

# The Sins of Speech

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[ 0 : 00 ] So James chapter 3, and I believe that I said verses 1 to 12 to the crew at the back, but I'm going to read verses 1 to 14, just a touch longer.

Let's read God's Word together. Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways.

If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal.

Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder, wherever the pilot wants to go.

Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body.

[ 1 : 06 ] It corrupts the whole person. It sets the whole course of his life on fire and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, and reptiles, and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man.

But no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men who have been made in God's likeness.

Out of the same mouth comes praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. Can both fresh and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives or a grapevine bear figs?

Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water. Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done and the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth.

This is God's holy word. Before we come and think about it together, we're going to sing one more time to prepare our hearts. A classic hymn, Holy, Holy, Holy.

[ 2 : 15 ] So let's sing to the Holy God together. Let's stand and we'll sing. Holy, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty.

Early in the morning, a song I'll rise to you.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Holy, merciful and mighty.

God in three persons, blessed Trinity. Holy, Holy, Holy, Holy, all the saints adore you.

Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea.

[ 3 : 37 ] Cherubim and seraphim falling down before you.

Holy, Holy, holy, holy, holy.

Glide by sin your glory may not see. You alone are holy.

There is none beside you. Perfect in power, in love and purity.

Holy, holy, holy, holy.

[ 5 : 14 ] merciful and mighty. God in three persons, blessed Trinity.

Please be seated. Tonight, we're looking at texts that are all about the life of wisdom. And that's specific to one area in the text that we read.

And that's the wisdom surrounding the way that we speak our tongues. And the reason, one of the reasons for looking at a subject like this is because we believe that the gospel changes all of who we are.

And so it first changes our relationship with God. But then the gospel makes a claim on our lives that we're to actually bow the knee, bow the heart in every aspect of who we are, including our speech and all other things.

And so we read from the actual list of the seven deadly sins from the book of Proverbs. From Proverbs chapter six. And this is seven areas of life that we're called to put away, to be new selves in.

[ 6 : 25 ] Just a reminder. This is what we read, that there are seven things the Lord hates. Haughty eyes, a lying tongue. Hands that shed innocent blood. Devising wicked plans.

Feet that run to evil. A false witness that breathes out lies. And a one who says discord among brothers. Now you can take those seven sins and you can translate them, whittle them down if you will, into five.

And they are pride, anger, unnecessary violence, quarreling. But then the fifth, and I don't know if you caught it when we read it, but out of the seven things that the Lord hates, according to Proverbs six.

Two of them appear to be the exact same. And two of them are the lying tongue and a false witness that breathes lies. And that means that at least God is very serious about the sins of speech.

He mentions it twice in the seven deadly sins here in Proverbs six. And the reason he mentions it twice is because one of those refers to false witness. Breathing lies in the midst of the courtroom.

[ 7 : 35 ] That's a judicial term in Hebrew. So it's saying that God hates it when people lie in the court. But then also the second time is just normal life. So whether you're in the courtroom or whether you're living life, he addresses here the sin of lying.

Now, in Proverbs, the word that gets used, a Hebrew word, a distinct Hebrew word that gets used to describe the sins of speech is the word deceit.

It's the word that shows up four or five times across the book of Proverbs and a few times in the New Testament. And it's correspondent to refer to the sins, all the different ways that we can be sinful with the way we speak.

But more precisely, deceit is the word that speaks of the condition of the human heart that stands underneath sinful speech. So deceit, when Jesus says out of the heart, the mouth speaks.

The mouth speaks sinful speech whenever the heart is full of deceit. Deceit's the term that describes the condition of the heart that produces sinful speech. And so let's think together this evening from Proverbs and James three about this problem and how to deal with it.

[ 8 : 42 ] So we're going to see first the power of deceit. Secondly, the origin of speech. And finally, the wise tongue. So first, the power of deceit.

Proverbs 12, 17 says that when people speak rashly to one another, that it's like a sword thrust to the gut.

So it literally says that rash words, words that are spoken improperly to each other, are like taking a sword and jabbing it right in the gut of the next person. It's a mortal wound.

And then vice versa or reciprocally speaking truth in love is like medicine. It's like putting a balm on a person's soul. And so when you look across the book of Proverbs, one of the things you see very quickly is that the main idea is that deceitful speech can kill.

