

# Proverbs for our Time: Speech

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] our gracious father we do thank you again for your word through which you speak to us and so we do pray again that you would give us ears to hear and minds to understand but more than that hearts that would seek to live in light of your word to us this evening we ask it in jesus name amen well i wonder if you've ever suffered from foot in mouth disease and not the one where you break out in a rash that babies get but you know the one where you've said something foolish and put your foot in it and i wonder if you've ever had that experience or perhaps more generally ever said something that you've regretted i remember coming home one day and when i walked in i tripped on some shoes left at the front door and exclaimed in a loud voice whose jolly shoes are these to which a sheepish voice came mine it was from a guest we're having for lunch that day i heard of a lady whose boss announced she was leaving and she said when's the party by which she meant you know when's the farewell dinner that didn't go down so well or one church bulletin the person writing it said on the next slide the pastor will preach his farewell message after which the choir will sing break forth into joy whoever wrote that put their foot in it well tonight we'll be looking at wisdom about words because as one commentator said proverbs has more to say about our speech than any other topic you may have got that sense from our reading from chapter 18 tonight but because this is the last talk let me spend a few minutes uh just recapping what we've done so far as you know probably a reasonably long book it has 31 chapters in it and so it was impossible to work our way through every chapter in four talks and said what i've tried to do is not just teach you from proverbs but about proverbs so that you can read other chapters for yourselves so in the first week we looked at chapter one and why proverbs matters and we also looked at the nature of a proverb and the structure of the book and that gave us our first two principles for reading proverbs i've given them again on the back of your outlines in case you missed them last week we also saw that wisdom begins with the fear of the lord so wisdom is not about being clever it's not about knowing everything in life actually it's not even about living well in this world without god rather it's about living well in this world with god in relationship with him where we fear him in love and humility and tremble at his word that's what wisdom is um and then in week two uh we addressed an issue that many people have with the book of proverbs which is it seems to promise too much and we looked at chapter three in particular and it does seem to promise quite a bit things that don't resonate with our own experience and so we looked at those promises and saw that because god has stitched order into this creation there is actually general truth to those promises and i gave you examples of those but we also saw that because we live in a fractured creation they won't be completely true until the new creation and then last week we looked at one of the collections so you might remember that proverbs is made up of a number of collections seven collections of proverbs and so we took a look at one collection in particular and saw that it used wisdom from the world and i tried to show that um it can do that because again god has put order in creation and so there is general revelation from which the world can glean wisdom but we also saw that

proverbs directs and shapes that wisdom by god's special revelation his word and so that's what we are to do in fact we are to direct and shape everything by god's ultimate revelation in his son jesus christ so that we might rightly apply the wisdom from the world and even wisdom from the old testament like proverbs and so that sharpened our third principle for reading proverbs and then we use those three principles you might remember from last week to have a go at doing it for yourself and so we broke up into groups you remember and you had a crack at some proverbs applying those three principles and so i do hope that you've not only learned some things from proverbs but you feel a little bit more equipped to read it on your own because it really is a helpful stuff but tonight i'm going to teach you just from proverbs i'm not going to give you any more principles and

i'm going to look at a topic from chapters 10 to 31 and the topic is words and so i've already applied the first principle for us really which is to work out what the topic is i've just told you it's going to be words and because it's topical we're going to have to kind of look at a whole lot of proverbs all the way through the chapters which means i'll put a lot more text on the screen rather than trying to force you to flip through your bibles that's not the way i prefer to do things but it's the way we'll do it tonight as to give you a different example of reading proverbs and as i said uh the topic i've chosen is words because proverbs has more to say about words than any other topic does that surprise you by the way when i read this this from this commentator it surprised me i would have thought money surely money or sex or something like that but speech words the tongue why then does proverbs think wisdom on words matters so much point one in your outline and the answer in your outline is because words are powerful they can either heal or hurt people and therefore bring life or death to relationships i see if you can finish this modern day proverb i'm sure you know well sticks and stones may break my bones but but it's rubbish isn't it it's false wisdom it does not match with our experience and more importantly it does not match against god's revelation god's wisdom for when we test it against god's word like proverbs 18 21 on the next slide it's the opposite we read the tongue has the power of life and death and those who love it will eat its fruit this is going to be uh the summary verse the verse that i want you to try and remember uh from tonight and it says that words are really powerful they have power to heal or hurt others to bring life or death to relationships and we will eat the consequences of how we've used our words and in particular if we love words if we use them well then it will even benefit us words really matter in other words and we can see this by the fact that there are so many proverbs about the power of words to heal or hurt for example on the next slide proverbs chapter 10 verse 11 says the mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence and so if we apply our second principle and ponder just here for a moment what it's saying is that yes the righteous bring life to others with their words but the words of the wicked may sound good but they actually conceal violence they actually do violence to people

