

I Will Be Thy Mouth...



David Wilkerson November 1, 1982

God met Moses at the burning bush and gave him a mandate to lead Israel out of bondage. He told His servant, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people in Egypt... I am come down to deliver them... I am sending you to Pharaoh... you will bring my people out of Egypt..." (Ex 3:7-10).

"And Moses said unto the Lord, I am not eloquent, neither have things changed since you have spoken to me... And the Lord said unto him, 'Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh the dumb, or the deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say'..." (Ex 4:10-12).

But Moses persisted. "Send someone else!"

Here, along with Moses, is where most of God's anointed stumble. We, too, limit God in this one area - control of our mouths.

Over and over God proved his power to Moses. He showed this timorous man he could turn water into blood. Cause plagues to cover the land of Egypt. Part the Red Sea by simply lifting his rod. Yet he would not believe that God could "be with his mouth, and direct his speech. He believed in the miracles he could see - but not in God's power over his tongue!

Moses stubbornly pleaded, "Lord, send another person, whomever thou wilt..." (Ex.4: 13). God became exasperated with such lack of faith, "...and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses..." (Ex. 4:14). He finally compromised by permitting Moses' brother Aaron to be the spokesman:

"I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do..." (Ex 4:15)

Moses felt he had good reason to doubt God's promise. How well he knew his own weakness! He confessed to having "uncircumcised lips" (Ex. 6:12). Ultimately this proved to be the very thing that kept him out of the Promised Land. An unyielded tongue! He maintained weak lips till he died. The Psalmist says. "...it went ill with Moses... he spoke unadvisedly with his lips..." (Ps.106:33).

What a powerful warning to us today! Here was a great man of God, a man of miracles and power, a man who truly knew God. He had just one flaw. But it was a flaw so great it angered God, and finally cast a shadow over all he did. It is recorded for our benefit. God expects us to learn from Moses lack of faith.

This isn't just an Old Testament principle. Matthew tells us Jesus sent forth His disciples as sheep among wolves. They were warned to expect opposition and persecution. But they were unafraid, because along with the command to spread the gospel, was a promise that he would "be their mouth..."

"When they deliver you up, take no thought of how or what you will speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what you shall say... for it is not you who speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaks in you..." (Matt. 10:19,20).

They were not to preach the gospel, or answer their critics, in their own words! Supernatural words of power were promised! Spirit words, falling from Spirit-directed lips !

There is another, spectacular incident in the New Testament when the Spirit was "with the mouths of his disciples". On the day of Pentecost, it was "given to them what they should speak." For it was not they who spoke, but "...the Spirit [who] gave utterance..." (Acts 2:4) in other words, the Spirit took full control of their mouths so that they said not one word except what He wanted spoken. And He wanted only one thing said:

"...they spoke the wonderful works of God..." (Acts 2:11).

Unknown tongues was not the centerpiece of Pentecost. Instead, it was the miraculous sight of 120 God-filled saints discovering that God was "in their mouths." It was the glory of Christ's disciples experiencing the ecstasy, not of tongues, but of the Spirit of the Father speaking through them.

The Spirit could have spoken with old or new tongues, with the tongues of men or angels, with known or unknown tongues. That was not the significance of Pentecost. Not the language He spoke, but how He spoke - using the lips of the gathered saints! My heart cries out, "Let Him speak what He pleases! Just let me experience the divine glory of knowing He has control of my tongue!"

This Brings Us To The Heart Of My Message

Study the New Testament and you will see that both Jesus and James propounded an impossible moral condition. Jesus put it this way:

"How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh..." (Matt. 12:34)

Here is how James said it:

"Does a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree... bear olive berries? Can a vine bear figs? So neither can a fountain yield both salt water and fresh..." (James 3:11-12).

The impossible moral condition is this: a truly spiritual person cannot speak evil!

Yet James insists, "The tongue can no man tame... it is an unruly member, full of deadly poison..." (3.8). He is not suggesting the tongue has a mind of its own. To the contrary, he knew the tongue is controlled by the heart! He was speaking of Christians who still have "uncircumcised lips" because their heart has not yet believed for deliverance. They bless God, praise the Lord loudly, and yet still speak against a brother or sister. James says, "...those things ought not to be..." In other words, it happens, but it is not scriptural. It proves there is a problem at the fountainhead.

Clearly it is not God's plan that our tongues be unruly. It is not His intention that we offend with our mouth - ever!

"Woe to him that offends... better a millstone be hung around his neck and he be cast into the sea..." (Matt. 18:6).

We are not left without an escape. The solution to the impossible moral condition is simply this: you have to be turned around!

"We put bits in the horses' mouths... that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body... Ships, driven by fierce winds, are turned with a very small helm..." (James 3: 3,4).

