

LET ME SEE YOUR TONGUE

ACTS 5:4

I was thinking the other day about the matter of words - for words are wonderful things. They are as sweet as the bees fresh honey - like the bees, they have terrible stings.

*Couple took a woman on a trip, the guest - talked constantly -
Whisper - whereas, a regular Chester boy. back home unload - The
Guest was informed "Don't say another word - you haven't stopped whole trip" -*

Now my subject carries me back to my boyhood years when I needed the help of a physician for the first time. Half closing my eyes, I can still see this somewhat pompous gentleman enter the room and watch him open his medicine satchel. Fascinated by the narrow glass bottles filled with multi-colored pills that looked like candy - and of course you anticipate that these are very powerful. But how things were shattered when he rudely took his fat thumb and presses down upon your chin, and says in a deep voice - that has a command to it. "Let me see your tongue."

Now I cannot recall all of the doctor's diagnosis, nor the color or the taste of the pills he prescribed. But let me see your tongue still lingers in my memory. And I think it is the gateway for some good thinking tonight. That has to do in the realm of physical ills.

"Talk Show!" People Wag their tongues

3 Min. Phone Conversation 3,000 words -

With all of this in mind, I hope that you will not regard it as a presumption on my part when I ask you let me see your tongue. Is it badly coated - coated with smut. And they show them too often and too easily - even in public, to foul the minds of others.

A little girl asked a man to pick a flower for her - which he did. She looked at it, smelled it, and handed it to the man and said please, put it back.

This, of course, was an impossibility. As the flower cannot be returned to its stem - neither can the spoken word ever be recalled to the lips.

Words may be dangerous. Once they win their way, they are gone forever.

You may be sorry and apologize for what you have said, but the damage is done.

L.B. - "Keep your Mouth closed & your Lid stay out of Trouble."

No wonder the Lord tells us in Prov. 21:23 - "Who so keepth his mouth and his tongue, keepth his soul from troubles." What lamentable troubles are wrought by an unruled tongue. It has wisely been said, a loose tongue gets it's owner into many a tight place.

"Do not use bad language. Say only what is good & helpful to those you are talking to"

In Eph. 4:29 - Let no corrupt communication - that is worthless speech proceed out of your mouth. But that which is good, to the use of edifying, benefiting that it may minister grace, blessings to the hearers. Here we see both the negative and the positive of Christian speech. From the negative standpoint, no worthless speech, should come from our lips. From the positive, the speech should be both a benefit and blessing to our hearers.

Man - at 6 yr old stomachache - 6 yr old - full belly of something in it
"It became stomach is empty, full belly of something in it"
Punch got hard ache - Well - you feel better if had something in it

Now we might ponder, what does God mean by worthless speech? It appears from the Bible. And he tells us what he means.

Most of us think people are funny or peculiar to talk to themselves. And they use their tongue to quote words to themselves. Think of the way that you re-act when you meet someone on the street, or you see someone in an automobile talking to himself.

We are amused at such antics. But when we stop to think of it, we discover that all of us talk to ourselves, at one time, or another. And that what we say is quite important to us.

We live in a world in which we are greatly influenced by the words of others.
" Bitter and hateful words can do harm beyond measure. And words spoken rightly and kindly can do endless good.

Someone has said "a word fitly spoken is like an apple of gold, in a picture of silver." The powerful words of great people in history have gripped men and have wakened. They have also broken the drought of the soul and set life flowing.

Job's friends said, (your words have upheld them who were stumbling.) We are therefore cautioned to be careful, of what we say to others. For words have power to hurt or power to help. Power to kill, or power to make alive.

Now if what we say to each other is important what we say to ourselves is even more important. In fact, that which we say is you.

Now there is a story in the New Testament. This is not our text but I want to illustrate with this by way of introduction. There was a wealthy farmer who was successful, upright, and honorable, in everyway in society. We don't know too much about his background or his family. But we know him by the way he talked to himself. He was fortunate enough to be in the position to reap a bumper crop. In that case, it seemed as if he would have said - God has been good. My workers and fellow laborers have been faithful. I have more than I need - so I'll give to the poor.

