A Bridle For My Tongue
Sunday, June 12, 2011

Last week I preached about anger. Anger will always be a part of our lives, and we need to learn how to deal with it in a Godly manner. God directs us to keep our anger in check. Remember these three verses, better yet, write them down:

**Ephesians 4:26-27 (NIV)**

> 26 “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

**Ecclesiastes 7:9 (KJV)**

> 9 Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools

**Ephesians 4:31-32 (KJV)**

> 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you

So what is it that tends to make us the angriest? Bad calls by officials at sports games? Bad hair days? Missing a great sale at our favorite store? Wait, I’ve got it, bad drivers! All of these things can get a person angry, but I think the one thing that has the power to make each and every one of us angry is the spoken word. When people speak, and we don’t agree, or we find what they say offensive or crude, or unacceptable (right or wrong,) or if we are spoken to in anger… The list goes on. How do I anger you, let me count the ways:

So how is it that we can become so angry just from words? They have so much power, so much influence, so much authority. Why is it that we are so affected by words?

Please turn to

**Genesis 1:1-9 (KJV)**

> 1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. 5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. 6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. 7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.
And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

And God said… and God said. God speaks and things happen, Jesus is the Word Of God. Words are mighty, full of authority and power.

God considers what we say to be very important. He wants us to speak what is right and what is good.

Psalms 39:1 (NIV) ¹ I said, “I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin;
I will put a muzzle on my mouth while in the presence of the wicked.”

Ps. 15:1-3 (KJV) ¹ Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?
² He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.
³ He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

When we speak good things, and don’t backbite or lie or gossip, we do what God is seeking from us.

Scripture tells us what we are supposed to say, and what we are not supposed to say:

James 3:9-10 (NIV) ⁹ With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.

Eph. 4:29 (KJV) ²⁹ Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Our words are so powerful, how many times have we been in a pleasant conversation, only to have everything go haywire, tempers flaring from one sentence, or even one word. It is so easy to lose control of our tongues. Paul writes about our tongues and compares them to a rudder on a ship, small yet powerful.

Prov. 11:9 (KJV) ⁹ An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.

A hypocrite destroys his neighbor. We know that a hypocrite is someone who says one thing, but does another. It is what the world accuses Christians of being. When we lose control of our tongues, we lose control of everything. James writes about what happens, and how we are perceived when we lose control of what we speak.
James 1:26 (NIV) 26 Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. If our religion is worthless, we are doomed. God tells us exactly what is going to happen to the wicked and evil person, the person who destroys with his words.

Psa. 50:16-22 (NIV) 16 But to the wicked person, God says:
“What right have you to recite my laws or take my covenant on your lips?
17 You hate my instruction and cast my words behind you.
18 When you see a thief, you join with him; you throw in your lot with adulterers.
19 You use your mouth for evil and harness your tongue to deceit.
20 You sit and testify against your brother and slander your own mother’s son.
21 When you did these things and I kept silent, you thought I was exactly like you.
But I now arraign you and set my accusations before you.
22 “Consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you to pieces, with no one to rescue you:
And in:

Rom. 1:28-32 (KJV) 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;
29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,
30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,
31 Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:
32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.
Paul lists 22 things in Romans that are evil and that God hates. 5 of those things are directly related to the tongue: Debate (argumentativeness,) Deceit (lying,) Whisperers (gossip,) Backbiters (two-faced friend,) Boasters (puffed up with pride.) So, about 25% of the list has to do with the tongue. He also writes to the Ephesians about sin:

Eph. 5:3-5 (NIV) 3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for
God’s holy people. "Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving." For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

We need to take our words very seriously. Christ spoke about our tongues, and our words.

**Matt. 12:36-37 (KJV)** 36But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

Pretty specific, very condemning, if we don’t watch what we say. So how do we “guard our tongues?” What is it that we have to do to be able to keep our mouths from condemning us?

**Proverbs 17:27-28 (NIV)** 27 The one who has knowledge uses words with restraint, and whoever has understanding is even-tempered.

28 Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues.

**Prov. 21:23 (KJV)** 23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.

Basically: stop talking so much, listen more, think more, hear the Holy Spirit before you speak…

Christ tells us in Matthew that it is our heart that speaks.

**Matt. 12:34 (NIV)** 34 You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

So what should we do to speak the right things? David asks God in Psalm 51 to change his heart. If we change our heart, we change what we speak.

**Psa. 51:9-10 (KJV)** 8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. 9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. 11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. 12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. 13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. 14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. 15 O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. 16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

When we listen to God, when we guard our tongues, He is generous; he understands that we struggle, that we are at constant war with our flesh. There is so much that God does for us when we are obedient and keep our tongues from sinning.

Remember this:

**Psa. 34:12-13 (NIV)**

12 Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days,
13 keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies.

In conclusion, we must guard our tongues, not allowing anger to control what we say, keep our hearts clean and our hands pure, slow to anger, slow to speak, always listening to the Holy Spirit for the words we should be saying. Not easy, but we can do all things through Christ or strengthens us.

Psalm 19:14 is a perfect prayer for us, letting us know exactly what we should be seeking:

**Psa. 19:14 (KJV)**

14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

Let’s pray.