

ReDay

Renew...Refresh...Restore...Retreat

... Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place...

(Mark 6:31)



May the words of my mouth...

This year we have been exploring how we encounter God with our whole selves, all our senses, and all that we are. This month we focus on the mouth and the power there is in the spoken word, whether directed to God or to other people.

The psalmist prayed:

May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight,
Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer. Ps 19:14 NIV

We speak thousands of words each day – our words can bless or curse, encourage or discourage, build up or tear down. The Proverbs warn against the mouths of the foolish, godless and wicked in quite graphic ways.

Scripture also tells us to shout, sing, tell, proclaim and declare the wonders of the Lord. In a world of suffering and terror, fear and chaos, uncertainty and change, what difference can our words make?
Can we really sing and proclaim the goodness of God in a world with so much pain?

God spoke creation into existence. He spoke and there was light.

There is power in the spoken word.

What do we speak into existence?

(Feel free to look up the songs used here on YouTube to sing along or simply to listen to)

https://youtu.be/T_xZX73w8Ss

May the words of my mouth...

May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight,
Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Call to worship

Let us sing of the Lord's great love forever;
with our mouths let us make his faithfulness known
through all generations.
Let us declare that his love stands firm forever,
that he has established his faithfulness in heaven itself.

from Ps 89:1-2



Prayer

You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you;
I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you,
in a dry and parched land where there is no water.
I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.
Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.
I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.
I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.
On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night.
Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings.
I cling to you; your right hand upholds me.
Ps 63:1-8

Scripture

Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God.
God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few.

³ A dream comes when there are many cares, and many words mark the speech of a fool.

⁴ When you make a vow to God, do not delay to fulfill it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow.

⁵ It is better not to make a vow than to make one and not fulfill it.

⁶ Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the temple messenger, "My vow was a mistake." Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands?

⁷ Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore fear God.
Ecclesiastes 5:2-7

Song

My Jesus, my Savior
Lord, there is none like You
All of my days, I want to praise
The wonders of Your mighty love

Shout to the Lord, all the earth, let us sing
Power and majesty, praise to the King
Mountains bow down and the seas will roar
At the sound of Your name

My comfort, my shelter
Tower of refuge and strength
Let every breath, all that I am
Never cease to worship You

I sing for joy at the work of Your hands
Forever I'll love You, forever I'll stand
Nothing compares to the promise I have in You

Scripture

The mouths of the righteous utter wisdom, and their tongues speak what is just.

The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.

From the mouth of the righteous comes the fruit of wisdom, but a perverse tongue will be silenced. The lips of the righteous know what finds favour, but the mouth of the wicked only what is perverse.

Those who guard their mouths and their tongues keep themselves from calamity.

Words from the mouth of the wise are gracious, but fools are consumed by their own lips.

¹³At the beginning their words are folly; at the end they are wicked madness—
and fools multiply words.

Ps 37:30; Prov 10:11; Prov 10:31-32; Prov 21:23; Ecc 10:12-14

Prayer

I will shout for joy to you, o God, and all the earth!
I will sing the glory of your name; making your praise glorious.
I will say to God, "How awesome are your deeds!
So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you.
All the earth bows down to you; they sing praise to you,
they sing the praises of your name."
I will shout, and sing, and say how great and awesome you are!



from Ps 66:1-4

Song

Let the weak say, "I am strong"
Let the poor say, "I am rich"
Let the blind say, "I can see"
It's what the lord has done in me [x2]

Hosanna, hosanna
To the lamb that was slain
Hosanna, hosanna
Jesus died and rose again

Into the river I will wade
And there my sins are washed away
From the heavens mercy streams
Of the savior's love for me

Hosanna, hosanna...

And I will rise from waters deep
Into the saving arms of god
And I will sing salvation songs
Jesus Christ has set me free

Hosanna, hosanna...

Reflection

God spoke and creation came into being.
Jesus, the Word of God, is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

How can the words we speak bring life to a world of pain and suffering, of uncertainty and change?

Scripture urges us to sing and shout to the Lord, to tell, declare and proclaim

the awesome deeds of the Lord, from generation to generation.

