

## I. Introduction

- A. Jesus saved his toughest words for his most religious audiences. Today's Bible verse is one of those moments. He is speaking to Pharisees, and Jesus says:
  - 1. *"You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks."* Matthew 12:34 NIV
- B. I want to zero in on the second part of this verse, because, Jesus states today's big idea: Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.
- C. What's going on inside you spills outside you through your mouth, through your words. Your words are a walking billboard sign of the condition of your soul.
- D. Welcome to week eight in our series called Bite Me! Tame your tongue, heal your heart.
- E. We're going to wrap up this series today, and begin a new series next weekend.
- F. In this series we have talked about labels, and how the labels we put on people affect their lives. We've talked about complaining, and how that's like letting off a stink bomb in someone else's soul. And we've talked about being a busybody, and about needless drama, and about not being a third person into a somebody else's fight. Stay out of it. We've covered a lot of ground.
- G. And today I want to return to ground zero of our speech habits: the heart. Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.
- H. I'm a dad; I have two awesome kids. My daughter is eight. My son is six. I let them run in the church. It's just this thing I have from my past. But they're great kids. And I love being their dad.
- I. One of the coolest things about my kids—your kids are probably the same—they wear their emotions on the outside. It takes about three nanoseconds to figure out what's going on inside them. When I pick them up after school, or when I peek into the classroom, or when I watch them reading or playing or chilling out—I can tell what's going on inside them really fast. They wear the heart on their sleeves.
- J. That's because they're kids and as kids, they haven't learned to EDIT yet. They just let it all out.
- K. Jesus said, "out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks."
- L. I called this series Bite Me! And I've been telling you these last few months to bite your tongue. And maybe you've tried. Maybe you've been successful, a little. I don't know. I hope you've become more aware of your words, and negativity, and complaints, and whining, and gossip.
- M. But I've had a hidden agenda for this whole series, and I want to put my cards on the table.
- N. I was hoping that you'd try to bite your tongue, and fail enough times to get frustrated. My agenda was to get you frustrated and discouraged and in despair of ever biting your tongue. Of ever radically changing the patterns and habits of your speech.
- O. Because you don't have a tongue problem.
- P. You have a heart problem.
- Q. Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speak

## II. Keep Your Heart

- A. You need a heart transplant: a new heart—a renewed heart. So the Bible says,
  - 1. *"(Guard) your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life."* Proverbs 4:23, NKJV.
- B. This verse begins with very strong words that mean to establish a perimeter of armed guards around your heart. All diligence, it says, not some, but all on guard. Lock it in a vault.
- C. Your heart: your core thoughts, feelings, and personality determines everything about you. It's precious. You need to guard your heart, because everything in your life comes out of it.
- D. And if your heart has been messed with, and if your heart has been wounded, you need to find healing for your heart.
- E. I am not talking about will-power.
- F. I am not talking about human effort.
- G. I am not talking about one more job on your to do list.
- H. I am talking about a weapon God gave you to heal your heart, so that by healing your heart, you can tame your tongue, and be a blessing to everyone around you.
- I. A tool. A weapon. A supernatural, divine resource. God has provided food for your heart, and when you provide that food to your heart, God's power floods through you, and in you, and affects all the issues of your life, including your speech. Want to know what that food is?
- J. It's the Bible.

## III. The Bible

- A. *"Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts"* Jeremiah 15:16 NKJV.
  - 1. Jeremiah feels wounded because God's own people have turned away from God. Jeremiah is there to turn them back to God, but he's sad.
  - 2. But that sadness doesn't have the final say. He finds God's Words and he says he eats them. He takes them in. He metabolizes God's Words.