Instead, he said, I will pull down my barns and build larger ones. And there

I will store my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years. Take your ease - eat, drink, and be merry. As (he talked to himself) he revealed that he was a moral fool and that he was completely empty of any appreciation for a life of higher values.

There was a woman who talked to herself. Life for her had been hard. She came to the Springtime of life with a shameful disease. She had to forfeit marriage and motherhood. She had some money but spent it all trying to get well. She could have said, I'll give up and die but she didn't.

She reasoned, I am sick but I am not dead. And faith told her that Jesus possessed healing for her. (She said to her self, (if) I only touch his garment, I shall be made well. This is the kind of daring conversation each of us must carry on with ourselves. This is the way to keep hope alive. This is the way to lick our doubts. This is the way to look at your tongue.

Think about the prodigal son. He talked to himself and when he found that he was without friends, money, and dignity - he looked at the sorry surroundings. He thought about the comforts of his home.

He began a (conversation) with himself. Listen. I will arise and go to my father. He continues to talk. He tells about the comforts and the privileges of his home. Soon, he talked himself into the long journey back home. If you really know how to talk with yourself, your prologue soon turns into a dialogue with the one who is the way, the truth, and the life.

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Note our text which tells us that Ananias used his tongue when he came to the disciples and he brought the price of a piece of property that he had sold - but he kept back some of it. And Ananias had conceived this thing in his heart - he had the example of Barnabas, who had sold land, and who had brought the proceeds to the disciples. He and his wife conspired together to sell their land, and to give part of it to the Lord's work. And they pretended to give it all.

But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost. And to keep back part of the price of the land. While it remained, was it not in thine power. And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power. Why has thou conceived this thing in thine heart. Thou hast not lied unto men but unto God. Acts 5:3-4.

Now the result was Ananias and Sapphira died. And great fear came upon the church. And the church learned on that occasion that it was possible for a child of God, who should be growing into the fullness of Christ, to allow Satan to fill his heart. The church of Christ and the fullness of Christ, to allow Satan to fill his heart, in the Christian is the ideal. And Satan is directly responsible for all the failings in the church of Christ, and all that is lacking in the life of the individual Christian. God works by addition and multiplication. And the Lord added unto the church daily such as should be saved. The Devil specializes in divisions, subtractions, and disruptions, and unity in the church. He wants division and discord. When a man finds Christ, the Devil suffers a major set-back of knowing full well that he can never regain the one that is lost to Christ if he cannot get him back - then he wants to see that he will not mature. And the serpent deceives a man. As when Christ walked upon this earth, he had conflicts with Satan.

Ananias sought to rob God. He lied to the Holy Spirit and used his tongue

knowing full well that their action, if discovered, might destroy the fellowship of the early church. And bring discord and envy, and jealousy. The result was that it didn't divide the church but it brought about his own death. Now, in this modern age, sin will take basically the same course. And always be attributed to all of the evil of the Devil. And it is tragically evident that the Devil worked through Ananias and make various suggestions. And they were interested.

They probably thought that giving everything to the disciple was rather extreme and unbusinesslike. But they wanted to give an impression and the Devil insinuated that the world would endorse them. And so it reminds us that we had better be careful about our tongues. Ananias walked down to the front of the altar and laid his money down and he thought that Peter was going to say, God bless you brother Ananias. But instead the preacher turned on him, with blazing eyes - why have you allowed Satan to fill your heart and to cause you to lie to the Holy Spirit. And to keep back part of the price of the land. Ananias was struck dumb. He could not say a word. Now how did Peter know what he had done. He thought that all he had to do was to fool a mere man. But here was a preacher reading his heart. The answer was the Holy Spirit was giving Peter the insight. Today men think if they can only fool other men, everything is alright. So they hide their sin from man and forget that God with his all seeing eye looks upon everything whether it is done in the blackness of midnight, or whether it is done in the brightness of mid-day. You cannot use your tongue to lie, to steal, to cheat God without Heaven calling you into account. "Be sure, your sin will find you out." Num. 32:23. "The mills of God grind slowly but they grind exceedingly small. Whatsoever a man soweth - that shall he also reap." Gal. 6:7. Pay day may not come tomorrow or the next day, but just as sure as there is a God, pay day will come.

