

Watch Your Tongue

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[0 : 00] 9. I said, now let me watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin.

I'll put a muscle on my mouth when I'm with wicked men. When I was silent and kept still and firmly held my peace, not speaking even what was good, this made my pain increase.

Because of this my heart grew hot and fire burned strong indeed. The more I mused upon it all, then I began to plead. Lord, show me that my life will end, how many days I'll see.

And cause me, Lord, to understand how brief my life will be. O Lord, how short you make my days before I sink in death. My years are nothing in your sight.

Man's life is but a breath. 1 to 5, Psalm 39. I said, now let me watch my ways. I said, now let me watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin.

[1 : 18] I'll put a muscle on my mouth while I'm with wicked men.

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Lord, show me that my life will end, how many days I'll see.

[2 : 56] And cause me, Lord, to understand how brief my life will be.

Oh, Lord, how short you make my days before I sink in death.

My years are nothing in your sight. Man's life is but a breath.

Let's turn again to the chapter we read in Ephesians. Ephesians chapter 4.

Looking at verse 25. Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

[4 : 09] Having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth. The day you become a Christian, things change. It's not just that the burden of guilt and the burden that sin brings into our lives is lifted and that we are now accepted by God, that we have a great sense of belonging to God and freedom with God.

We don't feel like running away from God. We're wanting to run to God. All that happens when we become a Christian. But more than that happens because we begin to change as a person.

Yes, we're still the same person, same personality. We still have many of the characteristics and the unique characters that we are.

Everybody's different. But as time goes on, more and more of the influence of Jesus Christ ought to become evident within our lives.

People should notice. You know, it's one of the things, actually, when a person becomes a Christian, that they can't hide. Even if they try to, you can't hide the fact that you become a Christian.

[5 : 23] People notice. Even if you're trying, you say, I can't, I'm not to, because sometimes people who, who've said this before, but people who lack assurance and they're not, they're not absolutely sure whether they've come to faith in Jesus Christ and that they're so wanting to and they're still seeking it, but they have come, but maybe don't know it themselves.

The thing is that they, they haven't said a word to anybody, but people notice. And when the time comes, when they do tell somebody, people say, oh yes, we saw that.

Because you cannot hide the work of God that goes on within a person's heart. Because people's lives change. And they change in order to resemble Jesus more and more.

So this is one of the things that marks out the Christian. And Paul makes it very clear that once we become Christians, we have to work at it.

Yes, God works in us, but we have to work at it as well. It is God who works in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. But it also says, we are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you.

[6 : 38] So that there is this ongoing work of God within us, but we also are to work as well. And that's what Paul is telling us. Because we are to no longer walk through this world like the non-Christian.

Paul tells us in verse 17, this I say and testify in the Lord that you no longer walk as the Gentiles do. And this is how the world walks, we've got to remember, in the futility of their minds.

They're darkened in their understanding and alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardness of their heart. Now that doesn't mean that people who aren't Christians are ignorant people, because some of them are brilliantly clever.

But it means that with regard to the spiritual understanding of their understanding of who God is and what God requires and all these things, they walk in darkness.

And we've got to remember that so many of the decisions that are made by people are made in the darkness. Morally dark, spiritually dark.

[7 : 48] And that is why we need to pray for those in authority over us, for our leaders, that the light of God will come into their hearts. because it's only then that they will truly make the best decisions, the decisions that are right for us and glorifying to God.

Because otherwise, as it says here, they're walking in darkness. And so we are to live in a different way. Now we live in a very secular world, in a very powerful world that is pulling us away from God. And you as a Christian today know all about that. And that's part of the huge struggle in the Christian life. Because when you're a Christian, you say to yourself, and when you, like in your heart, and you're sitting here in church, and you're saying to yourself, my desire is really to follow the Lord.

I want to walk in His ways. I want to be a totally committed Christian, and I want that my life will glorify God in all that I say and in all that I do.

That's your desire. But you and I know that that isn't the way that it always works. Because often we find that there are desires that pull us away.

[9 : 08] And often we catch ourselves and we're saying, what am I doing? What am I thinking? Where am I going? And sometimes people can get into all kinds of doubt and say, if I'm thinking like this, if there are these desires tugging away at me, I can't be a Christian.

But we've got to remember that although there is a new heart given to us, the old is still there. It's not that the old has all been removed and banished, and that everything is just brand new, and there's nothing there to drag us down or pull us away.