or in the middle there chapter 10 verse 21 the lips of the righteous may nourish many but fools die for lack of sense i hear the words of the righteous again bring life or nourishment but fools lack the sense to listen to it and so they die you see the words of the righteous bring life so much so that if you ignore them it leads to death that's how powerful words are words can hurt just like swords really hurt but they can also heal it's pretty clear isn't it words have real power to heal or hurt and we know this is true in our own lives don't we last month i saw someone who had moved away from melbourne they came back to visit us here at htd and it was great to see them and i was at the front door just shaking hands after the service and he came up to me and you know the first thing he said after hello he said have you put on weight now i admit i'm not very fit and by not very fit i mean my son beat me in a wrestling match the other day because i was too puffed to continue perhaps i should have just sat on him and my wife can say this to me because we have a different kind we have a closer relationship but for this person who i'd not seen for a while their words kind of hurt a little bit in my enlarged gut obviously now i tried not to react i said yeah i probably have or maybe the suit has shrunk you know that old excuse and i think he realized what he had said and so he tried to cover it up with but your preaching is still as good as ever but it was too late the words were already out and that's the thing with words isn't it once they're out we cannot get them back in i tried to demonstrate this to some youth group kids once by getting a tube of toothpaste and squirting it and say now get it back in you know you can't except one kid did so i won't use the illustration here but the point is words really do have power to heal or hurt and not just individuals but whole communities as well so on the next slide proverbs chapter 11 verse 11 we read this by the blessing of the upright a city is exalted but by the mouth of the wicked it is destroyed now again applying our second principle of pondering for a moment we need to work out what's being said here because at first glance it's hard to see what this blessing of the upright is so we need to look at it a bit more and notice how the blessing of the upright is in the first line is paralleled by the mouth of the wicked in the second line and so that gives you a hint of how to understand it and so it's likely the blessing of the righteous is because of the words they speak to their mouths and so the picture seems to be one where the righteous use their mouths to pray for the city or to give wisdom to others to live rightly in the city so that israel might enjoy the blessings god prepared for her in the land but it's certainly clear that words can destroy a whole community isn't it including church communities i grew up in a church where um one pastor uh we had um sadly uh cheated on his wife and had an affair and uh it is a horrific thing adultery is horrific in the old testament was punishable by death in