Now no one was forcing Ananias to use his tongue in this way - to lie unto man and unto God. No one pushed him into doing this. Peter didn't do this.

And the pity of it today is, God's children often let the Devil in. They have been saved but they will allow Christ to come in to redeem them - but when the Devil knocks they want him to have a little bit of room in their hearts. And while they are holding on to Christ. So Ananias stood there - he did not say anything. He trembled a few minutes, he fell down dead. Then the young men picked him up and carried him out and buried him. Now they had not even a funeral service. Now Peter did not kill Ananias. God did. And it was an awful thing for his tongue to lie to the Holy Spirit. And the spirit comes to a man - convicts him of sin. And the man says, yes, I'll surrender to Christ. Now I'll go and I'll straighten out my sins. You answer, I'll do that tomorrow. And the next day you say, No, I'll keep that old hatred in my heart. Now the spirit of God tells you to do certain things. And to help your church. But you lie to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit says, go, and help this man in need. And tells you here is somebody that needs help. You might be able to help him become a Christian. But you never get around to doing it.

Three hours later (Sapphira) came in. She looked around - her husband was not present. And she wanted to know what had happened. But they gave her no smile of approval. The crowd was silent. She did not understand. Peter spoke to her. Did you sell the land for so much. Yes, that was the price. Peter then said to her, you agreed with your husband to lie, to the Holy Spirit. Your husband is dead and the young men that buried him are ready to bury you. She gave a sob, fell down dead, and was carried out and buried by the side of Ananias. They had been together in lying to the Holy Spirit.

Here was the net result of a tragedy. That turned out God weeds out the weeds from the flowers that grow. He must discipline the church. And of course, when they died, the result of the tragedy was more people were saved, and there was greater growth in the church. And fear came upon the church. The believer said,

we must get right with God. We must speak the truth and tell the truth. Maybe it will be good - for somehow God might judge us again. We notice that there are hypocrites in the church - there are out-siders by the multitudes that need to be added to the church, but when God works with mighty power - things really happen.

The preacher had power to carry on many signs and many wonders - V. 12. People truly were gathered in and were saved when this happened in the church.

Now let us for a moment see your tongue. I think as I think of these people in the New Testament - I think there are three things that I see when I look at their tongue. I see words of deprivity. And second, I see words of deception. Third, I see words that are demoralizing, and damaging. *Just dynamic words!*

I. WORDS OF DEPRIVITY

Now these words which Ananias spoke were corrupting words. They were debasing. Words of deprivity.

Now this has to do with obscene and filthy stories, that are heard so frequently around the office, in the shop, or in the school. It is the foul and course talk that comes from the lips of so many.

Isaiah had been tainted by this sin. He cried out to God. 6:5 (I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips. I dwell in the midst of a people with unclean lips.) The Lord gave Isaiah complete victory. And the once defiled lips were transformed to proclaim God's message boldly.

Not only should a believer in Christ resist immoral speaking, but he should not give his time to listen to such speech. Some would not think of telling these vicious stories, thoughtlessly join the crowd and enjoy listening to this kind of corrupt speech. It seems to me that this may be equally as sinful.

A politician was considerably renowned. But of low ethical standards. He came to a public dinner one evening and found himself seated between two ministers. Not content with making the two gentlemen of the cloth embarrassed with the coarseness of his talk, and the suggestiveness of his stories, he continued in this vain when he was called upon to speak. Pleading for sympathy because he had been seated between two (sanctimonious sinners) He went on with his address with many obscene tales.

