

What Your Words Say About You

New Castle Bible Church

Shaun Lewis

May 2020

Text: Mathew 12:33-37

INTRODUCTION

Matthew has shown us to this point that the kingdom was present, Israel's long awaited king had come. Salvation was within their grasp. What would Israel do? Reject Him. Matthew 12 tells us she rejected Him.

John's Gospel puts it this way, "He came unto His own, but His own did not receive Him." I have thought for years that this may be the saddest verse in all the Bible. Brilliant incomprehensible light shines into human history... but men preferred the darkness.

Back in Isaiah 5, the Lord likened Israel to a vineyard. He had worked this vineyard, clearing the ground, building hedges, doing all that's necessary. You would expect that a well-managed vineyard produces good grapes... but it didn't. The Lord lamented: "What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it?"

The nation had repaid centuries of His lovingkindness with rebellion. Read Isaiah 5, and the yield of all God's care was "wild grapes" *Be-ushim* – "rotten fruit." And during Jesus' ministry centuries after Isaiah's ministry... the fruit of Israel was still rotten.

That may seem harsh, but in Matthew 12, the men who represented Israel rejected Jesus. The Lord healed a man oppressed by demons. The people marveled, but the Pharisees said in Matthew 12:24, "It is only by the prince of demons that this man casts out demons."

"This man"—you can hear the contempt—"this man" is of the devil. We want nothing to do with Him. His power doesn't come from God but Satan. Of all the profane things the tongue has ever said, nothing is so offensive to God as this.

Israel's King had come, but the stewards of Israel denied His return, and there would be no turning back from it.

How does a person get to this point? How do you get to a point of believing that Jesus is satanic? How do you witness so much goodness and healing, so much light, and actually hate it?

That's what Jesus will help us understand today, because we're looking at that connection between our words and our heart.

Matthew 12:33-37 – “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Both words and actions come from the heart, but words flow far more easily. Friends, there is no clearer line of sight into your heart than through your mouth. So, I believe the main point of our text today is that the words of your mouth reveal the condition of your heart.

Main Point: The words of your mouth reveal the condition of your heart.

Jesus explains the Pharisees' words, and in doing so, He wants us to realize...

Your Words Reflect Your Heart (v. 33-34)

Your Words Expose Your Treasure (v. 35)

Your Words Indicated Your Destiny (v. 36-37)

I. Your Words Reflect Your Heart (v. 33-34).

I really don't know much about trees, but one thing I do know is that good fruit must come from a good tree.

Tanner's Orchard has rows upon rows of apple trees. I don't need to sample the soil or analyze the bark—I just look at the apples. If the apples look fresh and attractive, I'll take it. Good apples, so in my mind that means I'm looking at a good tree.

And, when I see withered, rotten apples, I assume there's something wrong with the tree.

The quality of the fruit tells us the quality of the tree. Good fruit comes from a good tree; bad fruit comes from a bad tree. No surprises here.

Jesus takes this principle and applies it to the Pharisees. How could someone say that the work of God's Spirit is the work of Satan? Jesus asks: “How can you speak good, when you are evil?”

Evil statements reflect evil hearts, and here's where it starts to sting... because Jesus called the Pharisees, a "brood of vipers."

"Brood" or offspring of vipers. The Pharisee prided themselves that they were faithful leaders, godly men who kept the Law. They believed they were nothing like Israel's leaders from the past. Jesus says, "No, you're far more like the leaders of ages past. If they were vipers who mercilessly ravaged the sheep, you guys are their offspring."

Zechariah 7 tells us God's view of Israel's leaders in the Old Testament.

Zechariah 7:9-12 — "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart.' But they refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears that they might not hear. They made their hearts diamond-hard..."

The Pharisees were the same vipers as Israel's leaders long ago. Men with diamond-hard hearts who had no compassion for those who were suffering, would show no mercy. With hearts as hard as diamond, the Pharisees condemned Jesus.

"For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."

Imagine the heart as a bucket that fills up with good or with evil desires. A cup of hatred followed by a cup of bitterness, cup after cup added to the heart until the brim is reached and evil begins to slosh out of it.

Each time Jesus preached, healed on the Sabbath, or showed mercy, it was as if another cup of bitterness and hatred flooded into the hearts of the Pharisees. They hated it, and Jesus didn't stop. He just kept ministering. He kept teaching. The more good that He did, the more hated He became.

