

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

How Important are Careless Words?

Matthew 12:22-37

1 How important are careless words? Once they are uttered they can't be erased.

Years ago, when I drove on long trips, I would take my CB radio, place it on the dash and stick my magnetic three meter high whip to my roof. Then I would talk to truckers along the Interstate highways. Usually these were trips where my wife didn't come since these conversations would have drive her batty.

On one occasion a trucker was talking about his Christian faith to another trucker. I listened intently. His relationship to the Lord appeared to be a new, though rather immature, one.

What bothered me about the conversation though was nearly every other word that came out of this trucker's mouth was vulgar. Maybe he was in the process of gradually cleaning up his vocabulary after many years of habitual verbal filth. It just appeared to me that he had accepted his language as being okay.

He, likely, considered himself a Christian; but his vulgarity was “careless words”!

Our Bible talks to us about this. ² What do you need to know about “careless words”? We will get to our main scripture passage in Matthew, chapter 12, a little bit later. ³

The first thing we need to clear up about “careless words” is that . . .

I. Words are Important

Words are important. ⁴ They are **more powerful than you think!** ⁵ Why is this true? ⁶

The accumulation of the things you choose to hold in your mind eventually become who you are. ⁷ Words are the vehicles you use to transmit what’s in your brain to someone else’ brain. ⁸ So you influence what someone else becomes by the words you continually transmit to them. ⁹

Words have power. Second Peter, chapter 2, verse 18 says, **For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by**

appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. People have become great heroes of God by the encouraging words of those they respect. People have also committed suicide by the discouraging influential words of others! ¹⁰

There are powerful words for good. Singing with thanksgiving to one another, for instance. Ephesians, chapter 5, verses 19 and 20, Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹¹ This is encouragement to one another. ¹ ¹²

Then, there are powerful words for evil. We can get so hung up on debating issues of doctrinal interpretation, for instance, that we can neglect the more important issues of faith, love and godly giving!

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¹ | Thessalonians 4:18 - Therefore encourage each other with these words.

A couple of scriptures speak loudly here. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind.²₁₄ And again, Keep reminding them of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen.

Words are important!¹⁵ They are important also because . . .

II. Words are an Indicator of What's Inside

Words are an indicator of what's inside.¹⁶ Our scripture today from Matthew, chapter 12, first, talks about the Unpardonable Sin.³₁₇

There was a man who was possessed by a demon and couldn't speak or see.⁴₁₈ Jesus drove out the demon

² 1 Timothy 6:4-5.

³ Matthew 12:32 - Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

and healed him. This man was delivered from Satanic bondage. ¹⁹ This was a miracle where the Holy Spirit overpowered Satan's stronghold! ²⁰

The Unpardonable Sin is the refusal to accept the Lord regardless of the evidence. It is to have a completely closed mind to spiritual things! ²¹

You see this attitude all around you! You talk about the Lord and someone says, "I don't want to hear that God stuff!" A person rejects the Lord based upon some experience in the past they use as a smokescreen to justify their rejection. They shut out their mind to your witness! ²²

Words betray what your heart is like. Continuing with verses 33 through 35, **Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good?**

⁴ v22-24 - Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons."

For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.

The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. People don't have to listen to your talk very long to discover your attitude. Your words betray your heart! ²³

Therefore, **think before you speak.** Several Bible passages remind us of this. Proverbs, chapter 10, verse 19, **When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.** ²⁴

Proverbs, chapter 29, verse 20, **Do you see a man who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for him.** ²⁵

Again, in Ecclesiastes, chapter 10, verses 12 and 13, **Words from a wise man's mouth are gracious, but a fool is consumed by his own lips. At the beginning his words are folly; at the end they are wicked madness.**

To bring balance to our understanding here we need to bring up a third factor. ²⁶ As important and powerful as words are . . .

III. Behavior Speaks Louder Than Words

Behavior speaks louder than words. It speaks louder in a least three ways. ²⁷

Behavior backs up the words you say. First John, chapter 3, verse 18, **Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.** ²⁸

Behavior can even be more influential than just words. A beautiful example of this is in First Peter, chapter 3, verses 1 and 2, **Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.** ²⁹

Behavior gives power to the words of the gospel you present. In First Thessalonians, chapter 1, verses 4 and 5, it says, **For we know, brothers loved by God,**

that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.

So words are important. They are an indicator of what's inside you. But, actions speak louder than words. Are you guilty of using careless words? Are you guilty of living inconsistent with the words you speak? ³⁰

IV. What Do You Do When You Goof?

What do you do when you goof?

There's something you need to understand before we answer that question. ³¹

God's judgment may come to you in connection with your words and behavior. Ephesians, chapter 5, verse 6, says there may be a relationship here, **Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.** ³²

Our final two verses of Matthew 12 also suggest this, **But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.**

So now, what can you do if you've goofed?

If your careless words have wounded someone else, God's word tells you to do two things. ³³

Humble yourself. Proverbs, chapter 6, verses 1 through 3, **If you have been trapped by what you said, ensnared by the words of your mouth, then do this, my son, to free yourself, since you have fallen into your neighbor's hands: Go and humble yourself; press your plea with your neighbor! ³⁴**

Genuinely apologize. Lord Jesus commanded, **Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come**

and offer your gift. ⁵ You realize what the Lord is saying? It's more important to Him that you straighten out your relationships with your Christian brothers and sisters than it is for you to go to church! ³⁵ You shouldn't **give up meeting together** ⁶, but relationships are even more important than that! ³⁶

If your words have directly offended God, **surrender yourself to Him as Savior and Lord!** He promises to save you and His indwelling Holy Spirit will help you clean up. ³⁷

Remember, your words betray you! They present you for who you are. So, allow Lord Jesus to penetrate your life and clean you up. Then, your speech will honor Him!

<http://www.biblelifemessages.org>

⁵ Matthew 5:23-24.

⁶ Hebrews 10:25 - Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.