There was a hush of expectation as one of the clergymen was introduced to speak. Rising with quiet dignity, but with evident indignation he said, the address to which we have just listened, I would describe as a bite of rotten tongue sandwiched between two pieces of bread. With no further comment he sat down. Rightly shamed the politician and a few partisans left the room and the meeting adjourned. Is your face flushed too. Did the incident rebuke you also. Let me see your tongue.

In one of the Virginia campaigns, Gen. U. S. Grant was resting in a farmhouse with some of his officers. Heartily enjoying the good clean sport of exchanging amusing stories.

Sanctified humor is indeed a gift from God. One of the officers said, now I have a story to tell since there are no ladies around. Gen. Grant, looked up and quietly remarked, no but there are gentlemen here. The story was never

told. Let me see your tongue.

*Harvey crushed from prison Chicago Dec. 74 - served 46 yrs. - now -
and 5/8 - said different when 15, went to prison & today was profane language used today -*

Now close kin to filthy stories is (profanity). This to me is speech and words of depravity. Christians who do not always guard against the kind of worthless speech - many of us are constantly confronted with those who cannot speak a solitary sentence without punctuating it frequently with profane words.

God said, (Ex. 27) - Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, Thy God in vain. For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

But someone may say, though I use profanity occasionally, I never take the Lord's name in vain.

God replies, (Matt. 5:34) - I say unto you, swear not at all. Neither by Heaven for it is God's throne."

There are those who think nothing of blessing God on Sunday, and cursing God on Monday.

The Bible declares this to be a mark of the unsaved. For God catalogues the characteristics of the unbeliever. (Rom. 3:13-14.) Their throat is an open sepulcher whose mouth is filled or full of cursings and bitterness."

Under no circumstances should a believer in Christ bear the stand of this depraved characteristic. It is accomplishing nothing. And is detrimental in every respect.

If people must be profane, (why) do they take God's name in vain. Why

not pick on Shakespeare. Why not pick on Columbus, or somebody else. Why pick on God. The answer is simple - such speech is but another sly and subtle trick of Satan. To get man to blaspheme the name of the Lord. He should honor and love. Therefore, let me see your tongue.

II. WORDS OF DECEPTION

Yes, Ananias speech and his words were deceiving words of deception. And this has to do with lying. It matters not whether they are white lies or black lies, or some other color. They should not proceed out of the believers mouth.

Peter said, in V 4 you have lied not only unto men. But unto God. You have practiced deception.

Psalm 116:11 - David said, in my haste all men are liars. He thought he had spoken out of turn. But the facts prove he wasn't too far wrong.

A survey in one of our Eastern cities reveals that out of 10,000 men and women, 98% were in the habit of telling lies.

How common practice - even among Christians.

Husbands and wives lie to each other. Now the Christian home is the place where the husband and the wife are supposed to be truthful. But they lie about this and that, and the other.

Children lie to their parents. And deceive their fathers and mothers.

Employees and employers try to practice deception on each other with lies. No David was not just speaking off the cuff. It might have been one of his observations. David was just about 100% right.

Psychologists now tell us men and women cannot get along without lying. After probing the inside facts on honesty, they have declared that honesty is not always the best policy. They tell us we should not feel a sense of guilt every time we have attempted to stretch the truth. For this is natural.

The psychologist is correct - it is natural for the unredeemed man, for the natural man receiveth not the things of God. (I Cor. 2:14) And so he is right - the natural man and woman cannot get along without lying to each other. Because that is part of their nature.

Psalm 58:3 - the wicked are astranged from the womb. They go astray as soon as they are born - speaking lies. Now Ananias practiced deception. The true believer in Christ will find lying abnormal.

Even though the psychologist may try to tone down and moderate the seriousness of lying - God's attitude has not changed.

To him, a lie is deception.

Prov. 6:16-17 - These six things does the Lord hate. Yea, seven are an abomination unto him. A proud look and a lying tongue. V. 19 - A false witness that speaketh lies. Let me see your tongue - is there deception.

Rev. 21:8 God offered the word of caution to the unsaved and warns that

liars will be judged. All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. "Let me see your tongue."

