our backyard, we will not expect to go out and gather apples. So, it is with our words. Jesus said our mouth speaks from the "overflow" of our heart. Ray gave us this proverbial saying two weeks ago. "What is down in the well is going to come up in the bucket."

You might try to excuse your words sometimes by saying something like, "I don't know why I said that." Or "Where did that come from?" Jesus said, "It comes from your heart."

**The tongue occasionally reveals the opposite of what is in your heart.**

I think we get that our tongue usually reveals the overflow of our heart. We might not like to admit that, but we do understand. Then, Jesus shifted as revealed in verse 46. In fact, one could argue that it is almost opposite of the first idea. Whereas it is true that the tongue usually reveals the overflow of what is in our heart, it is also true that sometimes the tongue reveals the opposite of what is in our hearts.

Your lips may say, "Lord, Lord" but your actions do not give evidence that Jesus is Lord.

Consider these additional words from Jesus as recorded by Matthew.

Matthew 15:8—These people honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.

Matthew 7:21—Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord!" will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.

What is the common denominator in these two seemingly contradictory principles? In both cases the real issue is our hearts. This leads us to a third principle. If we learn anything at all, let us learn that the real problem with our tongues is not our tongues. The real problem is our hearts.

So, how do we change our hearts?

**In any case the remedy is not self-control, but Spirit-control.**

We deal with this sin the way we deal with all sin.

Ezekiel 18:31—Throw off all the transgressions you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit.

What? "Make yourselves a new heart." Well, just a bit later, Ezekiel said, (speaking for God)

Ezekiel 36:26—I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."

This is why the Psalmist at his lowest point cried out to the Lord and prayed,

Psalm 51:10—God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Reformation does not work. We need transformation. And Jesus promised transformation. Paul declared transformation.

2 Corinthians 5:17—“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look new things have come.”

But, still you ask why? Do I just sit back and do nothing.

Galatians 5:16—I say then, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

And then,

Galatians 5:22-25--But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith,<sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.<sup>24</sup> Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.<sup>25</sup> Since we live by the Spirit, we must also follow the Spirit.

### **So What?**

Well, that is a lot to take in so let's make this simple and go back to Jesus' parable in Luke 6:43-49. I love this story. The story can be applied to so many different parts of our lives. But, today, let's focus on the three phrases—(1) Comes to Me, (2) Hears My words, (3) And acts on them.

**Come to Jesus**—If you are not in relationship to Jesus, none of this makes sense. If you do not intend for Jesus to be Lord, (if that is not your heart), your words will always be destructive words.

**Hear His Word**—If you want to win in this area or any area, you must fight with God's Word. You must open yourself up to God's Word.

**Act on His Word**—After you hear His Word, then respond to it.

Have you seen the advertisements for Life Lock—the company that deals with identity theft protection. They have a series of ads that make the point that it is not enough to just monitor for identity theft, real identity protection is in fixing the problem. In one such ad, someone who appears to be a dentist is examining the patient. He says, “David, you have one of the worst cavities I have ever seen.” He begins to remove his gloves and walk away. The patient says, “Aren't you going to fix it?” The response is “Oh, no, I'm not a dentist, I'm a dental monitor.”

Let us not just identify the problem. Let's fix the problem—beginning right now. Refuse to tolerate sins of the tongue. Remember that God knows your heart. Recognize that victory is in Christ.