

Hebrews 6.9

Of Life, Death and Tongues

We left off last week with the idea of inspection. Inspecting our own salvation, and being watchmen over the souls of our brethren. To be willing to live with mutual accountability and the care for one another that encourages growth, maturity and holiness. Unfortunately, this kind of life as the body is often a rare commodity. All too often, our life as the body is tainted with envy and selfishness; we are frequently more concerned with making ourselves look good at the expense of others, and will drag out every bad thing we know about someone so that they are made less than we think ourselves to be. This kind of malice kills the unity and grace that is to be the hallmark of the body of Christ.

The writer of Hebrews is giving us a better example of how we are to speak even when something difficult must be addressed. He shows restraint and care, true concern for the innocent and guilty alike. He is unwilling to drag them through the mud, instead focusing on the importance of the issues that matter rather than the petty things that would often be the

only topic of conversation. His pattern is one that we should seek to emulate, guided by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God we must seek to submit our words and our tongues to the authority of the God who calls us His own precious possession.

I. OUR WORDS ARE POWERFUL

a. They are the that which fills us ...

Proverbs 18.20-21

- They feed our souls with good or with evil depending on our focus
- They have the power of life and death

b. They reveal our hearts.

Proverbs 26:23–26

c. We must remember that God is always concerned about the pattern of our words, for it reveals the character of our hearts.

- d. Our words are the gateway to the nature of our souls

Matthew 12:35–37

II. SPEECH IS A PRIVILEGE

The privilege of speaking to and about the people of God is not to be taken lightly. We must understand that God is not unconcerned about our words. That He cares how we speak to and about the ones that He loves!

- a. Speak with Grace

Colossians 4:6 (NKJV) ⁶ Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

- b. Speak for edification

Ephesians 4:29 (NKJV) ²⁹ Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

This is a two part command, first speak so that it builds up those who hear in the grace of God. Your words should be intentionally and purposefully spiritually that which builds up... but there is also a negative command here.

c. Avoid corrupting speech

- i. Spiteful speech
- ii. Grudges
- iii. Speaking that which is not needful
- iv. Speaking that which is merely ugly, with no redeeming intent or value.

- "It ain't ugly if it's true", is a lie.
- "You have a right to know" - you probably don't
- "I'm going to share this in love" - probably isn't

d. Avoid divisive speech

Proverbs 26:20–22

- Slander
- Gossip

e. Speak Mercifully, use discretion - We are obligated within the bounds of holiness to cover one another's faults. Just because you know a thing doesn't mean that it should be spoken. Just because you have been given information does not mean that it must or even SHOULD be repeated!

f. To speak with an abundance of grace and mercy, rather than allowing your own anger or jealousy to govern your speech

Proverbs 12:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ A fool's wrath is known at once, But a prudent man covers shame.

g. To keep the ugly truth to ourselves

Proverbs 10:12 (NKJV) ¹² Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins.

- h. To make sure that anyone who hears us speaking of another will only hear that which is an ornament to Christ

Proverbs 25:11–12 (NKJV) ¹¹ A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold In settings of silver. ¹² Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold Is a wise rebuker to an obedient ear.

- i. To go out of our way to make sure that the faults which are so evident to us are kept from the glare of the public eye.

Proverbs 17:9 (NKJV) ⁹ He who covers a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates friends.

III. SPEAK WITH WISDOM

It is essential to know when to strike and when to comfort. Remember Proverbs 18.20-21, the power

of life and death... Words can be healing or destructive

- a. Speak for holiness - there is a balancing obligation to speak in such a way that sin is not coddled. We must use the privilege of speaking to the body of Christ to encourage holiness.

Thessalonians 5:11–15

- b. Speak reflectively - We have an obligation to judge those inside the church, ourselves first and most

Galatians 6.1-5

- c. Speak needfully - We have an obligation to speak that which is needful, not that which is comfortable

Proverbs 28:23 (NKJV) ²³ He who rebukes a man will find more favor afterward Than he who flatters with the tongue.

d. Speak truthfully - Love speaks the truth, even when it hurts.

i. A friend is known by his earnest counsel

Proverbs 27:9 (NKJV) ⁹ Ointment and perfume delight the heart, And the sweetness of a man's friend gives delight by hearty counsel.

ii. It is best to seek those who will give that earnest counsel

Proverbs 27:5-6 (NKJV) ⁵ Open rebuke is better Than love carefully concealed. ⁶ Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

IV. SPEAK TOWARD HEAVEN

a. Use wise counsel to wage war against the true enemy, not one another

*Proverbs 24:5–6 (NKJV) ⁵ A wise man is strong,
Yes, a man of knowledge increases strength; ⁶
For by wise counsel you will wage your own
war, And in a multitude of counselors there is
safety.*

- b. Use your words to encourage one another toward the things of God

Ephesians 5:15–21 (NKJV)