the new testament it is certainly condemned in strong language and yet this pastor's adultery did not destroy the church it grieved the church but it did not destroy it yet we had another pastor who rubbed people up the wrong way so much so that these people started spreading rumors about this part of pastor and speaking against him in a very non-christian and dare i say wicked way and sadly that did split the church and eventually destroyed half of it including the pastor you see we we rightly regard sins as like adultery as horrific and and they are and it does divide and destroy families but it's rarely that it divides and destroys a larger community like a church community and yet words on the other hand rumors gossiping in-house fighting well that has divided and destroyed churches time and time again did you see how powerful words are and if that's not enough reason to use words wisely then proverbs gives us one more it says that our words can even end up healing or hurting ourselves all right so on the next slide we read in proverbs 18 verse 6 16 the lips of fools bring them strife and their mouths invite a beating now violence is almost never a good thing but sometimes you can understand why a drunk college student mouthing off to a biker gets hit in the head you kind of think well you know why you deserved it we'll take our proverbs chapter 12 verse 13 on the next slide it says evil doers are trapped by their own sinful talk though the righteous can escape trouble here our unwise words or sinful talk end up coming back to bite us and i'm sure you've had the experience of that but on the other hand wise words can fill us with good things as the next verse shows the tongue has um the fruit of the sorry no sorry the from the fruit of their lips people are filled with good things and the work of their hands brings them reward i hear the words uh the fruit of their lips are in parallel with the second line the work of their hands and so just as we work with our hands produce things to feed us and so on so even our words cannot end up feeding us metaphorically and sometimes even literally this idea is repeated in chapter 18 on the next slide where it says from the fruit of their mouth a person's stomach is filled with the harvest of their lips they are satisfied or the tongue has the power of life and death our summary verse and those who love it will eat its fruit you see wise words can mean that we end up being filled with a good reputation or being rewarded at work with accolades or with friendship or with gifts or unwise words can mean we are avoided and lose friends and the like i used to teach at a christian school and there was one staff member who was always careful with what he said and sought to encourage others and i remember another staff member going through a difficult time her sister passed away um and she was struggling with a few things and this man really gave some wise counsel listened and helped her out and she was so appreciative of this that she took him and his wife out for dinner and so this man's wise words literally filled his stomach our wise words you see can not only heal or hurt others or communities but even ourselves perhaps uh on the next slide chapter 13 verse 13 puts it more plainly those who guard their lips preserve their lives but those who speak rashly will come to ruin it's pretty pretty clear isn't it i've been saying that words have power to either heal or hurt but proverbs puts it more seriously than that doesn't it as we saw in our summary verse it says words have the power for life and death you can't get much more serious than that can you our words really matter and so the first step to having wisdom about words is to realize how much they matter now i'm sure you know this but we forget it don't we we forget how much our words matter we think they are cheap when they are not we just use them cheaply and we forget they matter especially in the heat of the moment one of our daughters got so angry with my wife michelle one time and she started having a go at michelle and at the end of her tirade she ended with what she thought was the biggest insult she could level at her mother she said and that blouse looks terrible on you but she felt so bad she came back later saying mommy you always look good not that michelle is a vain person i should be clear it's the other it's the other one but the point is in the heat of the moment it's easy to blurt out words that hurt rather than heal that bring death to relationships rather than life and so we need to keep remembering how much words matter and since they do matter then what are wise words point two on your outline well as i've been looking through proverbs from chapters 10 to 31 i've tried to group them into four categories or four ways to use words wisely and they're on your outline there and i've also given you a selection of verses that you can look up later i haven't given them all to you i didn't have enough room on the outline so first wise words are considered words so on the next slide for example chapter 10 verse 14 says the wise store up knowledge but the mouth of a fool invites ruin so here the wise listen and gather knowledge information first they consider things first before they speak but the fool on the other hand rushes in without thought or consideration and so invites ruin or take uh on the next slide chapter 15 verse 28 the heart of the righteous weighs its answers but

the mouth of the wicked just gushes evil or 1727 the one who has knowledge uses words with restraint and whoever has understanding is even tempered you see the wise words are considered words as our parents taught us we are to think before we speak and when we think first it means we don't speak doesn't it in fact proverbs has proverbs about not speaking or speaking only few words so that we might consider for example proverbs chapter 10 verse 19 on the next slide when words are many transgression is not lacking but whoever restrains his lips is prudent or wise or 11 12 there whoever derides their neighbor has no sense but the one who has understanding holds their tongue you see using words wisely means not running off our mouths but holding our tongues and in proverbs those who talk lots without thought or consideration those who babble on are associated with fools

[ 20 : 12 ] so on the next slide we read the wise in heart accept commands but a babbling fool comes to ruin and in case we didn't get the first time two verses later whoever winks in a malicious way causes grief and a babbling fool comes to ruin it's pretty clear isn't it wise words are not impulsive and babbling instead they are considered thought about and few in fact holding our tongues can even make the most foolish person look wise so on the next slide proverbs 17 says even fools are thought wise if they keep silent and discerning if they hold their tongues that's true isn't it I mean have you ever been in one of those meetings or committee or the like and people all speaking and then someone who hasn't said anything yet speaks up later on and often it sounds really wise they kind of come across as really wise don't they and they are but often it's only because they've held their tongue and listened and considered before responding now I realise that for some of us like talking more than others and one gender is prone to talk more than the other and I think

