

Controlling the Tongue | 4/24/16

- The tongue that praises God and curses man
 - The tongue of the Christian is an interesting piece of the body.
 - On one hand we can use it to glorify God and sing praises of thanksgiving. Then on the other hand we can use it to sin against God and to speak evil to others.
 - James 3:9-10
 - “We praise our Lord and Father with it, and we curse men who are made in God’s likeness with it. Praising and cursing come out of the same mouth. My brothers, these things should not be this way.”
 - James makes it clear that the sanctified mouth of the Christian should not be praising God one minute and the next sinning against God.
 - Unfortunately, Christians still fall into this trap of sin and we use our mouths for evil against God.
 - This passage of Scripture speaks to all of us, none of us can say that we have never used our mouths in a way that would displease God, we are all guilty.
 - The first thing that a Christian must understand if one is to get the tongue under control, is that we cannot do it ourselves.
 - James 3:7-8
 - “Every sea creature, reptile, bird, or animal is tamed and has been tamed by man, but **no man** can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.”
 - The key is that no MAN can control the tongue, because only by the grace of God can one do this.
 - Christians left to our own devices and our own power cannot help to contain it.
 - Our sinful nature will take over and control it for us.
 - But by the grace of God and by giving it over to Him, He can control it for us.
 - **Why do you think we cannot control the tongue on our own?**
- Our words carry great weight in the eyes of God.
 - Sometimes we think that our words don’t always mean a lot. We say that actions speak louder than words for example.
 - While there is good reason for that in that it is better for one to physically help someone that to just talk about it.
 - However, words to God do carry great weight.
 - In the eyes of God who judges us our words carry the same punishment and guilt as do our physical actions.
 - Matthew 5:21-23
 - “You have heard that it was said to those of old, You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment. But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, You fool! Will be liable to the hell of fire.”
 - The primary focus of Jesus’ teachings here is on anger but our tongue is the tool used so speak the anger and when we allow it to be used for this it throws the fuel on the fire.
 - Jesus says that we will have to account for every careless word that we speak.
 - Matthew 12:36-37
 - “I tell you that on the day of judgment people will have to account for **every careless word they speak**. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

- That passage causes us to think quite deeply into the words that we speak as even our stray words carry great meaning to God.
 - All those times we carelessly said something that was evil in the sight of God is not going to be overlooked.
 - The mouth speaks that which comes from the heart.
 - Christians and people in general will make the comment that their mouth got them in trouble.
 - While it's true that speaking without thinking first or just saying whatever comes to mind can certainly get one in trouble, this is not the root cause.
 - If our lips say something that gets us into trouble or causes us to sin, there is a much deeper problem than just our lips.
 - The mouth is simply the method of delivery or the vessel. It is NOT the source.
 - Our mouths simply spit out what is in our hearts. If vile and evil come from our lips, then vile and evil is in our hearts.
 - Matthew 15:17-20a
 - "Don't you realize that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is eliminated? **But what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart,** and defiles a man. For **from the heart** come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immoralities, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies. These are the things that defile a man,..."
 - If our hearts were pure then there would be nothing for our lips to use or say that could defile us.
 - This is why it is critical that to clean up our speech that we must first clean up our hearts.
 - **The only one who can clean up the heart is God!**
 - Psalms 51:10
 - "God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me."
 - With the Holy Spirit living within us we know have the power of God living within us and He can help us to control our hearts and our tongues.
 - **This does not mean that because of the Holy Spirit that know we will never say anything evil or sin against God because** we still have our selfish nature, we can still CHOOSE to sin.
 - But now with Christ we have the ability to refrain from our sin and we can get our sinful tongue under control.
 - **How does the condition of your heart affect what comes out of your mouth?**
- A Christian filled with godly wisdom understands the importance of being slow to speak.
 - Scripture tells us that we must listen more than we speak.
 - James 1:19
 - "My dearly loved brothers, understand this: Everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger,"
 - Wisdom and knowledge is upon one who can restrain his words, who can hold back his tongue.
 - Proverbs 17:27
 - "Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding."
 - God gives us this truth and wisdom for a purpose.
 - One who can refrain and control themselves has knowledge and wisdom, because they understand the importance of listening more than speaking.
 - Although it seems that we almost naturally want to speak more than we hear.