It can wound. It can be a mortal wound on somebody's soul. It can destroy. And that speech that is full of love and righteousness brings life. It's like medicine to a person.

[ 9 : 49 ] Now, it's not difficult to imagine why this is the case. Imagine. You don't even have to imagine because you've seen it play out. In real life, imagine that you see a witness in the courtroom and that witness breathes out lies like we read about in Proverbs 6 towards another person.

And they breathe out so much corruption. They breathe out so many false statements that the guilty one goes free or that the innocent one gets put into prison for life.

And that's a grave injustice. It's evil. It's wicked. And Proverbs is a text that was originally written to young men, actually, to royal boys that were being trained to rule the land.

And so Proverbs over and over again is saying young men, but it's, of course, for everybody. It's God's word. Everybody never lie. Never lie. Why? Because when we lie and we lie and we let little lies carry on and carry on, little lies become big lies and big lies become courtroom lies.

And courtroom lies produce immense injustices in the land. And so the writer says that a harsh lie, a harsh word, a rash word has the power of death.

[ 11 : 08 ] It wields the power for grave injustice. It can kill. But on the opposite side, words can also at the same time give life. Now, the New Testament has a chapter devoted to this.

And we read it. James chapter 3. Very famous. And in James chapter 3, James gives us three illustrations, verse 3 to 5, for how powerful our speech really is.

It's always wonderful when the Bible gives the preacher the illustration. So that means there's ten minutes saved. I don't have to think of an illustration. It's right here. There's three of them. Verses 3 to 5, James 3.

Did you see them? He says the tongue is small, but it can do great things. It's very powerful. And here's how he explains it the first way. It's like the rudder of a ship.

You know, you think about the great ocean liners that park out in the Firth of Forth. Some of those things are absolutely massive. And they have very, relative to their size, they have very small rudders.

[ 12 : 08 ] And the rudder can, of course, steer the entire thing. And what it's hinting at there is that your speech, the way you speak, is so powerful to you that it has the power actually to reshape your own heart.

That when you speak lies all the time, you become a liar. That speech actually shapes our plastic hearts. We are moldable. It changes the soul. The second illustration is that our speech, our tongues, are like a bit in the mouth of a horse.

You know, bits are little metal poles that you stick in the mouth of a horse. And you can control a horse of 20 hands, which is horse talk for a very big horse, with just a tiny little piece of metal.

And that's what your tongue can do to your own soul. But thirdly and finally, this is the most important. He says that, verse 5, that the tongue has the power of a fire, that it begins like a spark.

I think he's thinking of there in this first century culture of a simple campfire, you know, casting a little flint and building a small fire.

[ 13 : 16 ] Now, my family and I went camping two Fridays ago. This is our first. I have four small children. This is our first ever family camping outing. I've always been a big camper.

Going with children is a different thing, I learned. And we went two Fridays ago, and I bought a flat pack little grill slash campfire set.

You can put charcoal in it. You can put wood in it. And if you've ever done this, you have done this. Of course you've done this. You've gone camping. You've been out in the woods. And you've built a little fire somewhere.

And you know that when you're in a public place, it's not private land. It's not your land. What do you do with it? You know, you're vigilant. You watch it closely. You clear the brush. You know that you do not want what could happen happen.

And you know what James says. He says a small campfire can all of a sudden, it can get out of control. And it can become what? A forest fire. And a forest fire can become a city fire.

[ 14 : 16 ] And a city fire can mean the nation burns. And he says that's the power of speech. In other words, you see what he's saying? He's saying that when a fire is treated appropriately, it's light in the midst of darkness.

You know, it's warmth in the midst of Scottish cold winters. It's food when you need it, right? But when you let it get to the wrong place, when it goes too far, it burns down the nation.

And that's the power of human speech. It's the instrument of death and life at the same time. It has immense potential all in one. And so I think James here is working from a very important proverb that we read that says it all.

Proverbs 18, 21. Proverbs 18, 21 says, In the tongue is the power of life and of death. Now let me ask you tonight.

Did you know that your speech can minister life or death to other human beings? That in your tongue, in the gift of speech that God has given you, that you have such immense power to give a mortal wound or to be a balm that heals the soul?