The Pharisees hatred had grown to a point that it sloshed out. Here they said that Jesus is satanic. It was evil desire filled to the brim spilling out of the heart in venomous words. And in time, those evil words would become evil actions and murder.

Evil isn't obvious until an evil heart is disturbed or encounters a trial.

An angry man may seem very nice... until he finds a scratch on his new car. The bucket was full, the scratch jolted it, and rage sloshed out in a stream of vitriol. But then the water calms down, and he seems to become a nice guy again.

That scratch tells us volumes about this man. His words weren't just an accident—they were a verbal mirror that perfectly reflected his true self. His stream of anger was bad fruit, right? And what produced it? A bad heart. One that's filled with love for a car.

Out of the abundance of the heart, you speak... and speak... and speak. If you want to understand someone, pay close attention to their words when they're in a trial. If there's bitterness or evil desires deep within, the next time the bucket of your heart is jolted, some of that is going to spill out. It did with the Pharisees, it will with you and me.

Our words do more than reflect the condition of our heart. They actually expose what the heart treasures.

II. Your Words Expose Your Treasure (v. 35).

Matthew 12:35 — “The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.

Matthew 6:21 — “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Water doesn't slosh out of an empty bucket, my friends. What comes out of the bucket must have already been in the bucket. Regarding the Pharisees, it's not as if they just had a bad day and flew off the handle against Jesus.

No, they were like whitewashed tombs—ornate on the outside with death on the inside. The Pharisees dressed the part, even walked a certain way and maintained a kind of posture to indicate piety—this was all part of their image.

The image that you keep is what you'd like people to think that you are. According to Jesus, your words are the real you... and deep within the heart are all the things the heart treasures.

Luke 11:39 tells us that the Pharisees were greedy; 16:14 says they loved money. Matthew 23 says they love to receive honor, they love to be seen, they love to be exalted. It seems we could say that the Pharisees treasured money and power. They produced bad fruit, because they were bad trees. Why were they bad trees? Because the source that nourished them was bad.

Money and power aren't inherently bad, but they were never meant to nourish the soul.

Solomon tried it and didn't discover joy in the process, but emptiness.

Rockefeller was the wealthiest man in modern history. He was once asked how much money is enough. You know what he said? “Just a little bit more.”

Money and power, self-glory and self-exaltation—this was the treasure of the Pharisee. If you were just a common Jew who listened to the Pharisees, they wouldn't think much of you.

Jesus was an entirely different matter, This rabbi from the back-hills of Galilee starts teaching, one with no formal education, no wealth, no power of any kind. *He teaches Scripture in a way that's different from us, doesn't keep our traditions, rebukes us, outdoes us with His deeds.*

The Pharisees hated Jesus to point of murder because He was a threat to their treasures. Instead of repentance, humbling their heart before the Lord. Rather than rid their hearts of this evil desire, they rid their lives of Jesus.

As I said before about the man with the scratched car... you may be like him, a perfectly calm person most of the time, but what comes out when your treasures feel threatened in some way?

If you treasure money, what words come out of you when your finances are devastated?

If you treasure entertainment, what do you say when you're bored?

If you treasure achievement, what comes out of your mouth when you fail?

If you treasure leisure, what come out when your rest is interrupted?

This is important because the real you comes out when your treasure is threatened. When the Pharisees called Jesus satanic, Jesus didn't say, "Well, I know you guys have had a rough day. Let's talk about it after we've all cooled down." No, because what they said in that flash of anger showed the real person.

Trials are anything that threatens my treasure... what you say in those moments isn't an accident or a slip of the tongue—it's the real you.

Friends, I'm usually a nice person. If you talk to me on any Sunday morning, you'll see "nice Shaun" because I'm genuinely eager to see you. If you talk to me on Sunday afternoon, I'm tired and highly treasure a few hours of relaxation. If that relaxation is threatened, I'm ashamed to say that my words do not always reflect "nice Shaun". That small trial that threatens to steal my relaxation—it pushes the real "Shaun" to come out in that moment.

We want to downplay those moments, don't we? View them as exceptions to the norm, nothing too serious. We do that because we're ashamed. We're ashamed that the image we project of ourselves doesn't match reality. Instead of confessing it and repenting, we hide who we truly are from others.

Charles Spurgeon — "More of a man is seen in his words than in anything else belonging to him; you may look into his face and be mistaken, you may visit his house and not discover him,

you may scan his business and misunderstand him; but if you hear his daily conversation you shall soon know him. The heart babbles out its secret when the tongue is in motion.”

