

Hangry: The Power of Words

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Turn to Matthew 12 (Page 665)

We won't be to this passage

For quite a while

But when we get there

You'll notice that our passage

Is actually one page later

Then I put on the screen

It just didn't seem right

To put the correct page number

At the front of the church

So, turn to Matthew 12

And we're just going to call it page 665

Tell story of woman at the well...

John 4:13-14 (NIV) - Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a *spring of water welling up to eternal life.*"

John 4:34 (NIV) – “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.”

Now hold on a second:

They were confused

Because they thought He was talking about a sandwich or a taco or something

And we know He wasn't talking about lunch

But what work *was He* referring to?

He labeled it

The work He was called to do

But He didn't *do* anything in this story

He didn't heal anybody

He didn't cast out any demons

He didn't pay this woman's electric bill

Or give her a habitat for humanity home

I mean what work is He talking about?

And it's important

That we figure this out

Because He said doing it

Whatever *it* is
Is like food for His soul

Which means its probably food for our soul

So, what did He do?

He spoke

That was it

I mean, He spoke with kindness

He spoke with empathy

He spoke with love

But that's all the work He did

He just spoke

And that apparently was the work God was calling Him to

In that moment

And that work

Was like food for His soul

I really need you to

Hang on to that

We'll come back to that

Proverbs 18:20-21 - From the fruit of their mouth a person's stomach is filled; with the harvest of their lips they are satisfied.

Now, notice a couple things:

He refers to "fruit"

And a "harvest"

Fruit & a harvest

Scripture says our mouths

Are constantly sowing seeds

And we reap a harvest

Based on what words we've sown

This sowing & reaping

Is a theme throughout the Bible

Galatians 6:7 - Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

We reap what we sow

If we plant vegetables

We'll reap vegetables

If we plant weeds

We'll reap weeds

That's true in a lot of things

But I want us to think of it today

In terms of our mouths

In light of Proverbs 18

We reap what we sow

And notice it starts with

“Do not be deceived”

Paul says that

Because people are *often* deceived

That’s also true of a lot of things

But specifically

People are often deceived

With their words

Many of us

Think that our words are inconsequential

Many of us think that we can sow weeds

But reap vegetables

“Don’t be deceived,” Scripture says

Now let’s apply that back to Proverbs 18:

Proverbs 18:20-21 - From the fruit of their mouth a person's stomach is filled; with the harvest of their lips they are satisfied.

Verse 21 continues:

The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

Our words

Have the power to bring life

You've got to catch this

Our words have the power to bring life

And our words

Have the power to destroy

If you don't believe that

For the words *from your* mouth

Very likely you do believe it

From the destructive words

Others have said to you

I can remember kind words

Said to me decades ago

And I can remember hurtful words

Decades ago

I remember my freshman speech teacher

I took speech
Because I was sick of being scared
To talk in front of people

This is a true story
If I had to give a book report or something
I would get so nervous
I would be nauseous
And frantic
Until it was over

When I signed up for my freshman classes
At the end of my 8th grade year
And I bit the bullet and signed up for speech
I dreaded that all summer

When I got up to do my first speech
In speech class
My knees
Literally knocked against each other

I remember doing a reading for speech class
A reading
No skill involved there

And Mrs. Webb saying

I had an “authoritative voice”

I was a little short scrawny kid

Still recovering from puberty

I did not have an authoritative voice

But Mrs. Webb said I did

And I walked out of that class...

Every time you talk

You’re planting seeds

And eventually

We all eat of their fruit

I think it’s interesting

That the Hebrew word translated life

Here in verse 21

That word is found 14x

In the first two chapters of Genesis

When God brings life to the entire universe

Through His Words

The Bible says that God brought life to the universe

And cosmologists marvel at the fine tuning of galaxies

With the precise expansion rate

And gravitational pull

And orbits and rotations

It's precisely fine-tuned

And God brought it to life

Through His Word

The Bible says that God brought life to our planet

And scientists marvel at its fine tuning

The precise distance from the sun

The impact of the moon's gravity on our tides and weather

The earth's rotation

And tilt and gravity

All precisely fine-tuned

And God brought it to life

Through His Word

The Bible says that God brought life to the oceans

And to the birds of the sky

To the animals and livestock and bugs on the ground

All precisely fine-tuned

And God brought all of them to life

Through His Word

But the crescendo of Creation

Was people

God formed Adam

In His Hands

And then He breathed *into* Adam

The very breath of life

God formed Eve

From a rib at Adam's side

To literally walk... together... thru life

And He gave Eve

The very breath of life

And then He granted us

The "power of life and death"

With that precious breath

The breath He loaned us

It's not ours forever

The breath He loaned us

Can be used to bring life

And the breath that He loaned us

Can be used to destroy

And Jesus said

Using that breath to bring life

Is like food for His soul

The Apostle John

Described Creation this way:

John 1:1, 3-4 (NIV) - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

And then God made us

In His Image

And in His likeness

And then this Word

John 1:14a (NIV) - The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.