[ 15 : 31 ] And so the second question then, the diagnostic we have to have tonight is, What are you doing with your speech? What are you doing with this gift that God has given you, that he's given you to wield in a very specific way?

Now, oh boy, the Gospels is very clear. Jesus spoke about this very clearly. He gave us the final word about our words. Matthew 12, 36, I tell you, on the day of judgment, every person will give an account for every careless word that they've spoken.

For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned. Oh, careless speakers, what are we to do with ourselves?

Now, secondly, secondly, the origin of speech. We've seen already that our words are very powerful, that they can minister death, they can minister life, but the question underneath that is why.

In other words, what is it about human speech that makes speech so powerful? Why is it that this is the case, that our words are ministers of death and of life?

[ 16 : 47 ] What is it that makes our speech so powerful? And I think James hints at it for us here, in chapter 3, verse 9. In chapter 3, verse 9, he says, we use our mouths to, on the one hand, bless God.

He's talking about hypocrisy here. We bless God on the one hand, but then he says, we turn the next day, and we curse our neighbor. We speak ill of our neighbor. We gossip. Who has been made, and here it is, he says, we curse our neighbor who has been made in the image of God.

Now, immediately, we know what James is thinking about. You know, where is James taking us? Where is James reading? What is James reading as he writes this? He's thinking about Genesis chapter 1.

He's taking us back to the very beginning, to the first page. And he, in other words, is trying to help us to think about our speech in the light of creation. Because he tells us, the issue in our speech is that we curse people made in the image of God.

And do you see what he's doing? He's asking you the question, well, what is the image of God? Why is it so serious to talk poorly of others, to gossip, to slander, to speak with spite, or flattery, to lie to your neighbor?

[ 17 : 55 ] Why is it so serious? And he says, it's serious because they are in the image of God. So he's connecting speech, our words, directly to the image of God. What's the connection?

Here it is. The first thing we read about God in the Bible, on page one, is that God is the great speaker. He creates the world by word.

He opens his mouth. The very first thing that he does is he speaks word, and out of nothing comes something. Creation ex nihilo. Creation from nothing. There is something by speech.

And so when you get to Genesis 1, 26 to 28, you've got to say, well, what does it mean then for me to be the image of God? You are the image of God. What does it mean? It means so much.

But one of the things it must mean is that I am distinguished from the animal kingdom because God has made me a speaker like he is. God speaks, and from nothing there comes something.

[ 18 : 58 ] And then he turns and says, and I give to you, humanity, the gift of words, the gift of speech. Why do you think God has decided to communicate his revelation to us by way of word and not image?

Because words, speech, it's so critical from the beginning. He is the divine speaker, and we're like him in that we speak. And so, that means that we image God as the image of God when we speak words that give life, and we desecrate and sin against the very image of God and fail to image God when we speak words that minister death to other people.

That's why our words are so serious, because we have been made to speak like God speaks. It's who God is, a great speaker. Now, there's, again, an illustration of this in the Bible.

I don't have to come up with an illustration. There's a perfect illustration in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew Bible, the Bible that Jesus Christ read from, has a name in Hebrew that in English is called the Tanakh.

And it had three parts to it. It's our Old Testament as we have it. But in it, the writings were a section, and they were a group of books grouped together, like the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, these books of wisdom.

[ 20 : 25 ] You know, we know these books as books of wisdom. But there were also four other books in that section of the Old Testament. And those books were meant and given to us as illustrations of what it means to live the wise life.

There were two about men and two about women. So when you read through Proverbs, you read through Ecclesiastes and books like it, the Psalms, what it means to live the wise life, the life of worship, and you say, well, I need to see that lived out.

The Old Testament gives you that. Who are they? Two female, Ruth and Esther. Two male, Daniel and Job. And in each of those, there's also an anti-wisdom character, or many.

Now, the greatest, or the worst, you should say, of the anti-wisdom characters in all of the Old Testament, I think, is the great king, Nebuchadnezzar. The king of the world. You know, the most powerful man who ever lived in some senses.

And at the height of his power, Daniel chapter 4, he goes out to his balcony and he opens his mouth. He speaks. And remember what he said? He says, Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and because of the glory of my majesty?