David, as he pours out his heart to the Lord, expressing his fears and anguish, seems to always end up being able to praise God:

*With my mouth I will greatly extol the Lord; in the great throng of worshipers I will praise him.
31 For he stands at the right hand of the needy, to save their lives from those who would condemn them.
Ps 109:30*

In the midst of his trouble and sorrow, he is also able to pray:

*3 Set a guard over my mouth, Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips.
4 Do not let my heart be drawn to what is evil so that I take part in wicked deeds
along with those who are evildoers; do not let me eat their delicacies.
Ps 141:3-4*

Jesus recognized and taught that “the mouth speaks what the heart is full of”. (Matthew 12:24)
He goes on to say, “the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. (Matthew 15:18-19)

Our mouth simply expresses what’s going on inside of us – whether that is positive or negative. It’s not just our words that we may need to watch, but what’s happening within us.

James, however, seems to say it most powerfully:

*The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body.
It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one’s life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. (3:6)*

He points out that it just isn’t right to praise God with the tongue and at the same time to curse others; that out of the same mouth should come both praise and cursing! (3:9-10)

We all know the power of words: words that encourage, build up and bless or words that discourage and destroy. We can choose how to use our mouths to connect more deeply and intimately with God and to connect more authentically with those around us.

Think back on the words that have come out of your mouth recently.

How have your words brought life to others?

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths,
but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs,
that it may benefit those who listen.

Ephesians 4:29

Pause



Scripture

For you have been my hope, Sovereign Lord, my confidence since my youth.

⁶ From birth I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother's womb. I will ever praise you.

⁷ I have become a sign to many; you are my strong refuge.

⁸ My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendour all day long.

As for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more.

¹⁵ My mouth will tell of your righteous deeds, of your saving acts all day long—
though I know not how to relate them all.

¹⁶ I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, Sovereign Lord;
I will proclaim your righteous deeds, yours alone.

¹⁷ Since my youth, God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvellous deeds.

¹⁸ Even when I am old and grey, do not forsake me, my God,
till I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come. Ps 71:5-8; 14-18

Prayer

May your unfailing love come to me, Lord, your salvation, according to your promise;

⁴² then I can answer anyone who taunts me, for I trust in your word.



⁴³ Never take your word of truth from my mouth,
for I have put my hope in your laws. Ps 119:41-43

¹⁰³ How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!
¹⁰⁴ I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path.

¹⁰⁸ Accept, Lord, the willing praise of my mouth,
and teach me your laws.

Ps 119:103-108

Song

My soul will sing with all the strength I have in me;
I will rejoice with every day He gives.
I will recall the wonders He has shown to me,
His power to heal, His mercy to forgive.
We join with angels to sing His praises.
He does not treat us as our sins deserve.

High as the heavens reach above the earth
Is Your unfailing love, is Your unfailing love.
Far as the east is banished from the west
You took our sins for us removed our sins from us,
How wide, how high
Is Your unfailing love.

Our King delights to show compassion to the weak;
Their deepest needs He loves to satisfy .
Throughout the earth His justice and His mercy speak,
And He will run to meet the victim's cry.
From everlasting to everlasting
Our youth renewed with every step we take.

Though we are dust, a moment in eternity,
As flowers bloom today and then are gone,
He crowns our lives with beauty and with dignity;
His patience smiles on all who turn to Him.
From generation to generation
We'll tell the story of His faithfulness.

Benediction

May the words that come out of my mouth
and the musings of my heart meet with Your gracious approval,
O Eternal, my Rock, O Eternal, my Redeemer.
Ps 19:14 VOICE

GOING DEEPER – May the words of my mouth...

Here are some suggestions that may help you in your time of reflection.

- **Reflect:** Read through the Reflection again. Notice what stands out for you and think about why this might be. Notice the words: what moved you? What was jarring? What was hard to read? How do you feel when you read these words? Where in your life do these words resonate?
- **The Bible** is full of guidance about how we should use our tongues and how we should not use them. Here are just some of the passages: Matthew 15:11-20; Luke 6:43-45; James 3:1-12; Eph 4:29; Jeremiah 1:9; Isaiah 51:15-16; Isaiah 53:7; Ps 51:15; Ps 40:1-5; Ps 54:2;

Choose one (or more) of these passages and think about what God is saying to you about how to use your tongue. Reflect on the words used in these passages (sing, tell, proclaim, declare, etc) and also reflect on the words that God speaks to us. How do we honour the words of God's mouth?

