

Dec. 01, 2013

Your Mouth is Not Your Own

Proverbs 10:18-21

B.I: Your mouth is not your own. Christ purchased it with His blood. Therefore speak only to glorify God and serve one another.

Introduction:

One of the great distinctions between a Christian and non-Christian worldview is that Christians take great comfort in the fact that they we belong to Christ.

The world can't comprehend this way of thinking. This doesn't sound like personal fulfilment, self-actualization or comfort! It sounds like slavery! The world is all about ownership and rights, private property, and personal space. Today we have women's rights, children's rights, traveler's rights, animal rights, and gay rights (just to name a few). We want to do what we want, when we want it, without anyone telling us what to do or restricting our options.

But this is not the way the Bible teaches Christians think. In 1 Cor. 6:19–20? Paul asks,

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰ For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”

You see the reason we no longer belong to ourselves is because God has purchased us for Himself with the precious blood of Christ. We have abandoned all claim of self-ownership. We now have a loving, gracious, and absolutely

perfect Master. And we understand that living in obedience to Him is far better for us than obeying our own impulses and desires. The Corinthians knew this, but they needed to be reminded. We need to be reminded that our bodies belong to God and they are to be used to glorify Him.

This applies not only to our feet, our hands, our eyes, and our ears (just to name a few part of our bodies) but to our mouths as well. Our lips and tongue also belong to God, so we should only say words that glorify Him.

Proverbs has much to say about speech (as we will see), but the passage that will serve as the launching point of our study this morning is found in chapter ten. Here the author has much to say about the difference between the righteous and the wicked. In fact the entire book of Proverbs is peppered with illustrations that distinguish between the two. What is of peculiar interest in chapter ten, however, is that the focus seems to narrow to the speech of these two people. A wise person who fears the Lord speaks differently than the fool who trusts in himself and despises wisdom. The passage that I want us to consider this morning is Prov. 10:18-21.

He who conceals hatred *has* lying lips, And he who spreads slander is a fool. ¹⁹ When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, But he who restrains his lips is wise. ²⁰ The tongue of the righteous is *as* choice silver, The heart of the wicked is *worth* little. ²¹ The lips of the righteous feed many, But fools die for lack of understanding. (Pro. 10:18–21).

Before we dive into the practical implications of this passage and its connections to the other wise sayings in the book of Proverbs, let's take a minute to make an observation. Notice that Solomon is contrasting the speech of one who is

“foolish” with that of one who is “wise” (18-19). At first blush it may seem as if Solomon thinks of these two in non-ethical terms, as if to say the one is smart and the other stupid. But Solomon takes pains throughout Proverbs to demonstrate that the difference between the wise man and the fool has a strong *moral component*. Witness the fact that in verse 20 he calls the one man “wicked” and the other “righteous.

God’s view of wickedness tends to be broader than ours. We tend to think of the wicked in terms of people who steal cars, practice fornication, and commit murder. But here we find that God’s category of wickedness extends even to how people speak to one another. In the eyes of God, sinful speech is not just unwise but wicked and immoral. On the other hand, righteous people evidence their righteousness through wise words that glorify God.

The question is: How can you glorify God with your Mouth?

I. By Repenting of Wicked Speech:

1. There are three statements we need to consider in verses 18-19. Each of them focuses on the deadly effects wicked speech has upon other people. We see the first characteristic of wicked speech in verse 18, where Solomon says, *“He who conceals hatred has lying lips.”*

A. LYING:

2. Lying is perhaps the most obvious form of wicked speech. You know what lying is. It consists of speaking a falsehood with the intention of deceiving. Lying traces its roots back to the devil whom Jesus calls the “Father of Lies” (Jn. 8:44). And like Satan, a wicked heart does not hesitate to lie when it seems advantageous. In this case, the person who wants to conceal his hatred of someone is tempted to lie.

3. Perhaps the most vivid and shocking example of this is when Judas betrayed Jesus with what...? A kiss. Prov. 27:6 *“Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.”*

4. I think the author’s primary concern here is not so much the lie as the wickedness in the heart that causes the lie. Notice verse 20 (10:20) says, “The heart of the wicked is worth little” [i.e. worthless]. Hatred is the real issue here because it is a root that caused the fruit of lying. There is a wicked root beneath every lie. You may lie because you hate someone. You may lie to hide sin. You may lie to win friends, or evade taxes, or to make a profit: Prov. 11:18 *“The wicked earns deceptive wage...”* But every lie finds its root in a wicked heart.