3. Almost every week, I preach two mini-sermons to you. In the first one, I say, "Open your Bible, please." In the second one I say, "You have a great God." Actually, you preach that one to each other. Open your Bible, please. You have a great God. Put those two lines on my tombstone.
  4. I want you to metabolize the Bible so much it becomes part of you that it changes your heart.
  5. And look at the results in this verse. What does the word of God, ingested, digested, and metabolized into a human heart produce? The joy and rejoicing of my heart, says Jeremiah.
  6. Might I suggest that if you've lost your joy, the first place to start is a return to the regular uptake of Scripture?
  7. Because when you get the word of God into you, you don't just get information. You get power. God has packed His own power into the Word. Every promise, doctrine, truth, and warning of Scripture, is like a radioactive little pellet. It goes inside you and makes you strong and it gives you joy. The Bible is the world's best mood-enhancing substance.
  8. And he gives us one all-importance clue why—because "I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts."
  9. What's that mean?
  10. It means the Bible gave Jeremiah his new identity. It gave him a sense of who he is. It will do the same for you, so that you can say, I am called by Your Name, O God. I know who I am, and I know Whose I am.
  11. Question: If you could fill your heart with the joy of God, fill your heart with the power of God, and fill your heart with the identity you have because you belong to God—if you could fill your heart with all those byproducts of the Word, don't you think you'll have a brand new way of speaking?
    - a) Your words are bitter because you don't have God's joy
    - b) Your words are harsh because you don't have God's power.
    - c) Your words are angry because you don't have God's identity.
  12. Ever watch those remodeling shows on TV? Our favorite is Divine Design. My wife and I love Candace's makeovers.
  13. The Holy Spirit uses Scripture to makeover your heart. And that's the only way you can bite your tongue.
- B. *"But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" Mathew 4:4, NKJV.*
1. See, there's that comparison again between food and God's Word. God wants you to ingest and digest and metabolize his Word.
  2. Here, Jesus was being tempted by the Devil. He was tired. He was hungry. And the devil personally tempted Him. The devil knew if he could get Jesus to violate God's plan for His life, then Jesus wouldn't qualify any more to pay for the sins of the world.
  3. So the devil says, "Hey Jesus, if you're so hungry, command these stones to turn into bread."
  4. And Jesus snaps back a verse from the Old Testament, from 1500 years earlier, from Moses. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.
  5. Jeremiah was saying that the Word produces Joy.
  6. And now Jesus is saying that the Word produces Satisfaction. When you are empty, the Word makes you full. When you are emotionally running on fumes, the Bible fills you up.
  7. You need the Bible.
  8. When I was a little kid, I was hungry for the Bible. I got myself a little spiral bound notebook, and I went to church Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, and I went to Sunday School.
  9. And I took notes. I wanted somebody to put the Bible together for me. I wanted to see the big picture. So there I was, 10 years old, 11 years old, taking notes in church.
  10. And I loved it when the preacher was organized, and I could take notes.
  11. And I hated it when the preacher was disorganized and I couldn't take notes.
  12. By the time I was in high school, I'd get up early and read my Bible, and listen to recorded sermons (cassette tapes back then), and I took notes. I was always taking notes.
  13. I learned something. I learned that God's Word began to make sense, but it was slow. And the more it made sense, the more confidence I had in it. The more satisfied I was with it.
  14. I learned the terminology. I learned the doctrines. The big picture began to snap into focus for me.
  15. It took time
  16. My kids just did their first cross country track meet, next door at the public school.
  17. Both kids did great, and I was proud of them, because I never ran anywhere when I was a kid. Afterwards I was talking with my daughter. She said, "Dad, running is hard. I don't know if I want to run anymore. And I didn't win!"
  18. We're not going to force her, but I told her, "Honey, this is your first race EVER, and you did great. A lot of those other girls have been running for two or three years, and you still beat most of them. If you want to get good at this, you need to keep running in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and 4<sup>th</sup> grade. A lot of the other girls will drop out, and when you're in 5<sup>th</sup> grade and 6<sup>th</sup> grade you'll be really good. When you're in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, you'll be a champion. That's where champions come from—in anything."
  19. And some of you are stuck in your first year with the Bible, and you say, it's hard. And I want to quit.
  20. R.C. Sproul wrote,