- Use one of the Bible passages or songs provided in the material to practise **Lectio Divina**.
- **Visualise Scripture!** Choose one of the Scripture passages that tells a story (for example, Jesus' teaching in Matthew about how we should speak, or the description of Jesus' silence in Isaiah 53). Slowly read the story through. After each verse, close your eyes and picture the scene being described. What do you see, smell, hear? What would it feel like if you were there? How is God speaking to you through this? You could either record this experience in your journal or share it with someone.
- **Be creative:** think of ways you can creatively express what Scripture says about the power of the tongue. You might like to make a word collage of the ways we are encouraged to speak, or a picture collage of the dangers of the tongue. You could write a poem, prayer, song that challenges or inspires others, or you could write your own prayer of confession. You might also like to compose your own statement of how you wish to use your speech to glorify God and build others up.
- Go for a **walk**. What do you notice as you hear the conversations of others? What kinds of words fill our environment? Does this challenge you in any way?
- If you are **sharing** this retreat day with someone else, spend some time sharing your reflections or insights. Share what God might be saying to you about this topic. Pray together.
- If you like to **journal**, make a note of what you have experienced during this retreat time in your journal. A simple way to do this is to:

Thank God for Who He is and what He is doing in your life

Notice what is happening around you and in you

Respond to what God has shown you, by thanking Him, repenting, or recommitting yourself to Him

- **Simply sit in His presence.** We don't have to do anything to enjoy being in His presence! We are in His will when we are fully and completely in His presence, with our hearts focussed on Him.

EVEN DEEPER

LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina is an ancient spiritual practice from the Christian monastic tradition. Its title derives from the Latin words meaning reading and divine/holy. In Lectio Divina, we seek to experience the presence of God through reading and listening, meditation, prayer, and contemplation. Lectio Divina can be practiced both by individuals and in groups.

Practicing Lectio Divina Individually

1. Text

Begin by choosing a section of Scripture that you would like to read and pray. You can choose the text randomly or use a liturgical book, such as The Book of Common Prayer. Try not to set a goal for how much content you will cover; the goal is to listen for God and to experience his presence.

2. Preparation

Do what you must to quiet and prepare yourself to hear from God. If you need to find a quiet room, sit in silence for several minutes, or sit in a comfortable chair, take whatever posture will help you prepare to receive and experience God's presence.

3. Reading/Listening

When you sense that your heart is prepared, begin by slowly reading the passage of Scripture that you have selected. Move slowly through sentences and phrases. As you read, pay attention to what word, phrase, or idea catches your attention.

4. Meditation

Begin to meditate on the word, phrase, or idea that has captured your attention. Repeat it again and again.

Consider:

What thoughts come to mind as you meditate on this word, phrase, or idea?

What are you reminded of in your life?

What does it make you hope for?

Meditation is no easy task—as you try to concentrate don't be disappointed if random thoughts enter your head. As they do, offer them to God.

5. Prayer

Now begin to speak to God. Tell God what word, phrase, or idea captured your attention and what came to mind as you meditated upon it. How is God using this word, phrase, or idea to bless and transform you? Tell God what you have been thinking and feeling as you've listened and meditated. Tell God how you hope this word, phrase, or idea will change your heart to be more like His.

6. Contemplation

Finish by focusing your attention on the fact that God's presence is with you. If as you try to focus on God's presence you sense a need to read the text again, to continue meditating, or to simply continue talking with God, allow yourself to do so. As you do, know that you are in the presence of God.

THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN - Finding the movement of the Spirit in our daily lives as we review our day.

This is something that can be done throughout the day or at the end of the day. It helps us to become more aware of and focused on the presence of God in the midst of everyday life.

1. Recognize the presence of God

Be still and know that you are with God.

2. Look at your day with gratitude

Acknowledge God in the big and small things of life.

3. Review your day

When or where in the past 24 hours did you feel you were cooperating most fully with God's action in your life? When were you resisting?

Ask yourself

- What habits and life patterns do I notice?
- When did I feel most alive? Most drained of life?
- When did I have the greatest sense of belonging? When did I feel most alone?
- When did I give love? Where did I receive love?
- When did I feel most fully myself? Least myself?
- When did I feel most whole? Most fragmented?

4. Reconcile and Resolve

- Seek forgiveness
- Ask for direction
- Share a concern
- Express gratitude
- Resolve to move forward

Mars Hill Bible Church
marshill.org/teaching/sp

SONGS

Shout to the Lord: Darlene Zschech, 1993 Wondrous Worship (Admin. by Music Services, Inc.)

What the Lord has done in me: Reuben Morgan, 1998 Hillsong Music Publishing

My soul will sing (Psalm 103): Kristyn Getty, Stuart Townend, 2007 Thankyou Music (Admin. by Crossroad Distributors Pty. Ltd.)

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