5. In Luke 6:45 Jesus explains “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil *man* out of the evil *treasure* brings forth what is evil; *for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.*”

6. Parents, it is so important to teach your children not to lie when they are young. When you catch a child lying, it is appropriate to discipline them (even corporal discipline). But while you are disciplining your child, take the time to ask them a simple question... “What did you want?” or “What did you fear?” This will reveal the true motive of the heart and open up a perfect opportunity to bring the gospel to bear in that very teachable moment.

7. Proverbs says a lot about lying:

- 12:19 “Truthful lips will be established forever, But a lying tongue is only for a moment.”
- 12:22 “Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, But those who deal faithfully are His delight.”

- 19:9 “A false witness will not go unpunished, And he who tells lies will perish.”
- 21:6 “The acquisition of treasures by a lying tongue Is a fleeting vapor, the pursuit of death.”
- 26:28 “A lying tongue hates those it crushes, And a flattering mouth works ruin.”

8. Remember, your Mouth is not your own. Therefore do not lie. But lying is not the only kind of sinful speech God is concerned about. Look back at 10:18. *“He who spreads slander is a fool.”*

B. SLANDERING:

9. Slander is defined as whispering, or defamation. Often this is done in the form of “innuendos, half-truth, or exaggerated facts” about a person in order to do them harm. Such a person is motivated by hatred and seeks to injure or damage the reputation of another. In Christian circles it is often not so much a desire to cause harm so much as is a desire to exalt self that provokes the slander. In either case, however, injury is done to the other person whether the victim is aware of it or not.

10. Among believers there is no place for this kind of speech. We are a body. Christ purchased our unity with His blood. Therefore, slander, and every other form of verbal sin should have no place in the church. Once again, the apostle Paul is concerned about the same sin. Ephesians 4:31 “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.”

11. Oh beloved. There is not a single person in this room who has not committed every one of these verbal sins. That’s why Paul has to remind us! It’s so easy just to say what you feel

with little concern about whether our words glorify God or edify others. But God is very concerned about our words.

12. In Matt. 12:36 Jesus said, *“But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.”*

13. Why is God so concerned about a little gossip and slander? Because, as Solomon said, (Prov. 18:21) *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue.”* What we say to one another matters. That’s why Solomon said so much about it.

- 16:28 “A perverse man spreads strife, And a slanderer separates intimate friends.”
- 20:19 “He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, Therefore do not associate with a gossip.”
- 30:10 “Do not slander a slave to his master, Or he will curse you and you will be found guilty.”

14. But there is a third way our passage for the morning says we can sin with our Mouth. Look at the next verse (10:19) *“When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable.”*

C. Jabbering:

15. Jabbering is simply talking for the sake of talking. The person who does this may say that they have the “gift of gab” when in reality, it is simply undisciplined speech. When we “jabber” we are not thinking about the glory of God or how we can minister to the person who is listening; we’re just talking for our own benefit.

16. What does such a person get out of incessant talking? Perhaps the motive is acceptance. Or, it may be the pride of self-pity that says “No one fully appreciates how I suffer, but I’m going to help you understand.” There are probably other motives for jabbering, but a person who talks too much does so

primarily because the person he is most concerned about is himself.

17. At its root, the Jabberer is saying to the one forced to listen, “Love me. Accept me. Praise me. Adore me. Worship me.”

18. Talking too much seems like such a meaningless thing, but it’s not. When you Jabber, you open yourself up to all kinds of sins of the mouth. That’s why Solomon said: (17:28) “Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise; When he closes his lips, he is considered prudent.”

19. Listen to Solomon’s warnings;

- 14:23 “In all labor there is profit, But mere talk leads only to poverty.”
- 18:7 “A fool’s mouth is his ruin, And his lips are the snare of his soul.
- 18:13 “He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him.”