And this same Word

Jesus – full of grace and full of Truth

Gave us today's passage

About our words

Read Matthew 12:34b

Why is the tongue so powerful?

Because it's tethered to your heart

The mouth speaks

What the heart is full of

Read Matthew 12:35

I said tethered

A better picture is actually of a well

Your mouth

Reaches down into who you are

And pulls up... the truth

It pulls up... reality

So, when you're hearing a person's words

You're hearing, not just their voice

You're hearing their heart

Read Matthew 12:36-37

The word translated "empty" here

Is sometimes translated "careless," or "useless," or "worthless"

It literally means unprofitable

Or lazy

It's doing "nothing helpful"

So, what does a word look like

A sentence

A statement

That does “nothing helpful?”

It’s empty

Can I tell you what I think

Jesus is doing here?

I’ve not found any scholar

Who agrees with me

So, grain of salt, ok?

I think Jesus is saying

Words are powerful

Solomon says

The tongue has the power of life and death

When we speak

We’re planting seeds

That will produce... a harvest

Vegetables or weeds

No word is truly insignificant

And Jesus here is saying

All those words that you *think* are insignificant

You're gonna have some explainin' to do

About those not-so-insignificant words

If this is true

And I believe wholeheartedly

That it is

If this is true

How must this change our life?

Because it must

Our world needs it

And I would suggest to you

That our souls need it

Jesus said speaking to this woman

Encouraging her

Comforting her

Challenging her

Was like food for His soul

So, if we're *not* doing that

How do we not expect

To be *spiritually* hangry?

Some of us

Have convinced ourselves

That our personality

Or our temperament

Or our upbringing

Excuses us from Biblical mandates

But I would suggest

That if we're not using our words

As God intends

We're also paying a price

Those around us are impacted

Certainly

But we're also paying a price

God impacting others

Through our words

Is like food for our souls

Not just theirs

When this doesn't happen

Both lack nourishment

The giver and the receiver

So is it any wonder

In our sarcastic

Caustic

Verbally-aggressive society

That our culture feels dark

And getting darker?

I mean, I hear a lot of Christians

Talking about the darkness

As if we're not the light of the world

Is it possible

That the key to bringing God's light and love and grace and truth to our world

Is Christians

Using the breath that God gave them

To praise Him

And to speak life into others?

It will bless the recipient of those words

And it will be food for your soul

Speak Life Outside Your Home

This is not an extra-curricular part

Of being a follower of Jesus

This is foundational

Just take a look

At this small sampling

Of commands:

James 5:16b (NIV) - Pray for each other.

Romans 12:10 (NLT) - Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.

1 Thessalonians 5:11a (NIV) – Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up.

Romans 12:15-16a (NIV) - Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another.

Romans 15:7a (CEV) - Honor God by accepting each other.

Galatians 5:13b (NIV) - Serve one another humbly in love.

Galatians 6:2 (NirV) - Carry one another's heavy loads. If you do, you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Ephesians 4:32 (NIV) - Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

1 Peter 4:9 (NIV) - Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

You cannot live
An authentic Christian life
And not be pouring into other people
Period.

Speak life outside your home

Speak Life Inside Your Home

Isn't it true
That sometimes we treat strangers
Better than we treat our own family?

We have an opportunity
To forever and dramatically impact
The life of the people we live with

This could be roommate or spouse or child or parent
Speak life inside your home

Proverbs 18:14 - The human spirit can endure in sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear?

You're more likely to feel crushed in spirit
By those inside your home
Then from anyone else

“Every good marriage is made up of good words. Every bad marriage is made up of bad words or no words.” – Jimmy Evans

So, if your marriage

Or other relationships

Are not what you want them to be

Don't focus on what they're doing or not doing

Change this for yourself

Bring good words

Into their life

Honestly, this has been a conviction for me this week

I talk for a living

And yet sometimes my family

It's like the plumber's toilet is the last to get repaired

Sometimes my family

Has a disobedient husband and father

Not doing what he should

With the breath God has given him

Speak life inside your home

Speak life outside your home

Speak to God for Life

I know some of you

Right now

Are saying

“I don’t feel like I have any life to give!”

“I feel empty, how am I going to fill someone else up?”

Jesus told His disciples

That a relationship with God

Is like a vine

With many branches

When the branches are disconnected

They are lifeless

And dead

And empty

But connected to Him

His life pumps thru them

Making them alive

And growing

And radiant

If you don’t feel like

You have any life to give

Talk to God

When you acknowledge Him

As the leader of your life

And when you ask Him

To forgive you of your sins

He'll make you alive

Last week

My friend Ralph

81 years old

Declared to God and all of us

That it was time

Time for Jesus to be His Lord

And He wants to give you life as well