

His Tongue Is an Unruly Member

by Leonard Ravenhill

The tongue is a powerful tool that can bring great blessing or great harm, and it is a reflection of our character and our relationship with God.

Duration: 1:17:38

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 2:1-4, James 3:5-6

Topics: "Tongue"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of time and how it is misused in today's society. He emphasizes the power of man to subdue and control various creatures, but highlights that man cannot control his own tongue. The speaker also mentions the potential of children to be geniuses if they are taught the right things at the right time, but laments the lack of time spent on proper education due to distractions like television. He concludes by warning that God keeps record of our words and will judge us accordingly.

Transcript

And, uh, out of many wise things that he said to me, one of them was this, that he said, I'm not sure I'll live to see this, but I think you'll live to see the time when Christians from other countries come back to America to teach us what Christianity's like. And that day's come. One of the most acceptable men, one of the greatest preachers I know.

Again, he's an Indian, not an East Indian like our dear brother Boland, but, uh, a very wonderful man by the name of Baksing. Some of, any of you heard Baksing? Good. Didn't you really get moved when he spoke? He has a profound knowledge of the word of God.

Uh, we were in a large meeting and, uh, the auditorium was so constructed that they had these large chairs, these big wooden chairs, um, like movie house chairs, you know, tip-up seats. And he said, before I speak we're going to pray and we're going to pray the Bible way. And he recited about 15 or 20 or maybe more scriptures where they all knelt.

And he said, we cannot pray unless we kneel, and so everybody must kneel down. Well it so happened that a lady that we know was there and she weighed about 250 pounds and she had a problem. Turning round to kneel, it was awful.

But getting up was ten times worse. They just had to hold a meeting till she got turned round out of those chairs. But he insists on this, and he is one of the most remarkable men of faith that I know.

Setting off for England from India before he flew, he was going down the street with a little attache case about this size, and somebody said, where are you going? And he said, England. Oh, when are you going? He said, now. Where's your baggage? In my hand.

Is that all you take? Well, it holds my pajamas, toothbrush, shaving kit, and I can wash my shirt at night. That man has raised up over 350 churches. And he just has as much money as when he started, like Jesus did.

And round the world, some of the greatest men of the day, are men like this dear brother this morning, who I understand never went to Bible school. One of the great preachers in America today was, went to see Dr. Tozer some years ago. His girlfriend took him along and she said, I want you to meet my pastor.

And pastor, I want you to meet my boyfriend. He's a preacher. And he said, what Bible school did you go to? He said, none.

And he said, that's an advantage. And maybe it is in the days in which we live. And I have repeatedly said, and I'm so glad that this brother shared it, it was my conviction that God did not go off production when he produced Wesley and Finney and Whitfield.

You know, we've got such cocky ideas of our success, and a lot of it's rubbish. We're drawing the biggest cards in history, nothing of the kind. We've got radio, blacktop roads, TV, all the news media, advertising and whatnot.

Do you know that John Wesley was excited because before he got rolling, two spirit-filled Frenchmen were drawing 30,000 men a night, men and women a night. No blacktop roads, no motels to sleep. Twenty-two years of age, George Whitfield was up in Boston.

The population of the city was 12,000. He drew 14,000 a night. No blacktop roads, nowhere to eat.

Men admitted that they took a horse and rode with a wife on the horse. And then when the horse got tired, the men got off and walked, and walked up to their knees in snow. And a very famous American stood one day and listened to George Whitfield, and he said, I stood back, I stood back, and he figured how far he could hear George Whitfield speak distinctly without any amplification.

And Benjamin Franklin, he was the person, said how amazed he was at the power of that man to draw over 25,000 people night after night. I'm still sure revival doesn't cost one red cent. You don't boost personalities.

God, the Holy Ghost, does the job. I'm glad this young fellow, quite young, only 29, that he's learned the ways of God. Isn't greedy for publicity, doesn't get excited if you thank him.

Doesn't walk around with a sense of air and cocksuredness that so many evangelists have. I'm glad he's learned. He's had it rough, I'll tell you that.

He wouldn't tell you, but he preaches a message that not many churches want night after night. Oh, one night he's a novelty. He's good, he stood us up.

But boy, when you hammer that same nail night after night. Do you know what they do? They show you the door and give you a love offering. There's more love than offering, and there's not much love.

You know, the evangelism we've had in the last two decades hasn't done much for us. God's going to raise more men like this. I'm absolutely sure of this.

The Spirit of the Lord is discernibly on him. And I think it's something very wonderful, very encouraging as far as I'm concerned. I understand he's coming to our conference next week at Eros.

Well, he's our good brother there. He's going to be there and I'm going to be there. So, I don't know, I'll be happy not to preach.

Let him do it. These two do the preaching and I'll listen. I'll maybe take the offering for a change.

I mean take it home, not just collect it. Now here's something you won't like. I've got a distinct advantage over the previous preacher this morning.

Or any other preacher maybe that's been on this camp since it began. Because I can not only tell you what the text is, I can show you it. Now you could do a lot better than I can do.

But let me show you the text. Shall I show you it right now? Here it is. Now you've got bigger ones and longer ones and ones that do a lot more work than mine maybe.

There's the tongue. The tongue is an unruly member. That's what James says.

I never understood it why, quite why. But the very famous preacher Martin Luther said that the epistle of James is an epistle of straw. I don't understand that because I think that it's a very practical epistle and it's a very painful epistle.

And you don't find many subjects in the Bible that get a whole chapter. You see the space in the Bible is very, very precious and very, very rare. So except in 1 Corinthians 13 where you have 13 verses on the subject of love.