That's why the Apostle said, you know, the good that I would, I do not, and the evil that I would not, that's what I do. That's part of the huge struggle that goes on within the Christian life. In fact, we would go as far as to say to the Christian, if you don't know a struggle, then you have to wonder really, are you a Christian at all?

because there is an ongoing conflict between the work of the Spirit and the whole lure of what we term the flesh, the old base human nature that still exists within us.

However, that being said, that doesn't mean that when we fail, which we do, when we fail, there is only one recourse of action, and that's to go to the Lord and to open up to Him.

[10 : 34] And confess to Him. Say, Lord, forgive me. Forgive me my sin. I've let you down. I've let myself down. Lord, I want to walk with you. I want to be right with you.

Forgive me when I go wrong. I've got to be honest with God. And God will, when we come honestly to the Lord, the Lord will hear us, and the Lord will pardon, and the Lord will forgive.

And in order to walk in the right way, it is imperative that we soak ourselves in God's Word. First of all, to know the way to go. And then to be given the strength to walk in that way.

This is the way, walk ye in it, when we hear and we read in God's Word. Because God's Word, it has a cleansing impact. It's like water. God's Word has the impact almost like of going into a shower.

You know, you go into a shower and you get washed and you get cleaned up. Well, God's Word as we take it every day, it's like that. It's got a washing effect on us. It's got a cleansing effect.

[11 : 36] And when you come away from God's Word, you feel better. You're given strength for the day. You can begin to feel renewed by it. So this is what we've got to do is saturate ourselves in

God's Word.

Because God's Word is liberating. And if you're today outside Jesus Christ, please, before I go any further, ask the Lord to come into your heart. Because you know this, it's a lonely world out there. It's a dark world. It's a world that's opposed to God. And if you're living only in the world, then you're living in a place that is opposed to God.

Please come in. Come in to Jesus Christ. Because, as I say to you, it's lonely. But you know, it's only going to get lonelier. The further you go away from God, the lonelier that life becomes. And if we go on all the way down into death's dark veil, then life becomes utterly lonely. Altogether, a loneliness that isn't even understood in this world.

[12:44] So please, come in to the warmth and into the light. So Paul, as he goes through this chapter, and as is so often the case, Paul is very practical, he tells us about how we should live.

And one of the things that he's highlighting here is the importance of how we speak. And so Paul is saying, therefore, having put away falsehood, it's not something that you start doing, it's something that you do, that the moment you become a Christian, you're starting to put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor.

Now, truth is an essential for our lives, particularly if we are Christians. Because as a Christian, you have received the one who made the most awesome declaration in this world, where he said, I am the truth.

Remember how Jesus said, I'm the way, the truth, and the life. I am the truth. So Jesus is the truth. So if we have received Jesus, who is the truth, then, if we are resembling Christ, if Jesus is working within us, then, truth ought to be at the very heart, the very center of our lives.

When Jesus was in this world, every word he spoke was true. He never embellished a story, he never flattered, he never tried to deceive anybody, he was honest, he was truthful, every word he spoke was true, and he never stretched the truth at any time at all.

[14:30] In fact, remember how the Old Testament prophet says, because he had done no violence, neither was there any deceit in his mouth. At no point did Jesus ever try to deceive anybody.

And, that's God's great aim for us, is that in a world that is full of lies, and full of deceit, and full of untruths, that his people will speak the truth, that their lives will be known for their honesty, their honest dealings with one another, and with the words that they speak, which are words of truth. Now, of course, sometimes, truth can be offensive, and there was no doubt that even the gospel, the gospel truth is offensive to many people, but truth is absolutely essential.

We sang in Psalm 1, Psalm David wrote, and David, who was God's representative here in this world, spoke about, and we've got to remember that whatever David, as God's representative here, is only reflecting what God is actually giving to him, and saying to him, says in Psalm 101, and verse 7, no one who practices deceit shall dwell in my house.

Now, that's a challenge. Now, when we talk about practice, it means that's what we're doing all the time. It's not like a one-off. When we practice something, it's what becomes a habit of our life.

[16:07] And if we practice deceit, in other words, if this is the main characteristic of our life, if we are kind of deceitful in all our dealings, then that is a really solemn, challenging thing, because David, who was God's representative, he said, no one who practices deceit shall dwell in my house.

They're out. And when we think, when we apply that to what God is saying, remember if Psalm 23 says, goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me, and in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be.

But then you have to say, your dwelling place, not if you practice, not if your life is a life that is given over to deceit. You see, it's challenging because God hates lies, deceit and lies are an abomination to him.

And so this is something that God's judgment comes upon. And so it's imperative that our life, that our lives are given over to truth, that our tongues are speaking the truth.