- a) Here, then, is the real problem of our negligence. We fail in our duty to study God's Word not so much because it is difficult to understand, not so much because it is dull and boring, but because it is work. Our problem is not a lack of intelligence or a lack of passion, our problem is that we are lazy.
21. Ouch!!!!!!!
22. Can I just pastorally encourage you to get back to the Bible? Can I echo Jesus' words? You don't live by bread alone. Your life is more than physical needs. You live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God—and those words are written down!
23. They bring you joy, and they fill you up.
24. Here is Jesus, tempted by the devil. He hasn't eaten in 40 days. He's physically famished, and He's spiritually full, because He's devoured God's Word.
25. By the way, Jesus had to GROW UP in his knowledge of the Word, just like you and me. He wasn't born a little Bible genius. He was raised like any boy.
- a) *"And the Child grew and became strong in the spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him."* Luke 2:40, NKJV
26. The Word of God was mighty in the heart of Jesus. And look at it effect:
- a) *"Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously"* 1 Peter 2:22,23, NKJV.
27. Jesus never sinned with His mouth. He never sinned with His speech. He bit his tongue. Don't you think that God's Word, metabolized into His heart, had something to do with that?
- C. *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in Righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."* 2 Timothy 3:16, 17, NKJV.
1. When I first came to neighborhood church, the second weekend of September, 2002, I preached a series from the book of Ruth. A short book, four chapters. Nine sermons. How many of you were here for that? Weren't here for that?
  2. In my interpretation, the book of Ruth is one of the Bible's core textbooks on GRACE. Most Christians suffer from a serious disease. It's called GRACE DEFICIT DISORDER. We are legalists to the core.
  3. So we twist the message of the Bible till we get it backwards.
  4. We have twisted the grand story of what God does for us through Christ into the fairy-tale of what we do for God through our own efforts.
  5. We are legalists to the core.
  6. So I preached this series from Ruth—I preached on grace. And every week, you know many times, pastors end their sermons with practical applications? That's good, and I do it sometimes.
  7. But not for my first weeks here when I preached through Ruth. All I did for 9 weeks straight was talk about grace, and then say, Church, this is God's grace. Enjoy it. Just enjoy it. Don't do anything. Don't change anything. Just be happy in God's grace.
  8. Nine weeks.
  9. People were mad at me. I'm not kidding. They came to me and said, "Tell us to do something." I said, if you're like most Christians you've been told what to do all your life. Have you done it?
  10. That made them madder.
  11. I said to one guy: "I'll give you a break so you can get caught up. How long do you need, ten years?"
  12. See, what's happened to Christianity is that we have set aside the deep truths of God, and tried to live in the last part of 2 Tim 3:16-17:
    - a) Every good work.
  13. We want good works. We want to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and shelter the poor. We want to right the injustices of society. We want to give water to the thirsty. We want to love our neighbors and bring about God's Kingdom in the world.
  14. But there's one little problem.
  15. You can't have the end of 2 Tim 3:17 without having the beginning of 2 Tim 3:16 and that says, ALL SCRIPTURE IS GOD-BREATHED and is PROFITABLE.
  16. So I just figured that as long as I had the enormous privilege of preaching in this church to these people, I would do my level best to present ALL SCRIPTURE to the people of God. And do my level best to construct a coherent, biblical concept of God and worldview in your mind, because that is the only way to be mature, and be thoroughly equipped for every good work.
  17. Look at the list here. What is the profit of Scripture?
    - a) Doctrine: The deep things of God, the terminology like justification, redemption, propitiation, the doctrine of Christ, of the Cross, of God.
    - b) Reproof. This word means smacking you upside the head when you blow it. Scripture normalizes your conscience.
    - c) Correction. This word means putting you back on the right path when you blow it.
    - d) Instruction in Righteousness. This means instruction (child training, discipline) in righteousness. God's way of living.
  18. You can't neglect Scriptures and be outfitted for everyday life with God. You can't bypass the written down word of God and experience divine power.
  19. Why not?

20. Because out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks.
  21. I preach good works, but only as a byproduct of the power of God flowing through you through the indwelling Christ, the indwelling Spirit, and the indwelling word!
  22. God so wanted to heal your heart and strengthen your heart that He gave you two supernatural power-sources:
    - a) The supernatural power of the Holy Spirit.
    - b) The supernatural power of all Scripture metabolized into your soul.
  23. Every believer has the Holy Spirit, but not every believer has the Word of God.
- D. "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word," Ephesians 5:25,26, NKJV*
1. Notice that phrase: the washing of the water by the word. God's word is soap for your soul.
  2. A.W. Tozer said,
    - a) The Word of God well understood and religiously obeyed is the shortest route to spiritual perfection. And we must not select a few favorite passages to the exclusion of others. Nothing less than a whole Bible can make a whole Christian.
  3. You say, my heart is a junk drawer. There are some pretty awful memories and despicable sins totting images and twisted beliefs sitting there in my heart.
    - a) Yeah, my words are cynical, because my heart is full of junk.
    - b) Yeah my words are negative and critical, but if you knew my heart, you'd be proud of me for how much I held back
    - c) Yeah, my words are fearful, anxious and full of fear, because my heart is half-crazed with abuse and cruelty and stuff so crazy I can't tell anybody.
  4. Listen. The Word of God is stronger than any lie the devil ever stuck into your heart.
  5. He will cleanse you by his word.

#### IV. Conclusion

- A. Martin Luther changed the world, and revived the lost message of grace. Where did he get it:
  1. "For some years now I have read through the Bible twice every year. If you picture the Bible to be a mighty tree and every word a little branch, I have shaken every one of these branches because I wanted to know what it was and what it meant." (Luther)
- B. "For the Word of God is living and powerful" Heb 4:12
- C. "Is not my word like a fire?" says the LORD, "And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?" Jeremiah 23: 29, NKJV.
- D. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek." Romans 1:16 NKJV.
- E. Listen, I want you to bite your tongue. I want you to change your words.
- F. But God has to change your heart first.
- G. And He won't do it without your ongoing cooperation.
- H. And He won't do it without you getting this Book into you.
- I. We are people of the Book.
- J. We have a sure and certain and inerrant and perfect Word.
- K. We have a love letter from God. It isn't easy to understand. It isn't easy to get into.
- L. But I promise you, if you start with God's Word—It will change you.
- M. It will heal your heart.
- N. And that will tame your tongue like nothing else.