[ 21 : 40 ] And the text tells us that by the words of his mouth, he was driven away from humankind to dwell with the beast, to eat grass like the cattle, to grow hair like a bird, to grow nails as long as birds' claws.

Now look, what's going on? James chapter 3, verse 7, is he wrestling with that Old Testament text? When in James 3, verse 7, he says, Every animal, bird, reptile, creature of the sea, we've tamed him.

We've put him in pens. We can tame any beast, even lions, but we cannot tame the beast of the tongue. And you see, Nebuchadnezzar, he spoke, he spoke lies and deceit and pride and he flattered himself full of selfish ambition, exactly what James refers to in James 3, 14, and immediately God said, I will give you what you are.

And he sent him away to be like a beast. You see what he's saying? If the image of God is to speak words that are instruments of life, then it's opposite.

You know, when we speak words of death, like Nebuchadnezzar, we become beastly. Our beastly speech, it dehumanizes. It dehumanizes the speaker.

[ 23 : 02 ] It dehumanizes the receiver. Just think about it. When you, a situation we've all been in, how many of us have been in here this week, in this situation, we've turned to a friend to talk about another friend.

And we did it behind their back and we spoke accurately of them. You know, it's not that we told lies. We said things that were true, but we did it with the worst motivations, selfish ambitions.

What do we call that? We call that gossip. And in that moment, what we're doing is we're saying that person is less the image of God than I am. We're cutting them down. And the Bible subtly, theologically hints over and over again that our sinful speech is dehumanizing because it desecrates the image of God, which is to be a life-giving speaker because God is life-giving speaker.

Now, back to Matthew 12, 36. Jesus Christ again says, anybody who has ever spoken a careless word will be judged for every careless word on the day of judgment.

And maybe there are a few of you who have not spoken a careless word in the last 12 hours. Maybe you're like me. And even this afternoon, you struggled.

[ 24 : 25 ] You struggled with careless speech. What are we to do? And it's no coincidence at all that when you open up the Gospel of John, John chapter 1, the first three words are, in the beginning, Genesis 1, and the next is, the Word.

The Word. You see that John's connecting us also back to Genesis 1 and saying, what do you do with your sinful speech? You see that God has spoken.

that the Word has gone forth, that the Word, the Logos Himself, the very speech of God is God the Son made incarnate. And that means that if He is the Logos of God, the speech of God, the Word of God into this world, this broken world, broken by our nasty words, He must be the instrument of life.

He must create life. He has to. He's the Word Himself. And how does He do it? How does He do it? How does He create life for us that have, for those of us who have wielded our mouths unto death, what does Jesus Christ do for us?

And here it is. You can go to one place. Isaiah 53. Isaiah 53 says that when the Messiah comes, when the very speech of God, the Creator Himself, comes to the world, He will be, in our eyes, so dehumanized.

[ 25 : 58 ] It's said that He would be so disfigured by suffering that we would see Him like an animal. That He would be like a sheep, a lamb, led to the slaughter for us.

That the very speech of God, the communication of God, the Creator Himself, would go all the way to dehumanizing death for us, that at the cross, at the cross, the very word of God heard nothing but divine silence from His Father.

He was forsaken. And you see, that means that at the cross, oh boy, Jesus' words, Matthew 12, 36, come true, that every word will be judged.

It was, it was, tonight. It was judged. In other words, have your, you can ask this question, James says that our words have the power to set a hellfire.

He uses the word Gehenna from the Gospels, Jesus' word for hell. Have your words ever set not just a fire but a hellfire? Look, if you are in Christ Jesus tonight, then the answer is yes.

[ 27 : 06 ] you set the hellfire by which He was burned. And here in that, not only the pronouncement of judgment over our sinful speech but the fact that Jesus Christ says, this is how much I love you.

This is how much I love you. This is how much I want you. This is how much I want to give you the balm that ultimately will heal you. That will change the heart of deceit into the heart of flesh.

Jesus Christ at the cross says, your speech is that serious and my love for you is this big. That I would go all the way to the point of death. Dehumanizing death like a lamb led to the slaughter to deal with this great problem that we have, our sinful speech.

And so, tonight, what are you to do with yourself? The first thing Jesus says is do nothing. Do nothing. Receive. Receive the work of Christ for every careless word that you've ever spoken.