Deep within the heart are the things that you most treasure... and those treasures are exposed when they feel threatened... and in those moments, what flows from your mouth—good or evil—that’s the real you.

Jesus has helped us see that words reflect the heart and expose the heart’s treasures. They also indicate a person’s eternal destiny.

III. Your Words Indicate Your Destiny (v. 36-37)

Matthew 12:36-37 — “I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Your words do not earn salvation, but they do provide evidence. This is a warning from Jesus. On the Day of Judgment, your words will provide oral testimony for or against the genuineness of your faith. Specifically, your “careless” words.

Careless, meaning our unfruitful or useless words. The words that seemed to slip out. Maybe they weren’t awful words, like calling Jesus satanic. Maybe they weren’t highly inappropriate words, lying words, or gossiping words... but words that weren’t helpful. The seemingly little words that slip out—an offhand remark or a faint grumble. Those little slips mean so much more than we think.

Over in James’ epistle, chapter 3 tells us the power of our words. I think it’s worth looking at today as part of this warning. Matthew 12 shows the heart behind our words; James 3 shows the effect of our words. James says that the tongue may be a small thing, but it’s so powerful.

You may think your “careless” words here or there aren’t much. Snide remarks, little complaints, bits of sarcasm, faint grumbles... little, careless words. Yet, they can sap the joy of your spouse in an instant, crush your children or cause them to replay it in their minds for years to come... and you had no idea. What seemed the size of a snowflake to you was a full avalanche to them.

James 3:6 says that tongue is a “world of unrighteousness.” Literally, a “system” or “cosmos” of iniquity. An entire universe of evil can be spoken into life.

Proverbs 18:21 — “Death and life are in the power of the tongue.”

Not the power of the sword, but of the tongue, because words precede actions.

Your words carry an awesome power to harm or to help. The effect of your words depends on the condition of your heart... and the content of your words indicates exactly where you'll spend eternity: "...for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Is your tongue becoming more Christlike? Are your words reflecting the power of God in your life? *I think so... I'm not sure.* A better question: "Is your heart becoming more like Christ?"

Your heart is sum of your thoughts, your will, and your affections.

Are you thoughts becoming more like Christ?

Is your will and ability to make decisions looking more like Him?

Do you find your desire for God to be growing?

If your mind, will, and affections look a little more like Christ each year... whether you realize it or not, your words are changing as well. And that's a sure sign that you belong to Christ.

CONCLUSION

I hope no one leaves this morning thinking, "OK, I just need to talk less." That may be a good thing for some of you, but that's not the right response. That's just polishing the image you want to project of yourself.

Our second Vice President, Aaron Burr, was highly skilled at this. He had an image he wanted everyone to believe about him, but it was said that no one ever knew what he truly felt or thought at any given time.

The Pharisees were much like Burr in hiding their true self. They walked a certain way, talked a certain way—but in Matthew 12, their hatred of Jesus had risen to the surface first with their words, but then in conspiring to kill Him.

What are we to do?

First, humble yourself in order to see yourself rightly and honestly in the light of Scripture. Your words, particularly when your treasures feel threatened, those words are real you. What do those words say about the real you?

Downplaying your outbursts, your gossip, your little white lies—all of it is polishing an image of ourselves, hiding from others, failing to humble ourselves before the Lord. It's pride, and Jesus shatters our pride to give us life everlasting.

Second, repent. Whatever your words happen to say about you, turn to the Lord in confession, and perhaps you need to turn to others to ask their forgiveness.

Third, abide in Christ. Good words are a fruit that comes from a good tree. Do not let your life look like Israel whose fruit was *be-ushim*, rotten or worthless fruit. Receive nourishment from Jesus. Our church surveys from January said that, on average, we at New Castle pray for 10 minutes a day. Church, instead of being nourished on the latest tweet or morsel of news—meditate upon Scripture. Fill your mind with the Bible, read good books, listen to good sermons, set aside time each day to pray. Be with Jesus, and you will become like Him.

Friends, if the words of your mouth reveals the condition of your heart, what do your words say about you? Let us pray...

Father, all I can think of is Isaiah's words where He cried out: "I am ruined; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" Today, gazing into Your Word, we have seen the King. Please do a work in our hearts. Help us to humble our hearts before You, to be honest about our own hearts, repent, and then abide in You. Give us clean hearts, Lord, and may it be seen in clean lips.