Eph. 4:25 - He said to the Christians - denounce lying - therefore putting away lying. Speaketh every man truth with his neighbor for we are members one of another.

No Christian shall be deceiving by his degrading and detrimental form of deception. Man should use his words to speak the truth in love. To be honest with all men.

There are no short cuts in this - and that is why when Sapphira and Ananias took a short cut God did not respect their words. There was deception.

So we have the deprivity, words of deception.

III. WORDS DEMORALIZING →

Now this is something that we find very prevalent today in the words people use and come off of their tongues - even in Christian circles. Demoralizing, damaging, slanderous speech.

(Gossiping) back-biting, are important wedges used by Satan to destroy Christian unity and harmony. And these do much injury, to a church of Jesus Christ. It is just like a disease.

Let me see your tongue - (is) it badly coated with gossip. Many tongues are. Does she gossip - was asked about a woman under discussion. Does she - was the reply. She is a regular snake - the kind you know who says, you don't have to believe everything you hear, but you can repeat it, and she does. And in the repeating, the good in people is always minimized. In their lives is given all of the accent.

Now think of this - (it) assumes some sort of grumbling, or murmuring, or complaining.

The children of (Israel) had no sooner been delivered from Egypt and the bondage and they became complainers against God.

The (early church) shortly after it was organized began to prosper. Yet we read in the text, there arose a murmuring.

(Wherever a work of God is being done, Satan will find some (willing one) for murmuring. He usually gathers in the weaker Christians. And they become more and more critical in their speech. Their sky darkens until it has no sun. All becomes as darkness.

They criticize everything and everybody. And soon are victimized - and they can no longer see the good but only the bad.

This is like a cancer or disease and weakens and in feebles the believer. Are you afflicted. I think I'd get on my knees quickly and confess it. Let me see your tongue. You need to receive the healing bomb of the Holy Spirit. To heal you before it is too late.

There is an (age-old tradition) according to Christ's day - one approached a crowd about the body of a dead dog. And he listened to what the people had to say. How ugly said one. The body is a mass of blood and mud. It's flesh is torn said another. He has lost an eye and an ear said the third. Then the voice of Christ was heard - but the perils are not as white as his teeth.

While others saw only the ugly, he saw that which was good. Why not do likewise. Cover the evil in others lives with Christian charity.

Slenderous speech is the worst kind because of the effect that it has on us. Someone has well said, some Christians are very polished. Everything they say casts a reflection on someone. They appear very pious but their speech betrays them.

James 1:26 - "If any man among you seems to be religious and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

It is totally inconsistent with the Christian pattern of life to talk about God in one breath and to criticize our brother in another. God declares this kind of Christianity is vain.

The man who practices demoralizing speech, is known as a gossip. Most of the time he has few or none of the facts. Because of his lack of understanding he gets things all mixed up. He is like a blotter - he soaks it all up but gets it all backwards. Because of this he preverts the facts and he becomes the roll of a judge. And he becomes harsh and critical.

Rom. 14:10 - God says that why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgement seat

of Christ. We are called to be witnesses. But at no time has our God appointed us to the bar of justice or judges. God alone is judge. We are commanded to pray for one another. And to use our tongues for prayer but not to judge.

Dr. Cantrell of Princeton University put on some experiments. He wanted to prove gossip. He wanted to show how rapidly a few words from a man's tongue would travel. He called six students into his office. In strict confidence he informed them that the Duke and Duchess of Windsor were planning to attend the university dance within a few weeks. And he made up a story, and told them about it. Within one week's time, this story had reached no less than 2000 students, and the town officials phoned the university demanding to know why they were not informed. The press agencies phoned for details. And Dr. Cantrell states, that was a pleasant rumor..and a slandorous rumor travels even faster.

Unfortunately the person who uses his tongue for gossip is not recognized - how many times we have been approached by those who say - I am not gossiping but I think you should know.

They prefer to think of it is just information but it is self-justifying - the polite way of prefacing a piece of bitter gossip. Christian, if gossip comes to your ear. I would not pass it on. Refuse to tell it.