And that you, tonight, by faith, believe tonight you're forgiven. You're forgiven for every word. Every word that you spoke in the past. Every word that's dehumanizing and harmful that you will speak in the future.

[ 28 : 16 ] It's glory. It's glory. It's beauty. It's the message of hope. It's the message of the gospel. Now, thirdly and finally, how then should we live? We've got to say something then about growing in this area of our lives because that's exactly what God calls us to here in James 3.

And so, lastly, let's consider the wise tongue very briefly. There is a matrix for righteous speech across the Old and New Testament, a framework for how to think about it.

What does it look like to be a holy speaker, to be a good speaker, to be a person who speaks words of life? And the framework that we get all the time over and over again, it's in Ephesians 4.15, verse 25, 1 John 1, John 14 to 17, and right here in James 3.14, he says that the key ingredients are that we always combine truth with love, never one without the other.

And that's, it's critical. You know, you can say, what does it mean to not lie and it's a little too simplistic in the eyes of Scripture to say, well, it just means to tell the truth.

Actually, righteous speech is more than that. Righteous speech is more than that. Righteous speech is not just the way you would speak in the courtroom as if you were saying, look, I'm going to tell you exactly as it was recorded on my iPhone.

[ 29 : 42 ] No, it's more than that. And I can show you this by a simple question. Let me ask you, those of you who are married, but this works for anybody, husbands and wives, have you ever spoke accurately the truth to your spouse at the wrong time and in the wrong way?

Oh boy, you have. Friends, have you ever spoken to your friend the truth in the wrong time, at the wrong time and the wrong way with the wrong motivation and then later you defend yourself and say, I was just telling you the truth.

It was just the truth. No, God says, no, that is not righteous speech. And James makes very clear here in James 3, 12 to 14 that truth is not enough, but actually the greatest question is why am I saying the things that I'm saying?

And he says, so if you say anything that's motivated by selfish ambition, then it becomes untruth. In other words, it's not God glorifying, it's not righteous, it might be accurate, but it's not the truth with a capital T, it's not righteousness, it's not the way of Christ, it's not true truth, if you will.

Let me give you just a couple examples and we'll close. Have you ever spoken accurately to a friend about another friend, but you did it for selfish ambitions?

[ 31 : 05 ] That's gossip. You know, have you ever spoken accurately directly to a person and said exactly what you think their problem is, but you did it for selfish ambition? That's spite.

It's a wound. It's a word that kills. Have you ever spoken about yourself to other people accurately, but with the motivation of selfish ambition? That's boasting.

That's pride. You say we can speak true words that are at the same time sinful words. But the matrix always across the Bible is that truth be unified to love.

One last example, a striking example from Proverbs 27, verse 6. It's one of my favorites. Wounds from a friend are faithful, but an enemy multiplies kisses.

Wounds from a friend are faithful, but an enemy multiplies kisses. You see what it's saying? That when you have a friend, a true friend, they will speak words to you, truth, in love, that wounds you.

[ 32 : 08 ] You know, it's not the sword, the dagger that kills by the way of a mortal wound. It's the surgeon's scalpel. A true friend will cut you with the surgeon's scalpel. We'll say, look, this is what I think is going on in your life and I love you enough to tell you so that you might be healed and grow.

But an enemy, the enemy comes up and kisses you on the cheek all the time. What's it talking about? The sin of flattery. Flattery is a form of deceitful lying.

It comes and praises a person all the time. But look, none of you are that great. I'm not that great. We're not that great. We can't be flattered. It's not true. It's a lie.

We're not that great. An enemy multiplies kisses on our cheek, but a true friend tells the truth in love. You see, truth without love is spite, but love without truth is flattery.

And neither of them are really love. Now, lastly, let me leave you with three thoughts. And I'll rattle these off in 30 seconds each. Three thoughts to walk away with. One, remember, your speech can be forgiven.

[ 33 : 16 ] If you are a believer in Jesus Christ tonight, it has been. Jesus Christ went to hellfire for your speech. And that's an invitation. But look, that means, that means then that you've got to be willing to turn around and forgive the speech of others.

And so, the Christian life cannot be one marked by harboring speech wounds. Wounds from the past or the way people have spoken to us. We've got to be, Christ says, take this gospel of grace and then go and live like it too.

