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Oakland church of Christ
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Good morning, Oakland family! It is always a blessing to be here with you. If you're visiting here this morning or looking for a church home, you've found it here at Oakland. You won't find a loving group of people on the planet, and they will treat you like family too.

I. INTRODUCTION:

- QUESTION: How much of what you said in the past week can you recall???
- How many of your conversations can you remember verbatim...word for word? Probably not many!!!
- As you think of all the conversations you've had, how many of those do you at least recall the basic gist of what you talked about? Probably just a few.
- That's kind of scary because, as authors Webster & Colley pointed out, the average person says about 150,000 words in a week.
TO
PUT IN IN PERSPECTIVE
 - That's enough to fill a 500 page book every week.
 - When you think about that novel we create each week, that would mean the typical human writes about 3,000 five hundred page books in a lifetime.
 - It's a sobering thought that we'll speak about 450 million words in the course of our lifetime (maybe more than that for people like me and my daughter Avery!)

AND IT GETS BETTER (OR WORSE PERHAPS)...What's even more sobering is when we read the WORDS of Jesus in Matthew 12:36-37

36 *I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, 37 for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."*

WOW!!! You mean God is listening to all of my 450 million words. And yours.?!?!?!?

Looking back over my life, ALL the things I've said, it makes me understand more why some monks and others take a vow of silence!!!

Maybe we should consider that sometimes???



TRANSITION: God is listening to my words. And He DOES remember each conversation and word verbatim!!!

SO THE Question:

How am I using my speech – for better or for worse?

Was it for the good or for bad?

Well let's take a closer look to see what THE WORD of God has to say about words...

Point I. OUR WORDS CAN DO GREAT DAMAGE

Turn over with me to James 3:5-8 where we read...

5 So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! **6** And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life,^[a] and set on fire by hell.^[b] **7** For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, **8** but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

a) Through the words we say “*the tongue is a restless evil full of deadly poison*”

b) PROVERBS 18:21 ACTUALLY SAYS “THE TONGUE HAS THE POWER OF LIFE AND DEATH!!!”

c) Although we may not remember the words we said or a conversation we had last week, sometimes the things people say to us are so sharp and cruel that they stay with us for a lifetime...

- You're just like your father
- My mother warned me you'd do that
- Just leave it...I'll do it myself

- Why don't you ever wear clothes like so and so's spouse?
- You know, so and so's spouse just a got a big raise, works out at the gym, drives a nice car, spends time with their kids
- Why can't you be more like that family's kids

WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL WITH OUR WORDS and keep guard over our lips:

James also says That we are to be quick to hear, slow to speak... once the words have gone out of your mouth, it's too late... WE CAN'T UN-SAY SOMETHING!!!

OUR STANDARD IS A HIGHER ONE: Ephesians 4:29-30 Let no corrupt (OR unwholesome) communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying OR (building up) that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.

LIKE YOUR MOMMA TOLD YOU, if you can't say something nice, maybe it's best to say nothing.

BECAUSE OUR WORDS CAN DO SO MUCH HARM, WE MUST KEEP GUARD OVER OUR LIPS...

POINT II. IN THE SAME WAY WORDS CAN DO GREAT HARM, FORTUNATELY, Our words can do great good

Proverbs 25:11 A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold inlaid in silver.

Our words can refresh and encourage someone that is discouraged and ready to give up and quit.

Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. Proverbs 16:24

In the same way that words can leave deep wounds, they can leave a lasting difference for the good. When my dad passed away several years ago, the words people said carried me through some of the most difficult times. I still remember them to this day...for instance....

- One person said, your dad isn't gone because I see him right here in front of me living on in you.
- Someone else just mentioned...your dad would be so proud of you.
- Be that person who says words that honor God and lifts others up!
- ONE ELDER AT OUR CHURCH IN NEW MEXICO...always told our children and others in the congregation, "You're so special! You know God loves you so much and is going to do great things in your life!"



HERE'S ANOTHER CRITICAL REASON WHY WE NEED TO WATCH OUR WORDS...

POINT III. ANOTHER SOBERING FACT...FOR BETTER OR WORSE/EITHER GOOD OR BAD - OUR WORDS TELL WHAT IS IN OUR HEARTS

Luke 6:45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

- What's in the well will come out in the water
- What's in the tree will come out in the fruit

IF YOU WANT TO TEST YOUR WHAT'S IN YOUR HEART...I heard someone once ask...WHAT WORD WOULD COME OUT OF YOUR MOUTH IF YOU FOUND YOURSELF IN A CAR THAT DRIFTS OFF THE ROAD AND GOES flying off a cliff???

We really do need to pray the prayer of the Psalmist.

Psalm 19:14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, oh Lord, my Strength, and my Redeemer.

Phil 4:8 – says finally brothers, whatever is true honest just pure lovely praiseworthy of good report admirable of praiseworthy...THINK ON THESE THINGS,

And I would say AS importantly *SPEAK on THESE THINGS!*



POINT IV. WATCHING OUR WORDS...

He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity. - Proverbs 21:23

We must **THINK** before we speak and here are a few other questions you may ask yourself before you speak?

1. Is this something I really need to say?
2. What is my motive in saying it?
3. Will my words heal or hurt?
4. Will my words draw me closer to God or further away?

5. Will my words drive a wedge between the one to whom I am speaking or bring us closer together and closer to the Lord?

PRAYER: I love this verse from Psalm 141:3,
Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips.

If you have been careless with your words and need to confess that, come this morning. If you look at your life and say, I've been a discourager more than an encourager, come.

Maybe you have some very important words that you need to say. Perhaps you need to use your words to confess that Jesus is the Son of God and be baptized today.

If you have any need, please come as we stand and sing.