You know, the doctor, I remember always when I was wee, you go to the doctor, the doctor would say, let me see your tongue. I haven't a clue what the doctor can, maybe I'll ask Martin afterwards what they can, what a doctor can tell from your tongue.

[17:29] but doctors were able to tell something by looking at your tongue. And you know, that is true spiritually as well. Because your tongue will reveal an awful lot about you, about who you are.

And what comes out, Jesus tells us, is only because of what is in there. Our words are not something that is different from what's going on deep within our heart.

Our words are a reflection of who we really are. And again, Psalm 101 goes on and says, no one who utters lies shall continue before my eyes.

So you see that the Lord takes lying very, very seriously. Now, one of the things that makes God's word so solemn and so challenging and so wonderful is that every word is true.

Just as we were saying, Jesus in this world, he never spoke anything but what was true. He was 100% honest and true in everything. This is God's word. And that means that this word is absolutely true.

[18 : 47] It means that every promise that is there, God has staked the integrity of his very passion and being on it. but it also means that every threat and every judgment is also true.

You can't separate the one from the other. Everything that God is saying is 100% true. And that puts an incredibly strong challenge upon us because when we handle God's word, we must be 100% honest with it.

Every minister, every teacher, every Sunday school teacher, every parent, everybody who is ever dealing with God's word and seeking to share God's word must be 100% true to it.

I cannot think of much that's of a greater abomination to God than when people will take his word. Remember, this is a God who cannot lie. It's not that God has chosen not to lie.

You know, some people will make a choice. Some people will say, well, I'm going to just speak the truth. But I could tell a lie, but I'm not going to. I'm just going to speak the truth. Well, God doesn't operate like that.

[20 : 10] It's not that God chooses only to tell the truth. God cannot but tell the truth. That is who he is. It is impossible for God to lie. It's against who he is.

He cannot do it. So here he has given us his word and every word is true. And can you think of anything more heinous and abominable in the sight of God than that people will take the words of the living and true God, the God who cannot lie, and start to make his word a lie, where they will try and change the meaning of it, where they will try and alter what it is saying, to make it sound something else, to be something else.

And people do that. People do it from pulpits. People do it with their pen. And they try and turn the truth of God into a lie. I cannot think of anything, really, that's much worse.

You know, we often categorize sins. But I would say that this must be one of the most offensive sins to God. God. And that is why it is so important that we handle God's word in whatever capacity we're doing so.

That we handle it faithfully and truthfully. Because he is a God who cannot lie. And he is jealous of his truth. So that it comes to us as a real challenge.

[21 : 37] So, as we say, we must be completely honest and truthful in all our dealings. When a person goes in, say for instance, a person in court, and a person goes into the witness box, as far as I know, but people will take an oath on the Bible, and they'll say, I promise to speak nothing but the truth, the whole truth, I will speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Well, you know, the Christian has gone into a witness box. And some people will say, well, if I go into the witness box, and I swear, take the oath on the Bible, while I'm in there, I will speak the truth, once I'm out of there, it doesn't matter too much.

It does. You see, we don't live in a world that's a pick and mix world, of when we speak the truth and when we don't. It's not a matter of coming to church on Sunday and we say, well, I'll speak the truth in God's house.

I'll speak the truth when I'm dealing with God's things, but at my work and my home and all these things, that's different. No, it's not. We're in the witness box all the time.

We are people who have taken this God's name upon our lips and God's name. We are witnesses to his truth. And so our lives have to be an open book of truth.

[22 : 58] And again, it's a huge challenge. And Paul is trying to drive home just how important this is. So every Christian ought to be known as somebody who is honest and true.

And of course, one of the greatest ways of being a witness for Christ is by speaking the truth. Now, as I said, we live in an age where lies are almost a way of life.

We live in the day of fake news. We know that, I'm not saying that every leader, but we know that politicians will often lie through their teeth.

And people in many walks of life, they will lie through their teeth. Lying today is not looked on any big deal. People will lie in all shapes and forms just to get on.

Well, we have to be very, very careful in the church that we never begin to adopt the ways and the practices of the world. and we have to always guard that deceit never becomes part of the way of the church.

[24 : 16] It's always so easy to begin to adopt the world's ways, the world's practices, just a little of it, allowing a little to filter in. Because the moment that we allow deceit, the moment that we begin to operate within the church by sort of changing the truth a wee bit, by trying to deceive people within the church, whether it's at the level of courts, or at the level of committees, or at the level of anything within the church.

We have to be absolutely honest in all our dealings in every way, or else God will judge us.

Because this is where judgment begins.

Judgment begins in the house of God. And we've also got to remember, where do lies come from?