And so, we've got to be people that are so motivated by Jesus that we forgive sinful speech. Number one. Number two. Number two is, at the same time, at the same time, it's very important that we go forth from here remembering how serious our words are.



John Webster, one of the great British theologians of the past generation. Many of you will know of John Webster. John died just a few years ago. He was a theologian at St. Andrews.

He wrote a wonderful essay about speech in the Bible and in theology. And this is what he says about it. He says that what is said may not be unsaid.

[ 34 : 30 ] Speech sets up meaning in this world which may never be retracted. Our words can be recanted, withdrawn, renounced, forgiven, but they cannot be unsaid.

Because that which has been said is irreversible. If I am called a fool by someone, I am now the one who has once been called a fool. And the someone who called me a fool is now the person who once called me a fool.

And the world is now a place in which that someone once called me a fool. And so a fool I will be. And you see what he's saying? He's saying that yes, your words can be forgiven, but the Christian has to be more serious about our speech than anybody else.

Because words can have serious consequences for all of life. They're very serious because we're made to speak like God speaks. Lastly, walking in step with the Spirit here creates a real paradox.

It's the last thing. Maybe you caught it. It comes up all across the Old and New Testament when the Bible talks about speech. It's one of the difficult things to know what to do with. Jesus says, out of the heart the mouth speaks.

[ 35 : 42 ] In other words, Jesus says ever and ever again like Proverbs and like James that you're going to speak in accordance with the condition of your heart. But then at the same time the Bible comes and says stop speaking like that.

You see the paradox? It says you can't help but speak according to the condition of your heart and stop doing it. And there's a paradox a relationship there and it's because the Bible understands number one that when you're in Christ you have the Holy Spirit you have the X factor there.

You know, you have the Holy Spirit who can do the work. But at the same time there's work for us to do here. We're called to grow. And here it is. When we decide to be conscious of our particular sin patterns when it comes to our words you know, what do you struggle with particularly?

Is it gossip? Is it slander? Is it slanting? Is it exaggeration? Is it lies? Is it small lies or big lies? Whatever it may be are you conscious of it?

Of your sinful speech patterns? And then the Bible comes and says look, here's why you've got to put it away. Because it's true that our souls are what we call plastic.

[ 36 : 53 ] Not in a material sense but in the sense that they're malleable. That we can change. That the more we speak truth the more we become truth speakers. And when you speak lies you become a liar more and more.

You see, out of the heart the mouth speaks but also whatever the mouth speaks the heart becomes. And so it works both ways. And so in the power of the Holy Spirit the Bible says how do you grow?

Well, in prayer you stop lying. You say I'm going to fight this nail and tooth. I'm going to put away the little lies that I'm addicted to. And then all of a sudden your soul changes.

And all of a sudden you love the truth and desire changes and you're reshaped. And that's how it works. That's how growth works in the Christian life. And so I can leave you with this last word and it's this.

We need counter habits to our sinful speech our sinful patterns. And here's the greatest counter habit you can take away. Swim in the river bathe in the waters of the speech himself.

[ 38 : 02 ] How do you grow? Bathe yourself in the word. The speech of God. Jesus. Meditate on him and his very speech we have here.

And in it your soul will be transformed. You'll learn the habits of righteous speech. Let's pray together and ask God to give us these hearts. Father, we pray now that you would change us as speakers.

We give thanks that you've given us the power of speech. We give thanks that we have been differentiated from the animal kingdom in this way. and we pray now, Lord, that you would forgive and forget the many sins that we have spoken through which we have spoken.

And we give thanks that you have in Jesus. We give thanks that it is true that our sins are cast away as far as the east is from the west because hellfire was set to Christ at the cross and he did not stay dead.

And so in the power of Jesus we rest in the forgiveness for our sins and now send us from this place as new selves, new speakers, speakers that are birthed by Jesus, regenerated by the Spirit, given life to speak words of life.

[ 39 : 18 ] So help us in this battle, Lord, we pray and we ask in Christ's name. Amen. Let's respond to God's word by singing together. We're going to sing the hymn, I heard the voice of Jesus say, let's hear the voice of Christ in prayer as we sing this, the words of this hymn to God.

So let's stand together and we'll sing.