

The Power of Words

Words can be positive or negative.

Words have power. The most common way we think of word power is their power to communicate, getting across ideas. But that is not the only power, nor the limit to the power of words.

The things you say can hurt and tear down, or they can heal and build up. We can be encouraged by words or we can be discouraged, or even hurt by words. The things you say and the things said to you have an effect. James says that they have a steering, or a formative effect.

The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. Proverbs 12:18

Words internalised have a formative effect.

Our words can bind us and trap us. Our words can set a direction for our life. Just as the words written into a programme for a computer directs it, so too we write the programme for our lives by the words we say about ourselves and the words that others say about us.

What you say of others influences their future.

³ When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴ Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. ⁵ Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. ⁶ 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. (James 3:3-6)

Words we say about others.

You can “tear strips of people”. How? Through angry words. We have a saying, “sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” Deep

down however, we know that is not true. The deepest cuts I have encountered in people have been inflicted through words.

There are a number of ways destructive words effect people.

1. You say something about someone, that person hears it and is hurt. (abuse)
2. You say something about someone, that person doesn't hear it, but others do and his or her reputation is hurt. (Gossip)
3. You say something negative or hurtful about someone, which allows spiritual forces to leverage what you say, and gain a foothold. (curse.)
4. You say something damaging against someone, they hear it and believe it. (oppression)

You need to be careful what you do with the words you speak. Jesus warns us that when we speak destructive words to one another we are killing. You can turn that around and when you speak loving words to one another you are giving life.

²¹ "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' ²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell. (Matthew 5:21-22)

Words said over us.

Words can do a number on you! If your mother always said that you would not amount to anything much, there is a strong chance that you never will. Significant individuals can 'programme' us to a certain extent.

Let's put that to the test. Do you say the same kind of things that your mother or father did? Do you react much the same way they did? Do you believe about yourself pretty much what they did? You have been 'programmed', positively or negatively.

And there is the key. Your belief about yourself is effected by what people say about you. You will all have conversations about yourselves playing over and over in your head like a recording. Every now and then it will switch to your favourite song.

If that song is a blues song, saying you will never amount to much, or you are a terrible person, or that you are unlovable, incompetent or whatever, it will become more and more really the more time you give to it. It will be a song that says you don't belong here, you are no good, and God cannot love you because of what you have done.

Words we say over ourselves.

Sometimes we write our own blues.

Sometimes we are our own worst enemy in this.

The easiest way this happens, particularly as you get older is that you focus on your illnesses. This happens so easily, because as you get older, you tend to suffer a lot of ailments. And so, when you meet together, what are your topics of conversation? Of course it will be the things going on in your life. Pretty soon, your entire time is spent talking about cancer, chemo, heart disease, the flu, arthritis, your dicky knee, and so on.

Sure, these things need to be spoken of from time to time, but after a while you then become the cancer sufferer instead of you. You become your illness, rather than *[insert your name]* who happens to be suffering from an illness currently. Don't write your sickness or your ailment into your DNA, it doesn't belong there. Don't speak of yourself as "sick" or "disabled" or any other final kind of a word. It is not actually true. The truth is you are saved, delivered and healed, you are just in the process of realising the fullness of the blessings God has won for you.

God has spoken words over you.

You have heard it said: "Sticks and stone will break my bones but words will never hurt me".

But I say to you; "Sticks and stones used on their own could cause a bit of pain,

But through God's grace and with His word they bring new life again". (That's my paraphrase of Exodus 17:1–7)

So what has God spoken over you? As you confessed your sin as we do regularly in our worship service, those words of forgiveness and restoration were spoken over you. At the end of the service there will be a word of

blessing spoken over you, listen to that blessing and let it sink deep into your soul, that's where it belongs. That blessing is yours! God earned it for you.

²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all^[c]; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are one.” John 10:27-29

²⁵ As he says in Hosea:

*“I will call them ‘my people’ who are not my people;
and I will call her ‘my loved one’ who is not my loved one,”*

²⁶ and,

*“In the very place where it was said to them,
‘You are not my people,’
there they will be called ‘children of the living God.’” (Romans 9:25-26)*

You are called “Children of the living God”. Listen to the language of that, in the Old Testament, the people of God were called, “the people of God.” In the New Testament, the language has changed, Jesus makes us, “Children of the living God.”

That is a far cry from some of the words that may be used for you, or that you use about yourself.

Which Words will you listen to?

You can choose what words about yourself which you accept, and what words you feed into the lives of others. Jesus was rather adamant that we should be careful in the way that we use our words.

How do you talk about yourself? What do you say about yourself?

It is time to sing a new song.

Let God’s words become your words. About yourself and about others.

Whatever is good, right & noble, think about these things.

⁸Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. (Philippians 4:8 NIV)

These are an example of God's words about you.

Psalm 8:4-9

*what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?
⁵You have made them a little lower than the angels
and crowned them with glory and honor.
⁶You made them rulers over the works of your hands;
you put everything under their feet:
⁷all flocks and herds,
and the animals of the wild,
⁸the birds in the sky,
and the fish in the sea,
all that swim the paths of the seas.
⁹LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

If you speak words about someone, and they are not uplifting, you may well be helping to write a new song, a blues song for that person. Help to write a happy song for people, and in doing so you will build them up. You have been given authority to bring this about.

When Jesus said to Peter, I give to you the keys of the Kingdom, He was giving that authority to the Church. We now have the authority to make spiritual proclamations which are binding in heaven. Your words have cosmic power. Use it for its intended purpose, to build up, heal and release.

Too many people, with the authority of the Kingdom, say things that will tear people down, and reduce themselves to nothing.

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

More:

You have been given authority. Firstly to proclaim the kingdom. Luke 9,10 etc. You have been commissioned to bring the kingdom to bear on the earth. The world won't simply succumb to the new king, it needs to be brought into submission. We don't do this by physical force but by spiritual force. The weapons we fight with are not of this world, but are spiritual and we fight against principalities and powers.

1 Peter 3:9

You can bring the light, and you do that by speaking words into the spiritual realm. You speak victory into the world.

Next: A life of Rejoicing. Philippians 4:4-9

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.