



Loving Jesus, Loving People, Plowing a Counter-Culture

SERMON TEXT: Selected passages from Proverbs

KEY POINT: Our words are more powerful than almost anything else God has given us.

FOR LEADERS

- *Theology Thursday: This week on Theology Thursday, pastors Alex & Doug will be continuing their 3-week miniseries on "How to Study the Bible!"*

GETTING STARTED

- [1] Communities Video:** Watch this week’s community extras video!
- [2] Icebreaker:** Share some words that someone shared with you that’s stuck with you all your life.
- [3] Opener:** What was one takeaway you had from the sermon this week?

WHAT YOU SAY

In the sermon this week, Steve proposed that speaking is one of the most powerful things that we do in life, and showed this with a number of teachings from Proverbs that bear this out. He went on to point out that we live in a time where it is easier than ever to also use our words carelessly and we should be wise in what we choose to say.

Ask for a volunteer to read Proverbs 18:21.

- [1]** Share a recent time where someone’s words had a big impact on your life, either for good or ill. How did those words affect you?
- [2]** In what ways does our modern culture cheapen the value of speech?

Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 12:33–37.

- [3]** If someone were to scroll through the history of your comments on social media, what would they conclude about what is in your heart? Do you think this would be a fair judge of what’s your heart? Why or why not?

Ask for a volunteer to read Proverbs 12:18.

- [4]** What are some practical steps that we can take to make sure that our words are not rash, like sword thrusts, but wise, bringing healing to those who hear us?

Ask for volunteers to read Proverbs 29:7, 31:8–9, and Psalm 82:3.

These passages speak of the importance of speaking (and acting!) on behalf of the weak, afflicted, and destitute—those whose rights are trampled or in jeopardy. In his message, Steve mentioned very obvious examples of this in our society in the way some people are still afflicted, simply because of their race.

- [5]** Who is someone like this in your own life, and how should you use your words to uphold and help them?
- [6]** Share about a time when you, or someone you know, have experienced this. How does speaking about this and bringing it into the light help with this, and how does being silent hurt?



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HOW YOU SAY IT

[7] Why is it important to give careful thought, not only to what you say, but to how you say it?

Ask for someone to read Proverbs 16:24.

[8] Think of a time when you said something that was true, but in a way that was unwise. How did the way you communicated hurt either your message or the person who needed to hear it? How could you have spoken differently to more effectively get your point across?

Ask for someone to read Ephesians 4:29-32.

[9] What is the difference between truth that tears people down and the same truth that builds people up?

[10] What are the most common ways of tearing people down with our words?

[11] What can you do to better align your speech with Paul teaches in this passage?

WHAT YOU DON'T SAY

Ask for someone to read Proverbs 13:3.

If we balance this verse alongside of many other things that are said in Proverbs, it is clear that this is not admonishing us to never speak, but rather to be cautious with what we say.

[12] In what ways does our world pressure us to speak rashly, and what can we avoid doing so?

Ask for someone to read Proverbs 26:17.

[13] Why is it so tempting to jump into other people's quarrels?

[14] Consider what we saw earlier about the Bible's exhortations to speak on behalf of those who can't speak for themselves. How can we do that, while still being mindful of what this verse is telling us?

PRAYER

[1] Pray that the Lord would make you more aware of what you say and how you see it, and that he would give you special grace to restrain your tongue in ways that honor him.

[2] Pray that those who hear your words would be blessed and encouraged by what you say.