The Holy Spirit longs to reveal to us that He is the horse's bit, He is the helmsman who turns the rudder of our ship! If you don't yet know what it means to have the 'Spirit bit' in your mouth, you are still wild and unruly as far as your speech is concerned. Your Pentecost has not yet "fully come".

For months the Holy Spirit has been trying to show me how serious this matter is. I want to share with you three things He has impressed on me.

I. If There Is Any Defilement At All In My Tongue - My Whole body is Defiled!

"...so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body..." (James 3:6)

There is no such thing as a 'slip of the tongue'. Not a word goes forth innocently. Christ Himself said our words overflow from our hearts. He did not say out of the last remains of the flesh, the mouth speaks but, "out of an abundance of the heart"! What we say is not accidental - but predictable!

That is serious! You and I may think we are full of God's goodness and love. We may think that when we speak ill of someone, it is accidental. But God tells us it was spoken because it was in our heart all along. James says any kind of quarreling, any kind of envy, is a direct result of strife in the heart! Strife is defined as "a fighting or contentious spirit." Gossip, envy, dissension, bitterness, rebellion - all are the overflow of a "fighting spirit." And they originate in the heart!

It is impossible for a Spirit-directed believer to speak anything but goodness, mercy, and righteousness. As impossible as fig trees growing olives. Or vines bearing figs. Or salt and pure water flowing from the same fountain. The Bible does not say salt and clear water ought not to flow from the same source - it says it is impossible!

These words must take hold of us! We must acknowledge that we cannot walk in the Spirit, be filled with the Spirit, and at the same time speak unholy words. Otherwise, we are still like the ungodly man who "...digs up evil... in whose lips there is a burning fire..." (Prov. 16:27).

Don't think for one moment those disciples on the day of Pentecost spoke under the Spirit's influence only when touched by ecstasy or high emotion. No! From that day on, they spoke words that were edifying - sanctified, holy, pure. Paul said that when they learned Christ,

"They put off concerning the former conversation the old man... they put away lying ... they spoke the truth to every man... and let no corrupt communication proceed out of their mouth - but that which is good to the building up... that it might minister grace to the hearers..." (Eph 4:20-29).

Paul did not say an unruly tongue was a weakness to try to conquer, or a frailty of the flesh that one must endure. He said it is inexcusable under any and all circumstances!

II. Without Purity, There Can Be No Power In A Single Word I Speak!

"The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times..." (Ps. 12:6). "The words of the pure are pleasant ones..." (Prov. 15:26). "...They are sweet to the soul, and health to the bone..." (Prov 16:24).

Why did the words of Christ have such power? Why did men say, "He speaks as no other man ever spoke - with authority! Because, according to His own confession:

"The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works..." (John 14:10).

These holy words are part of the inheritance Jesus left His followers:

"I have given unto them the words my Father gave to me..." (John 17:8).

We are not walking in the light of this glorious truth - the Lord is not "with our mouth" - until all around us can also say. "He speaks as no other speaks! There goes one who speaks only those words that glorify God!"

When we give ourselves to the Spirit, He will cause us to speak only those words that are from the Father. There will be no struggle, no legal battle. All it takes is a yielded heart willing to be disciplined by the Holy Spirit on this matter.

Unconfessed sin pollutes the Christian's tongue. Any minister or believer who harbors secret sin in his heart, has nothing to say to anyone! Every word he speaks is in vain. Words may pour out of a double-minded soul and seem sincere. They may sound pious. They may be absolutely scriptural. But they are meaningless if the vessel is unclean, because sin depletes our words of all authority.

It is not how intelligent your words are, or how well- executed or forceful. What really matters is how pure they are! Only pure words give health. Jesus said,

"A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things: an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things..." (Matt. 12:35).

Here is a sobering thought: every idle word we speak will be noted on the day of judgment!

"But I say to you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment..." (Matt.12:36).

The root meaning of the word idle is "not accomplishing any purpose, doing nothing; empty, useless, ineffectual, irrelevant". This is more than the incidental banter we all speak in the course of a day. This has to do with ineffectual witnessing. Irrelevant counseling. Preaching that accomplishes nothing. Words that do nothing to help God's kingdom.

God help us take this matter seriously, and begin listening to ourselves talk! I am asking the Holy Spirit to put the fear of God in me about my mouth - my words - so I will put a watch at my lips and speak carefully. Not just in the presence of others, but even privately - when all alone.

Does it sound complicated? Legalistic? Impossible? Here is the good part!

III. God Is Yearning To Be With Our Mouths, Too!

God is about to raise up a new generation of pure hearts and clean lips. In order to speak to the world again, He must have clean lips. So He is bringing His people back to a glorious vision of His awesome holiness. Like Isaiah. God's people are realizing how wicked we have become, how backslidden, how loose-tongued and undisciplined.