Lies come from hell. Because we're told that the devil, Satan, is the father of lies.

So, if we're a liar, who are we imitating? Well, we're not imitating Christ. The Bible tells us to be imitators of Christ. And if we're imitators of Jesus, we will seek to speak the truth.

Imitators of Satan, speak lies. That's what Satan does right from the very beginning. We're told that he's been a liar from the start. When he came to Eve in the Garden of Eden, he came with lies, and he came with the truth twisted.

[25 : 48] He gave a wee bit of the truth, but he twisted it just sufficiently to put it off guard. And you see, this is what God is saying. You mustn't do that. You have to be absolutely faithful and true.

And how thankful that we are, that we live, knowing that our God is true. You know, there's a lot of people today who have no idea what truth is.

It's a question. Pilate asked the question, what is truth? Well, people today are asking that. People think there are no absolutes. And they don't believe that there is such a thing as absolute truth.

Well, there is. Pilate asked that question. And that question is answered in Jesus. What is truth? Go and look at Jesus. Jesus is truth personified.

And how thankful that the Lord deals by way of covenant with us. Imagine if, imagine if God were to reveal to us just now and say, you know, I've only been fooling with you.

[26 : 51] All the words that I gave you, some of them are true, some of them aren't. Can you imagine how distraught we would be if God said to us, half of what I have said is true, but half isn't, and left it at that.

That would throw up our whole idea of our salvation, our security, all these promises. We'd say, which ones are true, which ones aren't. Oh, may we thank the Lord that he doesn't deal like that. He can't. He is absolutely true. And that is why today you and I can base our lives, why we can have this satisfaction and security, knowing that God has said, him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.

What if he turned around today and said, you know, I'm not so sure about that. Him that cometh unto me, well, maybe, maybe I won't cast out, but I might.

No, no, it's absolute. The one, any person who comes to me, I will never cast out. Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Imagine the Lord said, oh, well, some people who call on the name of the Lord will be saved, but not everybody.

[28 : 08] That's not what he says. Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. That's it. That's from the words. That's the words of the God who cannot lie.

Well, may we seek today to base our lives upon this truth because there's nothing else. This world is so uncertain.

And as we say so often, we don't know whether to believe this or that. People tell us this. We're not too sure. You and I make promises in life.

And we make them with the best will in the world. We've maybe promised somebody that we'll do this or that. Sometimes we forget because good, bad memories. We say later on, oh, do you know this?

I said I was going to do this and I forgot all about it. Or else our circumstances change and we can't do it. But that's never the same so with God because he knows everything.

[29 : 08] And he'll never forget anything. And he'll never find that what he has promised, that it's too big for him to fulfill. No. Everything is true. Every single thing is true.

You rest your life on the one who is the truth. And you've given yourself a security for life and for death and for eternity.

Let us pray. Lord, our God, we give thanks that we live in a world where, although it is challenging, that you are the one who we have told us overcome this world.

And help us to be honest in our lives. We hear the expression honesty is the best policy. For the Christian, it is the only policy. And so we pray that we might live honest through lives in our dealings before you and with one another.

Help us, Lord, as we go through life and all its challenges that we face. Grant us grace in these circumstances. Pray to bless every home and every family, particularly maybe where there's difficulties.

[30 : 19] We pray that you will help them overcome these difficulties. We pray, Lord, that you will be with us all and that you'll bless a cup of tea, coffee in the hall, and grant us grace in everything.

Take us home safely, we pray. Keep our feet from falling and our eyes from tears. Forgive us our sin in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to conclude singing from Sing Psalms in Psalm number 17. The 17th Psalm. The tune is Dennis. Verses 1 to 4. Psalm 17. Verses 1 to 4.

It's on page 17. Lord, hear my righteous plea and listen to my cry.

It does not arise deceitfully or come from lips that lie. Declare me innocent and vindicate my name. Lord, may your eyes see what is right and free me from all blame.

[31 : 22] Though you examine me and probe my heart and mind, and though you test me in the night, yet nothing you will find. I said I will not sin in anything I say.

From those who practice violence, I have kept far away. The tune is Dennis. Lord, hear my righteous plea. Lord, hear my righteous plea and listen to my cry.

It does not rise deceitfully or come from lips that lie.

declare me innocent. Declare me innocent and indicate my name.

Lord, may your eye see what is right and free me from all blame.

[32 : 46] Though you examine me and probe my heart and mind, and though you test me in the night, yet nothing you find.

I said I will not sin in anything I say.

from those who practice violence, I have kept far away.

Now may the grace, mercy, and peace of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.