Prov. 26:20 is a real good cure for gossip. Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out. So where there is no tale bearer, the strife ceases. The fire will be but smoking embers if the wood is not added. Likewise, gossip will die - never to live again, if you refuse to let your tongue repeat it. Let it die in your heart - the strife will ease and cease at that very moment. Progress in God's work will no longer be hindered. Souls will be saved. Your

church will prosper. You will be happier. How are we to cry out in the words of David - Psalm 141:3 - Set a watch, oh Lord, and for my mouth - keep the door of my lips.

Let me see your tongue.

IV. DYNAMIC WORDS

Now we have considered words of deprivity, words of deception, words that were demoralizing. Let us consider as we look at the tongue - about some dynamic words. Now the words that Peter spoke here had dynamic power. And some driving, impelling, magnetic power behind them. Because when he spoke, he was speaking for God.

As we look at your tongue - why not let your Christian speech be such as it should benefit and bless.

Eph. 4:29 - No corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may administer grace unto the hearers.

God not only tells us in this verse what not to do - but very clearly what to do. It is not enough to refrain from words of deception. But believers should substantiate their faith. And in helpful and kind words that bless others.

Col. 4:6 - Paul says the same thing. Let your speech be always with grace

- season with salt that ye may know how ye ought to answer everyone. Doesn't salt really bring out the flavor in some foods. It makes it taste so wonderful and delicious. And so Paul says, your speech - let me see your tongue. Just kind of season things with the salt of the grace that comes from your tongue.

The poet I commend his message to you.

If you attempted to reveal
A tale someone to you has told
About another, make it pass
Before you speak three gates of gold.

These narrow gates -
First, is it true
Then, is it needful in your mind
Give truthful answer and the next
Is the last and narrowest, is it kind.

And if to reach your lips at last
It passes through these gateways three
Then you may tell the tale not nor fear
What the results of speech may be.

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Show me your tongue, the Doctor said and he looked. And of course, a few days later when you go back for the examination the next time, he says, let me see your tongue. Quickly he said, “that looks better.” It has cleared up very well. In the realm of morals, religion, and truth, has your tongue been cleared up. Is it clean of gossip and smut.

A famous publisher declared if you are an articulate person you utter some (30,000 words every day). Think of it. If you put it in print, that would be enough books to fill an entire college library. How many pages of these volumes you are writing will be denounced by God. As speech that is useless. Matt. 12:36-37. Every idle word that men shall speak - they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement. For by thy words, thou shalt be satisfied. And by thy words thou shalt be condemned. Words are so dangerous and so important. We utter them so frequently and without thought or consideration, we don't realize every word we speak - it either blesses or it has some dynamic to it. Have you claimed the victory that is yours in Christ.

A good test to apply to this - how do you react when people are unkind to you. Is your attitude one of getting even. When some body says something to you - do you use some vile words.

Prov. 15:1- A soft answer turneth away wrath. But grievous words stir up anger. Have you learned to reply with a soft answer. Are you dominated by the spirit of the flesh. And you unleash these depraved damaging words that produce sorrow and regret.

It should be understood that because you are a Christian - you are not to be a door mat. Letting other people stomp you all the time. Now this is not humility that is taught in the Bible. But what God desires is - that you speak in such a way when you are offended - that you will speak words that will benefit and that will bless. Now people know that there is a right and a wrong way to say some things and to do everything.

Now the problem is deep in your heart. When it comes to the point of looking at your tongue. Matt. 12:34. Unfolds for us the real secret. And I think if we find this, we will find the truth tonight. Out of abundance of the heart, the

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mouth speaketh.

Speech, therefore, has its beginning in an unsundered heart.

Now if you carry a bucket of water and you bump into something and splash some out - or somebody stirs it, you spill some water. Now you can only spill what is in the bucket. In the midst of life, we have people bumping into us. And we sometimes spill out things through our tongues and our lips. And what is being taught here is that what comes out of the bucket is coming out of our heart. If your experience with Christ is shallow and insincere - then you need to take a look at your tongue.