20. How can you glorify God with your Mouth? First, by Repenting of Wicked Speech. Second...

II. By Cultivating Righteous Speech:

1. Look back at verse 19 (Prov. 10:19) “*When there are many words sin is unavoidable, But he who restrains his lips is wise.*”

A. Restrained Speech:

2. In contrast to the speech of the wicked/foolish person, Solomon teaches us about the speech of those who are wise and righteous. Specifically the wise/righteous person restrains his speech. The word for “restrains” in this verse means to

“exercise self control,” or to “hold back” his words.¹ The reason the righteous person guards his speech is because he fears the Lord and puts no confidence in himself.

3. Self-controlled speech is a common theme in the book of Proverbs, especially in light of the fact that the wicked/fool is frequently portrayed as one who makes no effort to restrain what he says. Nevertheless, Proverbs also praises the wise/righteous for what they choose to say. Such people tend to limit their words, and when they have something to say it builds others up and gives life to those who hear.

4. Let’s allow Solomon to speak for himself:

- 13:3 “The one who guards his mouth preserves his life.”
- 15:28 “The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer...”
- 17:27 “He who restrains his words has knowledge, And he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.”
- 17:28 “Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise; When he closes his lips, he is considered prudent.”
- 21:23 “He who guards his mouth and his tongue, Guards his soul from troubles.”

5. Ironically, righteous speech begins with silence. Wise/righteous people believe there is a reason why God gave us two ears and one mouth. Consequently, they are quick to listen and slow to speak. And when they do speak, they are intent on ministering to others.

6. Take a look at 10:20-21 “*The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver*”... *The lips of the righteous feed many.*”

¹ Ibid, (470)

B. Minstering Speech:

7. Solomon would not have us believe that the wise/righteous are people who do not speak at all. To the contrary, those who fear the Lord have much to say. In contrast to those whose talk is degrading to others (lying, slandering, gabbing) the words of the righteous are edifying. In fact, the words of the wise are sought after because they are deemed to be as valuable as “choice silver.” Hearing their words is like finding treasure.

8. Behind such speech is a heart that loves God and moves people to actions that honor Him. The Hebrew word for “righteous” in this verse refers to one who is upright, honest, and virtuous. It refers to a man or woman who is on the “right” path, living in obedience to the wisdom (i.e. word) of God. By this wisdom they counsel and lead others to walk the way of wisdom with them.

9. The phrase “feed many” may be better translated “shepherd” (or pastor) many. Wise men and women are, by virtue of their wisdom, godly leaders who teach others the way of wisdom.

- 10:11 “The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life.”
- 12:18 “There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, But the tongue of the wise brings healing.”
- 15:4 “A soothing tongue is a tree of life.”
- 16:13 “Righteous lips are the delight of kings, And he who speaks right is loved.”
- 20:15 “There is gold, and an abundance of jewels; But the lips of knowledge are a more precious thing.”
- 25:11-12 “Like apples of gold in settings of silver Is a word spoken in right circumstances. 12 Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold Is a wise reprover to a listening ear.”

10. You see, beloved, our speech matters to God. It is one of the most obvious indicators that we are children of God. The world believes it has the right to say whatever it wants. David spoke of such men in Psa. 12:4: *“Who have said, ‘With our tongue we will prevail; Our lips are our own; who is lord over us?’”*

11. But as sons and daughters of God we love the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We love the “fear of the Lord.” It is the beginning of wisdom. It is our comfort and security in life. So we gladly submit our words to His righteous rule. And like David we pray: (Psa. 141:3) *“Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips.”* And (Psa. 19:14) *“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.”*

Application:

1. We only touched upon a few possible sins of the mouth. The H.S. may be convicting you of other verbal sins as well. So in the quietness of your heart before God right now, ask Him to reveal to you specific ways you have sinned with your mouth.

- A. Are there sinful speech habits that you need to confess?
- B. How will you begin repenting of this sinful habit? Be specific. Don’t expect that it will happen simply because you will it so. Come up with a specific plan of action.
- C. Who will you ask to help you conquer this habit?

2. Maybe you thinking of a person (or people) you have sinned against with your speech. Perhaps it was angry speech, or malice, or slander, or gossip, or maybe you lied.

A. Take a moment right now to confess this to the Lord.

B. When will you speak to the person you sinned against.

C. If you need help, ask a brother/sister in the body (one of our counselors?) to help you. You will be glad you did.

B.I: Your mouth is not your own. Christ purchased it with His blood. Therefore speak only to glorify God and serve one another.