

Watch Your Tongue!



Paul says, ***“Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips.”*** (Romans 3:10)

Whoever said, “Sticks and stones will break my bones but names will never hurt me,” must have never been involved in interpersonal relationships.

The tongue in itself is not sinful. The tongue holds no moral quality, but yet, how it is used can bring life or death. It can tear down or build up. It can deceive, slander and discourage. What comes from the tongue and lip is the venom of asps. That is a *venomous snake!* This venom, when it starts to work its way in the body, brings about pain, sleepiness, heaviness and eventually physical death.

Have you been injected with the venom of asps? It may come from parents, siblings, spouse, co-workers, strangers, friends, your children and your neighbors.

The thing about being injected with this venom is that it brings about a quick death, on the other hand, words that are spoken in haste and in self-righteous pride kills one slowly because they are remembered in the heart and mind of the offended. Instead of timely words bringing comfort, encouragement and peace, it sows discord, discouragement, division, bitterness and falsehood.

All Christians at one time or another are going to face misfortune, calamity, or distress. Jesus didn't say our life will always be joyful and bliss, but will be filled with many difficulties as well.

Did you know that one of those difficulties will come simply because you choose to live a godly life? Jesus said that those who live *godly will be persecuted.*

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for there is the kingdom of heaven.”

In this case one will be persecuted just because they are living a godly life!

Paul repeats this in the book of Timothy,

“Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” (2 Tim. 3:12)

Those who live in an ungodly home or working with ungodly co-workers or live among their ungodly neighbors, somebody is going to make some kind of derogatory statement about our faith or how we live. Some might make comments, in fun of course, and with others sometimes more serious. Some family members will be outright angry with you; whether it is spouse or children, because you have set a standard that you will live and abide by.

The enemy is working very hard to distract us, and puts forth great effort of trying to get us to turn away from our God. I have experienced this at times and even recently. Sometimes I feel like throwing in the towel, but something inside me shouts “NO!” So what do I do? To be honest, I have a good cry. Not silently weeping, I’m talking audibly crying like a baby when it hits me hard in those very trying times as my heart earnestly seeks to hear a special word from God.

The Bible says the tongue is a very powerful thing and has much to say about that little instrument. There are about eight descriptions of the tongue in the Scriptures. Five of them are very destructive and three are good. The five descriptions of the tongue used in a destructive way are:

- A razor (Ps. 52:2)
- Poison (James 3:8)
- Sword (Ps. 64:3)
- Deadly Arrow (Jer. 9:8)

The three good descriptions are:

- Choice Silver (Prov. 10:20)
- Health or healing (Prov. 12:18)
- Tree of life (Prov. 15:4)

I had made mentioned of how “sheep bite.” Someone responded that *true sheep don’t bite. It’s the wolves who bite.* After I thought about it for a while, I have come to realize that person is correct. I can understand hateful words from the unsaved, but what about people who supposedly call themselves *Christians*? True sheep will not attack, criticize, and ostracize those facing trials in life. This is not a way to share burdens or to weep with those who weep.

Satan is going to hit us hard at times. He wants to numb us in our walk and he’ll use anyone he can, including so-called Christians. They want to inject

us with their poisonous venom to make us weak and fill us with doubts. He throws accusations and condemnation at us through his servants in hopes of getting us to give up.

But the Lord knows how to touch his own through His own. I have had a few emails sent to me with encouraging words and one in particular who is going through the same trial. There was also one email where the person said, *"I believe we can comfort others because God comforts us. If you can imagine yourself two years from now, comforted and healed, meeting a woman who is going through what you are going through now, and you helping her in a heart-felt way, from experience, that you wouldn't otherwise be able to relate to her on a deep level."*

And then I received an email from a woman who inspired me to write this. She could not express her grief that she shares with me, a mom, a royal daughter to royal daughter of our mighty King. This woman expressed that she just feels numb when she thinks about my heartbreak.

It's very hard for a parent to watch their offspring make the wrong decisions in life; taking the road of irresponsibility and getting involved with all kinds of immorality and surrounded by people who don't really care. It brings us a little closer to God in understanding His heart and how His heart must ache when His children walk away from Him. At the same time we must make our own choices as well. We must continue to live our lives to honor God even though others do not see the need, even within our own family. The parable that Jesus tells of the father of the prodigal son is very close to my heart.

There are times we have to let our offspring go and let it be a matter of sink or swim. Either they will come to their senses or they will die from their riotous living. But like the father of the prodigal son, he must have had thoughts go through his mind that pass through ours as well like, I wonder what my son or daughter is doing now? Is she/he in trouble? Who is she/he with at this moment? What are they doing? Not only that, you think back on the times when they were younger and so innocent and you were the most important person in their life, relying on you for guidance and daily needs. You remember those times they snuggled in your arms and were safe. Then the troubling questions enter and you ask yourself if you could have done things differently. Did I do the right thing? Where did I go wrong? But now they have reached that point in life where they must decide how they are going to live, and we must let go. Like the father, we will shed the tears and just have to wait; the outcome may be joyous or we might have to face tragedy.

However, I feel sorry for those who cannot understand another's pain; people who come into your life with unkind and thoughtless words, even from people you don't know on a personal level. People who think they have the solutions to all life's problems, and make accusations that are not true.

Jesus says, "But I say to you that every idle word, whatever men may speak, they shall give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned."

Speaking words of encouragement is like choice silver, health, and a tree of life. Words of encouragement are refreshing to the soul and help give us strength to continue. All of us must watch our words, even when restoring someone who may be overtaken in sin. We can speak the truth, but we can also speak it in love. It doesn't say to restore another with accusations and rudeness, but in meekness. One may use Jesus as an example to excuse their rough words on others, but Jesus was harsh on the Pharisees, not everybody is a Pharisee.

All of us are going to face trials in life, and many of us are in it now, but what a shame when we cannot bear our hearts out to one another in fear of the venom attack of the snakes out there who claim to be Christians.

Someone wrote something this morning which said,

"God has a special way of taking you through hard times and difficult seasons, and then bringing back to you, in even a greater way, the things that you thought you lost forever. Encourage one another, even more so as we see that Day quickly approaching."

Things are not getting better in the world today. The days are drawing to a close. We never know who we may touch with our words and how it will affect them. Will we bring life or will we bring death? Will we cause others to doubt? Will our words make them stumble? Will our words cause them to lose faith? Will they be words of healing and reconciliation?

Yes, we will have our moments of joy and celebration along with our times of trials and testing.

Some may see this as a trifle matter, but God has a lot to say about the tongue. It will not be until one has been injected with its venom at their time of trial and testing that they will not find it a trivial matter.

Just knowing that someone stands with us in prayer can be enough to not let go of the anchor of our soul. Barnes says of Hebrews 6:19,

"Hope accomplishes for the soul the same thing which an anchor does for a ship. It makes it fast and secure. An anchor preserves a ship when the waves beat and the wind blows, and as long as the anchor holds, so long the ship is safe, and the mariner apprehends no danger. So with the soul of the Christian. In the tempests and trials of life, his mind is calm as long as his hope of heaven is firm. If that gives way, he feels that all is lost."

Always hang onto the anchor in spite of what people will say to try and destroy our hope, because ultimately God is at work in our lives.

"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."