I won't look at people elbowing each other but these proverbs are not about always speaking so don't misunderstand it it's just about using our words with restraint so that we might consider and when my wife asked me how my day was I often give the typical male one word answer I can't then justify it by saying well proverbs says to hold my tongue point is proverbs is about holding our tongues in order to give a considered response wise words are considered words second they are also honest words and this is probably the biggest category in proverbs that I found so the next slide we read chapter 14 verse 25 a truthful witness saves lives and that was especially true in Old Testament days when the death penalty was on the table but a false witness is deceitful or 25 18 like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow is the one who gives false testimony against a neighbour or 26 28 a lying tongue hates those it hurts and a flattering mouth works ruin here it's saying honest words can save lives but dishonest words can take lives lies not telling the truth it's like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow says the middle proverb there and all those kill don't they and so that's why God hates lying words and will hold the dishonest accountable so on the next slide we read in chapter 12 verse 22 that the Lord detests lying lips but he delights in people who are trustworthy and he will judge as those next two proverbs show those who lie they will not get away with it you see wise words really are honest words and it means and it means not just avoiding to lie it also means not slandering which is spreading lies nor gossiping which is spreading rumors the rumors can be true but often it's only the juicy part of the truth that is spread isn't it which means it's not the whole truth it's not the context and the like our problem of course is we love gossip don't we on the next slide proverbs 18 verse 8 oh maybe I've missed that one oh no I have it there it is and 26 22 say exactly the same thing the words of a gossip are like choice morsels juicy bits of steak if you like they go down to the inmost parts people humanity loves gossip but it often causes trouble and so wise words will avoid it as 26 20 says without wood a fire goes out well without gossip a quarrel dies down of course sometimes we will need to say honest things that are hard to say so on the next slide we're reading proverbs 27 verse 5 and 6 better is an open rebuke than hidden love wounds from a friend can be trusted but an enemy multiplies kisses in other words hidden love is of no use unless it's used for the good of others and a friend who even gives a rebuke can be trusted more than someone who just sucks up to you and tells you what you want to hear all the time now that doesn't mean we need to go around and police people and pounce on them when we see them doing wrong rather the proverb speaks of a friend someone with whom we have a relationship and what's more the sorry if you go back

Barry for a moment the open rebuke as in parallel with the next line about love hidden love so in other words open rebuke is meant to be done in open love if you like the words are kind of meant to be in parallel there I mentioned to the morning congregation a little while ago that one time my wife

Michelle was actually concerned about how she looked it was a special occasion it might have been a job interview I can't remember and she was nervous and so she asked me if I liked the dress she was wearing and I said nope she's my friend so I could give her an honest answer but it wasn't very loving was it I could have said well my love you make it look so much better than it really is or perhaps simply said I don't like the colour but you see we are to have honest words even if it's hard words to say but when we say we need to have a relationship with them and we need to do it in love and that brings us to the third category of wise words which are gentle words so on the next slide Proverbs 15 verse 1 we read a gentle answer turns away wrath but a harsh word stirs up anger on the flip side if we are not gentle or gracious but insist and quarrel for something then it stirs up things it ignites a fire so do you see that 26 21 as charcoal to embers and as wood to fire well so also is a quarrel person for kindling strife you see wise words are also not just considered and honest but gentle gracious there was a guy I know who was deep in thought and accidentally cut someone off on the road near Tunstall Square and when he arrived at the car park at Coles he didn't realise it but this other person a really big guy got out of the car and told him that he cut him off and he was in no uncertain words and he was really angry and so the guy

[ 27 : 45 ] I know said look I'm so sorry I didn't realise I'll be more careful next time and the big burly guy ready for a fight went oh oh okay make sure you do and then just walked away a gentle answer does often turn away wrath and because of this it brings life to relationships so the next slide chapter 15 verse 4 the soothing or gentle tongue is a tree of life but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit it says or 16 24 gracious words are as honeycomb sweet to the soul and healing to the bones see wise words are gentle words are gracious words because they build relationship they bring life to relationships and the fourth category are apt words so the next slide that probably is 15 23 a person finds joy in giving an apt reply and how good is a timely word i saw another church bulletin blooper which i thought was kind of timely on the next slide it says ladies don't forget the rummage sale it's the chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house bring your husbands i'll leave it to you to work out how timely that is i'll take our proverbs 27 verse 14 on the next slide if anyone loudly blesses their neighbor early in the morning it will be taken as a curse and as someone who is not a morning person let me tell you that is true in fact i was looking for an illustration online and came across a mother who is a morning person she came in or chipper to wake up her young son who evidently is not a morning person and this is the face she met when she woke him up i'm not sure the right response was then taking a photo of the poor kid but but you can see the truth of the proverb can't you and that word is a word that is the right word at the right time in the right situation we've seen this before on the next slide proverbs 26 verses 4 and 5 it says do not answer a fool according to his folly or you yourself will be just like him and then immediately the next verse says answer a fool according to his folly or he will be seen in his own eyes now some people will take this as evidence that the bible contradicts itself but it's not what it's saying is there is a wise word is an apt word and there might be a situation where the first proverb applies but it might be in different situation where you apply the second proverb let me see if I can illustrate when a

