

“Power of Words”

The Rev. S. Shane Nanney – August 8, 2021

Ephesians 4:25-5:2

A woman, who was a terrible cook, gave a preacher a pie to take home to his family. After tasting the pie, they simply threw the rest in the trash, unable to eat it.

The next Sunday, the woman asked the preacher, "How did you like my pie?"

The Preacher responded, "A pie like that does not last long around our house!"

I'm careful of the words I say
to keep them soft and sweet,
I never know from day to day
which ones I'll have to eat

It is said that an average person speaks about 5,000 to 10,000 words every day. This is because, communication is the key to relationships, and the most used method of communication is words. We communicate with family members, friends, neighbors, vendors, colleagues, and so many others on any given day. Interestingly relationships can be built up or broken down, depending on the words we speak.

Proverbs 18:21 says, “DEATH AND LIFE ARE IN THE POWER OF THE TONGUE, AND THOSE WHO LOVE IT WILL EAT ITS FRUITS.”

That's how powerful our words can be; they can either speak life to someone or literally be so hurtful, that they can despair of life.

So, how should we NOT to use our words?

1. Gossip

All of us have experienced the ill-effects of gossip. Gossip breaks trust, and also causes feelings to be hurt deeply. The definition of gossip is, “casual or unconstrained conversation or reports about other people, typically involving

details that are not confirmed as being true.” Generally, people tend to gossip when they are idle, and most often gossip is closely related to slander.

Here’s what the word of God has to say about gossip:

In *Proverbs 11:13*, we read “A GOSSIP GOES AROUND TELLING SECRETS, BUT THOSE WHO ARE TRUSTWORTHY CAN KEEP A CONFIDENCE.” Basically, that’s what a person who gossips does - they share information that someone shared with them in confidence, to someone else. Here’s God’s command as given so directly in *Leviticus 19:16* “DO NOT SPREAD SLANDEROUS GOSSIP AMONG YOUR PEOPLE.” God does not approve of us spreading slanderous gossip about others. The purpose of gossip is never unity, but discord, and the sad consequence is mentioned in *Proverbs 16:28* “GOSSIP SEPARATES THE BEST OF FRIENDS.” Relationships that took many years to build can be quickly destroyed, if we yield to this habit of gossiping. Here’s a good caution to keep in mind. If someone gossips to you, remember that they will also gossip about you.

2. Rash Words

Sometimes, words are spoken in anger, and these words can be rash and hurt deeply. *Proverbs 12:18* describes it this way, “SOME SPEAK RASHLY LIKE THE CUTTING OF A SWORD.” There are many who carry these deep hurts in their hearts for many long years. On the other hand, here’s wise counsel from *Proverbs 15:1*, “A SOFT ANSWER TURNS AWAY WRATH, BUT A HARSH WORD STIRS UP ANGER.” Many beautiful relationships have been severed simply because of the use of harsh and unrestrained words. Especially while in an argument, it is extremely important to keep a guard over our tongue, and to be sure that the words that come out of our mouths do not cause hurt to others.

3. Belittling words

It is extremely crucial that we should not belittle others with the words we speak. This happens, especially when people joke about others. These jokes may target a person’s appearance or abilities, and often, though the one who is the target may appear to be smiling, they are hiding their hurt with the smile. This kind of talk also creates a sense of worthlessness in the person, whereby they begin to devalue themselves. Our fun and jokes must never be at the

expense of others. *Proverbs 11:12* tells us, “WHOEVER BELITTLES HIS NEIGHBOR LACKS SENSE, BUT A MAN OF UNDERSTANDING REMAINS SILENT.”

4. Lying words

Here’s another essential aspect of our words that do not help build relationships. This is the lack of truthfulness in our speech. When one lies, and practices deceit, it creates a sense of mistrust in the relationship. Trusting relationships are always built on truthful speech. These are the words of Paul to the believers in *Ephesians 4:25*, “THEREFORE, HAVING PUT AWAY FALSEHOOD, LET EACH ONE OF YOU SPEAK THE TRUTH WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, FOR WE ARE MEMBERS ONE OF ANOTHER.”

We are created to be better than we do. We must learn to “PUT AWAY ALL BITTERNESS AND WRATH AND ANGER AND WRANGLING AND SLANDER, TOGETHER WITH ALL MALICE, AND BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER, TENDERHEARTED, FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, AS GOD IN CHRIST HAS FORGIVEN YOU.” By doing so we become imitators of God.

This is how we are to use our words:

1. Healing Words

All around us are people who are hurting in so many ways. Every day we can ask the Holy Spirit, to give us opportunities to speak healing into the lives of people. There are so many who would love to have someone listen to them and speak words of healing to them. *Proverbs 16:24* says, “GRACIOUS WORDS ARE LIKE A HONEYCOMB, SWEETNESS TO THE SOUL AND HEALTH TO THE BODY.” Also, in *Proverbs 12:18*, “THE WORDS OF THE WISE BRING HEALING.” Let us ask God each day for wisdom, so that our words will be gracious, and bring healing to those around us.

2. Words of blessing

There are those who, when someone does them wrong or accuses them falsely, their immediate reaction is to curse them. Here’s what Jesus said we should do, “BLESS THOSE WHO CURSE YOU.” *Matthew 5:44* This is quite contrary to what the world teaches us. Paul says this more precisely in *Romans 12:14*, “BLESS THOSE WHO PERSECUTE YOU. DON’T CURSE THEM; PRAY THAT GOD WILL

BLESS THEM.” Our mouths should always pronounce blessings on others, irrespective of what they do to us.

3. Words of wisdom and counsel

God has blessed us with the gift of intellect and speech, which, if we use this gift as He wants us to, we can be the sources of wisdom, to those who need to hear some Godly wisdom in a timely fashion. *Proverbs 18:4*, says, “WISE WORDS ARE LIKE DEEP WATERS; WISDOM FLOWS FROM THE WISE LIKE A BUBBLING BROOK.”

4. Encouraging Words

People all around us are going through so much, and there are so many who need that word of encouragement. There’s no better way to do it, than to speak words of encouragement whenever possible. We read in *1 Thessalonians 5:11*, “SO ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER AND BUILD EACH OTHER UP, JUST AS YOU ARE ALREADY DOING.” Words of encouragement have the power to uplift and build up those who are down with discouragement.

These days we have various modes of communication, and it is therefore necessary, that we be cautious in the way we use them. The words we speak or share with others should be those that will help build strong relationships, and not be those that will destroy them. Jesus said in *Luke 6:45*, “THE GOOD PERSON OUT OF THE GOOD TREASURE OF HIS HEART PRODUCES GOOD, AND THE EVIL PERSON OUT OF HIS EVIL TREASURE PRODUCES EVIL, FOR OUT OF THE ABUNDANCE OF THE HEART HIS MOUTH SPEAKS.” It is therefore vital that our hearts are set right before God, and that He is the Lord of our hearts, so that the words that flow out of our mouths are under His control. Someone said this so aptly. “Every time you want to say something, stop and THINK. Is what I am saying True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary and Kind.” If yes, let us go ahead, if not we should stop.

Let’s use the power of words to build meaningful, healthy and strong relationships. Amen.