- People would much rather sit and talk about themselves than to hear others.
 - We can listen essentially in an unlimited capacity, where we can consume information.
 - We then take this information and process it and apply our wisdom (worldly or godly) to what we have heard.
 - When we speak we are acting on a decision or thought process that has essentially finished.
 - If we are talking, then we have already done our processing and have an answer or decision made that we are then speaking.
 - So in proper order we would listen and consume then take time to process the information by applying our knowledge and wisdom. Then we would speak after having made a decision that was thought out and well prepared.
 - **This is why we must be quick to hear instead of being quick to speak.**
 - We can hear quickly to process, but if we are quick to speak then we have not had time to apply the proper amount of knowledge and wisdom on what we are saying.
 - This is where we get ourselves into trouble.
 - The benefits of being slow to speak
 - We are seen as wise when we listen, even a fool.
 - Proverbs 17:28
 - “Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.”
 - We naturally see those who listen more than they speak as wise, we all probably know somebody that may speak very little but when they do its usually very wise.
 - But the one who babbles and just speaks without thinking more often than not puts their foot in their mouth and constantly says things they wish they would not have.
 - A Christian who is slow to speak should be applying the knowledge and wisdom of God to all of their decisions and statement.
 - We must give time for the Holy Spirit to guide us in our speech and to be sure it is godly and not fleshly.
 - We will not rush to a conclusion and are less likely to make a poor decision.
 - If we do give time to apply God’s wisdom and knowledge in our speech and we rush into saying the first thing that comes to mind we are much more likely to make a poor decision.
 - Even worldly wisdom tells one to take time before making big decisions, because a quick one will generally mean that we let our emotions and our flesh make them for us.
 - We must let God be the one making the decisions and giving us guidance. This usually takes time and prayer.
 - **How has the godly wisdom of being slow to speak affected you? Has your perspective on this changed with your spiritual maturity?**
- If we guard our tongues, we can prevent ourselves from sinning.
 - The main reason why it is important that we guard our tongues is to keep ourselves from sinning against God.
 - People all the time get themselves into situations that escalate and they do things that they regret.

- Most of the time these situations can be prevented if they never escalated out of control in the first place.
 - This most certainly applies to our tongue and whether or not we will sin against God.
 - Proverbs 21:23
 - “Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble.”
- There are many times where holding our tongues when we are angry will keep us from sinning.
 - Psalms 39:1
 - “I said, **I will guard my ways, that I may not sin with my tongue**; I will guard my mouth with a **muzzle**, so long as the wicked are in my presence.”
 - It is critical for the Christian to be able to guard their speech, to realize that even though they may desire to speak, that by doing so they will put themselves in a dangerous position.
 - **A wise Christian acting on Godly wisdom will know when to put on the muzzle, when to keep their peace no matter the circumstances.**
- Speaking out of anger will throw fuel on the fire, instead of quenching it.
 - When we are angry and we speak out with our tongue we instantly throw more fuel on the situation.
 - When this happens we are much more likely to sin against God, because as we speak our anger increases and our ability to think clearly is severely hindered.
 - It is a scientifically proven fact that when you are angry and especially when you are severely angry that you lose your ability to think clearly.
 - It is like when you are intoxicated that you say and do things you would not normally do. This is the same when one is angry.
 - The angrier you are the more common since, reason and wisdom go out the door.
 - **If we let our anger escalate through our speech, we significantly increase the chances that we will sin against God.**
 - How many times have we sinned in our anger? How many times have we let our anger pour fuel on the fire until we exploded?
 - It is in these times that we may find ourselves sinning against God either in our speech or our actions.
 - We may say something to someone that offends God.
 - We may physical do something that offends God.
 - **So when we do not hold our tongues and we let our anger take over, then our ability to listen to the Holy Spirit and apply God’s wisdom are severely diminished.**
 - When we have lost control because of letting our tongues escalate we lose our ability to listen to God’s guidance and His wisdom.
 - We really can silence the voice of reason (God) by not silencing our tongues in the beginning to prevent it from escalating.
- **We must hold our tongues of anger, because it will not accomplish God’s righteousness.**
 - James 1:20
 - “for man’s anger **does not** accomplish God’s righteousness”
 - God’s Word tells us that man’s anger will not accomplish the righteousness of God.
 - This is significant, because this means that in our anger we are not likely to act out in “righteous anger” like was displayed in Jesus Christ with the money changers.
 - We are instead more likely to sin against God in our anger, because unlike Him we cannot control ourselves.

- Where we lose ourselves in our anger God does not.
 - Christians must exercise restraint and patience so that we can accomplish God's righteousness.
 - **Has there been a time where if you would have held your tongue, that you would have prevented yourself from sinning against God?**
 - **Is this difficult to do?**
- So what should the Christian then do with their tongue?
 - We must speak the truth
 - Proverbs 12:17
 - "Whoever speaks the truth gives honest evidence, but a false witness utters deceit."
 - Proverbs 12:19
 - "Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment."
 - The Christian must focus on using our tongues to bring life to others and not death.
 - Above all the Christian must use the gifts that God has given us with the tongue to proclaim His truths and His wisdom to others.
 - Because ultimately our tongues can be used to bring life or death.
 - Proverbs 18:21
 - "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits."
 - We have the ability to use our tongues to speak lies and deceit try to turn people away from God, or we can use it to proclaim His truths and to turn people onto the path of Christ.
 - Faith in Christ comes from hearing the Gospel, will we be the speaker?
 - Romans 10:17
 - "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ."
 - Our voices must go out into the end of the earth to proclaim the Gospel and truths of Christ.
 - Romans 10:18
 - "But I ask, "Did they hear?" Yes, they did: Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the inhabited world."
 - Matthew 28:19
 - "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
 - Christians must not be silent
 - We must choose to use our voices for life, to bring the message of Christ to others.
 - Instead of using our tongues to sin against God and gossiping on the latest news, we must be sure that our lips proclaim His name.
 - We must not hold our tongues and only speak of Christ when we are in church.
 - We must boldly proclaim His name into the world.