Mormon or a JW knocks on your door claiming to have the truth when they don't that's serious and so you might answer them to try and point out their folly so they don't think they are wise in their own eyes the second proverb some years ago an older friend of mine had an experience where the JW knocked on the door and the JW said Jehovah's witness said do you want to be part of the 144,000 in heaven to which he replied but aren't there more than 144,000 JWs now he answered him according to his own folly they have an answer for that comment now actually but at that time this particular JW ignored my friend's answer and went on to other arguments and showed that he really wasn't willing to listen and engage in conversation and so my friend then applied this first proverb he thanked him and said goodbye he stopped talking lest he was sucked into his silly arguing you see wise words are apt or appropriate to the situation which may even change in the same conversation now of course there is an overlap between the four categories

I mean at words will be considered words and honest words as well but throughout proverbs the assumption is that words are to be used for the good of others to build them up in the words of our summary proverb to bring life to relationship and to people and as we bring life to others it often brings life to us as well that's just how God has designed us it's like when we serve others we end up feeling good we end up getting something out of it but using words wisely is not simply a matter of remembering that words have power to heal or hurt it's not simply a matter of getting those four categories tucked under your belt because Israel knew these things I mean they knew proverbs

better than we do and yet they could not keep them what they were missing was a right heart and in fact even proverbs acknowledges that it all starts with having the right heart point three so I think on the next slide

I've got chapter 4 verse 23 which talks about above all else guard your heart the father says to the son for everything you do flows from it and this is especially true of our words so on the next slide proverbs 10 20 says notice how the first line uses tongue and the second line uses heart they're in parallel with each other proverbs draws this close connection you see between the tongue and the heart or the next proverb there one whose heart is corrupt does not prosper one whose tongue is perverse falls into trouble you see the parallelism there there's a close connection between our heart and our tongue see proverbs wants us to realize that wise words actually begin with a right heart perhaps more plainly chapter 16 verse 23 on the next slide the hearts of the wise will make their mouths prudent wise and their lips promote instruction see our hearts often determine our speech and so what we really need in order to be wise about words is a right heart that's why in proverbs it's the righteous who speak wisely and the unrighteous wicked who speak foolishly because the righteous have a right heart so how do we get a right heart then how we made righteous well proverbs has given us a hint already it says the fear of the

Lord is the beginning of wisdom it's the fear of the Lord which gives us a right relationship with God where we fear him in love and humility and tremble at his word but this is not something we can do on our own in fact even after God saved Israel and made them his people and gave them these proverbs they did not continue to fear God nor keep these proverbs and so we need to apply our third principle now where we ask how might Christ and his teaching in the New Testament help us apply this these proverbs point four on your outline well it affirms everything we've seen so far first it affirms that words are powerful we heard this in our second reading from James didn't we James said the tongue is small but powerful like a small rudder that can turn a big ship like a small spark that creates a big fire and like proverbs

[ 35 : 43 ] James also acknowledges that our words have power for good or bad to either praise God he says or curse people but James added the fact that the tongue is so powerful it's actually hard to control a restless evil he called it and it's easy to stumble with our words and so we need to work hard at our words but we also need help what's more the new testament also says that our words have power of life and death not just in terms of relationships but in terms of eternity do you remember what the apostle Peter said to Jesus he said where else have we to go when you have the words of eternal life we have those words too the gospel is a word it's news so it needs to be spoken without words it's just a game of charades and this gospel word is powerful to bring life eternal and without it it will mean death eternal for the gospel is news about Jesus who died to take our punishment in our place so that we could be forgiven and given life eternal the gospel is the most powerful word there is and so using words wisely will include doing all that we can to promote and proclaim this gospel that's what the new testament adds to proverbs at that point of course it also reiterates the other categories of wise words too so on the next slide we heard from

