



Mind Our Language

As believers, people are attracted to Christ by our life. One of the ways is how we use the little organ called the tongue. In the book of James, the tongue is said to be an unruly evil which no man can tame. Yes. Our spoken words either exhorts, encourage or demoralize and destroy relationship. However, God can tame our tongue if we but submit it to Him. (Philippians 4:13) *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

In this article, we explore what the Bible says about spoken language. Sister Hui Tin has painstakingly researched on the topic and summarized her findings. It is by no means exhaustive. I would exhort all readers to search the scriptures and glean more lessons from it. May we be ENCOURAGED by the words in this article so that we can be aware at all times to Mind Our Language. - JK

Our words should not dishonour God or hurt others

“.....Go up thou BALD HEAD, go up thou BALD HEAD....”

2Kings 2:23,24 tells us a story of a group of youths who mocked the prophet Elisha with these words on the road to Bethel. Elisha cursed them and two bears came out of the woods and mauled 42 of them.

This scene took place just after the Prophet Elijah was taken up to heaven and the youths were mocking in disbelief. They bade him “go up” reflecting on the taking up of Elijah into heaven. They maligned an old man (whose very age commanded respect) and mocked his natural infirmity. The punishment was extremely severe as they had mocked God himself (as Elisha was a prophet), and mocked that glorious work of God, the assumption of Elijah into heaven.

The Lord hates sin and we must be afraid of speaking wicked words, for God notices what we

say. Let us not mock at anyone for defects in mind or body. The Bible tells us in Matt.12:36 that every idle word we speak, we shall have to give account for it in the day of judgement. Singaporeans call people “Ah Beng and Ah Lian” (terms for unsophisticated Chinese boy and girl). We use racist terms like “Bangla” and “Mat”. We criticize sloppily dressed women “ah Sohs”. These remarks harbour the sin of pride.

We will be judged for every idle word we speak

“But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.”

In Matthew 5:22, Christ showed us the full meaning of this commandment; according to which we must be judged. “RACA” (Aramic word meaning empty head) is a scornful word, and

(Continued on back page)

Take my lips and let it be filled with messages for Thee

Frances R Havergal

1836—1879

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(Continued from front page)

comes from pride. "Thou fool" is a spiteful word and comes from hatred. Today, we can be taken to court for "slander", but we will also be judged by our Lord for our words. The Singaporean calls others "thou fool" when we call others "Kayu" (Malay word for wood) or "blur". When we call someone a "Hero", we are implying that he has done something foolhardy. When we call a girl "Havoc" or "Cheo", we are slandering them because we are implying that she is promiscuous.

Our words reflect our heart condition

"But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man."

Christ shows us in Matthew 15:18 that what comes out of our mouths shows the wickedness of our hearts. Sins like pride and hatred live in our heart out of which come forth bad words to dishonour God. We call others "sotong" when we are irritated that they are inept, as our hearts are full of pride that we are efficient and intelligent. Drivers beware! When we use the expression "your grandfather's road" on road hogs, we are implying that they are slow and are proud that we are better drivers than them. Jeremiah 17:9 warns that there is no sin in word or deed, which was not first in the heart. They all come out of the man and are fruits of that wickedness which is in the heart.

No one expects to hear curses, lies, boastings & reviling from a believer's mouth

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." 1 Timothy 4:12

When you hear teens utter "shit", "*hole" or 4-letter words, you won't think he is a believer. Non-believers don't read the Bible, they read your life!

We must control our tongue if we want a happy and good life

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

1 Peter 3:10 tells that if you want a happy and good life, you must keep guard your lips. How true this is, as many a relationship has been broken by hurtful words used on each other. Nothing stirs up anger like grievous words.

Words have the power to build up or crush the spirit of another. A person is instantly crushed when he is called "smelly" or built up when he is told he is "good-looking".

Don't be hasty with your words

"Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him."

Proverbs 29:20 warns us not to blurt out what we are thinking or feeling without considering the consequences. Many of us have "put our foot in our mouths"!

We can only control our tongue with God's help

"But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison."

James 3:8 warns that control of your tongue is not easy to accomplish on our own strength, but if you depend on the Holy Spirit for teaching and guidance, you can have help and strength far beyond your own.

Let us use our tongue to bring praise and glory to the Lord

"And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long."

Psalm 35:28 tells us that we should use our tongues to witness for our Lord and glorify His name.

Let us use our words to say things to encourage and strengthen other believers and to bring non-believers to salvation.

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