"Then said I, woe is me! For I am undone: because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips... for mine eyes have seen the King..." (Isa. 6:5)

I must confess that I have experienced, in a real way, the terror Isaiah is talking about. I have been catching a new vision of the Savior's holy lordship! And the clearer the vision, the more I am aware of the sinfulness still in my life - the unruly tongue, the uncircumcised lips. If a holy prophet of God such as Isaiah confessed his lips were unclean, where do you and I stand? In recent weeks God has taken me into His royal woodshed and spanked me severely for speaking unadvisedly too often.

God said to Moses, "No man can see me, and live!" (Ex. 33:20). Isaiah saw Him and cried, "I am finished... I am undone! The old Isaiah is dead" (6:1-3).

Therein lies the clue - "See the Lord, and die!" Let the old you go up in smoke. A sacrifice. When you see Him as Lord, you die! But that's only the beginning. From there, you enter into resurrection life!

See how beautifully the Lord was with the mouth of Isaiah from that moment on:

"Then flew one of the seraphims to me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken from off the altar... and he laid it upon my mouth, and said - Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged... Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Go and tell..." (6:6-9)

We are invited to quit the struggle to do or say the right thing in our own power and strength. We are asked to die by faith - to be raised by faith - to be holy and acceptable by faith - and to live and speak by faith, as blood-purchased saints. The Spirit promises to circumcise our hearts and lips, so we can speak the words of our Father, even as Christ did.

Mark this well: Not in a million years can Christ come to be with your mouth through anything you can do! Go ahead. Make your vows. Tell God you won't ever lie, or gossip, or be envious, or say anything idle or foolish. Mortify yourself. Get deeper into discipline. Say to yourself, "From now on every word I speak will glorify the Lord." But you are doomed to failure and despair if you think will power or resolve will get you there. I've played the game - and it doesn't work!

No! A thousand times no! We are purified by faith! Our human will must be rectified so we can obey His word.

Conclusion: A Prophetic Word

All the while God was pouring this message into my soul, burning in my mind the need to have circumcised lips and a pure heart - I had a growing sense the Spirit was leading me to a glorious prophetic truth for these final days. I knew it had to be more than just a lesson on pure speech.

Why a new purging in our hearts and lips? Why a renewed vision of holiness in heart, tongue, lips, and mouth? God showed me why.

Our lips are the sluice through which the Spirit must flow! God is about to restore Zion and rebuild the tabernacle of David. He will do it with a mighty floodtide of the Spirit. A mighty river of living water to heal, cleanse, and restore. This river will flow from inside the body of Christ here on earth - from the hearts of His people! God does not need to call down some unknown, mystical power. Everything He needs is already available. The fountain is there; the water is there - a bottomless ocean!

Only one thing remains: The Spirit cannot flow in unhindered power and strength until all things are ready. The fountainhead (which is where our flesh taps into the Spirit) must be spotless. No purity - no flow! The sluice must be clean, and ready. All the debris removed. All obstructions gone. The channels deepened. What are the channels? The consecrated tongue, lips, and mouth of purified saints!

At the exact moment when the Spirit has accomplished this work, nothing will remain to be done. There will be nothing to turn on. Nothing to prime or force. All the pent-up power will cause the living water to "spring up" of its own accord. It will be "a well of living water, springing up..." In the original it reads, "leaping up".

Imagine - a gusher of Holy Ghost Power! The Holy Spirit is going to leap up within us. A river will flow out of each opened sluice. River will be added to river, rivulet to rivulet, and the waters will swell beyond anything every witnessed by man. Then we will experience the last-day outpouring which God promised - an outpouring from on high, that originates within us!

The question now becomes, Shall I pray for circumcised lips, just to be clear at the Judgment - or, Do I want to be a channel for this last-day outpouring? Do I want to go beyond forgiveness - to usefulness?

For me, the answer is obvious. I want the Holy Spirit to "come to my mouth" and prepare me for a gushing river of His love - flowing through me, to the world! Who would dare hinder this river? Who would dare take the matter lightly? The judgment could be beyond imagination for anyone hindering the flow. Denying others the healing that should have sprung forth from our very own lips.

It is so important to have the Spirit flowing through us. And not just for others. We drink from our own flow. It is living water for us, too. All we need is in that river: healing, revelation of Christ, spiritual wisdom and knowledge, peace of mind, hope, joy - everything necessary to produce all kinds of fruit.

James said, "Does a fountain send forth at the same place, sweet water and bitter?" But you can stop at, "Does a fountain send forth...?" It cannot send forth at all - until it is uncapped.

Do you want your fountain uncapped? Do you long for the Spirit to flow through you, consecrating your mouth? Here's how simple:

Lay aside every besetting sin -
Move into the realm of godly reverence
Confess your weakness and helplessness -
By faith, picture the blood of Christ running through the fountainhead, through the sluice, past the gates of your lips
cleansing and sweeping aside all hindrances.

Then - you will taste the sweet water that wells up within you.

Then - the Spirit will flow!

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