James one that brothers and sisters take note of this everyone should be quick to listen and slow to speak in other words our words should be considered we should think first speak second and the new testament also reiterates the need for honest words so on the next slide in Ephesians 4 25 Paul writes each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbour this also talks about the need for gentle gracious and even apt words so on the next slide Peter writes always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope you have but do this with gentleness and respect or Paul in Colossians let your conversation be always full of grace and then he adds seasoned with salt so that you may know how to answer everyone the season with salt there I think means apt it's a word that is tasteful or appropriate for the situation it's apt and as we seek to give answers that are gracious and apt then we'll know how to answer everyone

I remember going door knocking with a guy we'll call Larry and on one occasion it's a real person not a real name on one occasion the person who answered the door was someone doing shift work and we'd woken them up and so after explaining that we were inviting them to a church Christmas event the guy said I can't think you've just woken me up so just no thanks and he started to close the door I said sorry about that and Larry stuck his foot in the door and said oh come on mate haven't you got a better reason than that needless to say that was not full of grace nor apt for that particular situation and nor did it promote the gospel he needed that proverb about anyone loudly

blessing the neighbor early in the morning what's more Jesus also affirmed the fact or sorry Paul also affirmed the fact that we are to speak words that build others up according to their needs and Jesus also affirmed the fact that it's from our hearts that our mouth speaks so in chapter 6 verse 45 on the next slide Jesus says the good person 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 you see the connection here it's pretty obvious isn't it it starts with our hearts but Christ does more than just affirm the connection between heart and word that we saw in proverbs he's also the one through whom God gives us the new heart as I said the problem with Israel was they could not keep these proverbs about wise words because they needed a right heart and God promised to give them one so on the next slide in Ezekiel 36 we read God saying I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you your heart of flesh and I will put my spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws and that's exactly what God has done through Christ and so the next slide in Titus chapter 3 we read God saved us not because of the works done by us in righteousness but according to his own mercy how or by the washing of regeneration and renewal a renewed heart that includes of the Holy Spirit whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior this is how God regenerates and renews our hearts he he does it by his spirit through his son who pay for our sins at the cross and he does this when we trust in Jesus what's more his spirit continues to help us control our tongues so that we're not alone that's on the next slide in 2 Corinthians 3 18 we read and we all who with unveiled faces contemplate there's no a there it's just the Lord's Lord Jesus glory are being transformed into his image with ever increasing glory including the way we speak and this glory comes from the Lord who sorry this transformation comes from the Lord who is the spirit in other words as you know we're not alone God's spirit helps us to have wise words like Christ who spoke aptly so aptly that the Pharisees remember couldn't catch him out who spoke graciously to sinners but honestly to others even when they didn't want to hear it and sometimes he spoke zealously to defend God's honor and so if you want to be truly wise about words then the first thing you need to do is trust in Christ for a new heart that make sense it starts with the heart so have you done that have you put your trust in [ 42 : 37 ] Christ and for those of us who have then secondly we need to pray for God's help for his spirit to work in our hearts and at the same time for us to keep working at remembering that words matter they can bring life or death to relationships and in fact to people's eternity and we pray and work at using words wisely having considered words using honest words gentle and apt words and thirdly we are all to remember that there is forgiveness so when we fail with our words ask God to forgive and forgive others that's the hard part isn't it because there will be times when people use their words which hurt you but we are to forgive as God has forgiven us because from time to time we all suffer mouth in foot disease well let me close with a mildly amusing cartoon I saw it's of a married couple just passing a sign to the Cirque du Soleil which of course is the one where they do all the court contortions and it says the wife says you should consider joining I've seen you get your foot all the way up into your mouth mildly amusing but let's pray that we might use our words more wisely than that let's pray our gracious heavenly father we do thank you that through Christ we can have a right heart and be made right in your sight we thank you that through Christ we are given your spirit who convicts our conscience of your word and who moves our will to obey and so father we pray that you would help us by your spirit to use words wisely for they indeed have power to heal or hurt to bring life or death both to relationships and to people's very eternity help us we pray to use our words wisely for Jesus sake amen