And away in the Revelation where you have a chapter on heaven. And Romans chapter 7 where you have a very profound area where theologians make lances with each other. That there are very few areas in the Bible where a whole chapter is given to just one thing.

And this is almost true of this subject here, the tongue. And we read from verse 5 in James 3. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasteth great things. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth.

And the tongue is a fire, a word of iniquity. So is the tongue among our members that it defileth the whole body and setteth on fire the course of nature. And is set on fire of hell.

For every kind of beasts and of birds and of serpents and of things in the sea is tamed. And hath been tamed of mankind. But the tongue can no man tame.

It is an unruly evil full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God even the Father. And therewith curse we men which are made after the similitude of God.

Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same time sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree my brethren bear olive

berries either of vine figs? So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye are bitter, envying and strife in your hearts glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above that is earthly, sensual, devilish.

For where envying and strife is there is confusion and every evil word. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits without partiality and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

So the tongue is an unruly member and the tongue no man can tame. I've often wondered what the psalmist had in mind or what God had in mind when he said through the psalmist that our personality is an instrument of ten strings. I don't know what those ten strings are.

I could just make a suggestion that maybe the ten strings are our two feet, our two hands, our two eyes, our two ears, our one heart and our one tongue. My mother had a lot of wonderful philosophy. I don't know how she got it but periodically she'd shoot out a phrase and one way to learn is by repetition.

You can sit down and grind over something but as you get older it should be so that you could by the time you're my age or a little less than that that you could recite without a hymn book at all at least a hundred hymns. It's because the process of learning has automatically put a grove in the mind and because of that we have memorized certain things. My mother I say used to shoot out these things and very often if I got arguing with my sister my mother would say keep your tongue between your teeth.

And mother once I heard her say to people now you know when you get married you tie a knot with your tongue. You tie a knot, no, you tie a knot she says with your with your will but you can undo it with your teeth. And you know very well that before very long the tongue gets so active that even very often in a home there's so much disruption, there's so much dissension and all this of course is manifested through this little member.

I remember hearing a preacher preach at least I read a sermon that he had preached I don't know what was in it except this title and he called the tongue the red rainbow. And when I hear a song leader say now come on everybody stand up we're going to sing all for a thousand tongues I always say thank God they haven't. I mean if you'd another 999 tongues and you use it like you one you've got it might be hell living in your house.

I think the tongue is almost the nearest thing to perpetual motion. You couldn't use any other member of your body like you use your tongue. You try it tomorrow every time you speak while you're speaking over the phone hold the phone like this and keep your arm going like this.

And you won't talk 40 minutes to Mrs. Smith at the other end of town anymore. And then as soon as that phone has been run you answer the phone again and keep that hand going like that or change it to the other. And then when you're talking to the children shouting to them in the garden saying something to your husband move your arms.

You know what you'll do next morning you'll get up and you'll have to say to your husband could you lift this arm out of bed for me. Because there's nothing that you have that can take the power and take the beating that the tongue takes every day. Oh I'm glad people don't have a thousand tongues how miserable it would be.

I think of a man who one day was being told off as we say by his wife and his wife said to him it's no good talking to you anyhow. I'll tell you anything it goes in at one ear and out of the other. He said you're right.

I'll tell you anything it goes in both ears and out of your mouth. And you think sometimes that this is true isn't it. John Wesley said that the most prevalent evil in the church of God in the day in which he lived was corrupt communication which proceeded out of the mouth.

And I don't know what it's like in the law of America but in the law of England the highest penalty that you can get in the courts is because of slander. And slander is not necessarily saying something that's wrong about somebody. If you knew a man or a woman were living in adultery and you communicated that that man could take you up for slander even though it's true and get a very heavy fine out of you.

Now we have a tremendous paradox here. We're shown on one side the power of man and one wonders what the will of course the Holy Ghost wouldn't need to elaborate but here he shows us a number of things. He says that man is very powerful.

You remember in the eighth psalm, the psalmist says what is man that thou art mindful of him? Thou hast made him a little lower than the angel. The true Hebrew there is that man is made a little lower than God. You sometimes think these days he lives lower than the devil himself.

But what is man? Well man is the climbing creation of God. You do things in America very differently from the way we do them in Europe. For instance if a man is interested in a girl usually his idea at least it used to be, I haven't lived in England for a number of years now but it used to be that once he set his affection on that girl he'd strive with all that he had and he'd stack up money and at least if he had to rent a house he would be thought a bum as you say if he didn't have enough money to furnish that house right through and very often buy the house and furnish it.

So the way we put it is this, that in England a man gets the cage, he gets the bird but he gets the cage first and then he puts the bird in it. But in America it seems he gets the bird and then she asks to help buy the cage. He sends her out to work to buy the house she's going to live in and buy the furnishings.

Now I may be smart but I'm not sure it's really right and all the ladies said amen. But that's the way it goes. Customs are different but you know universally wherever you go you discover that there's a great problem in this business of the tongue.

Now I say that this man here under divine inspiration he shows us the power of man. And he says there isn't a beast roaming the forest there isn't a thing in the sea that man cannot take and in one day or another he can subdue that creature and make it his servant but he can't do that with a tongue. What amazing days we're living in.

Why I remember standing there at Niagara Falls maybe you've been there and I watched the water coming down on the American side and then the great horseshoe on the Canadian side and then they cut a channel it goes deep down through the rock. What have they put there? They put some great big spindles there. And then they get the water to shoot down there and that water drives those spindles in other words it drives the turbines.

And man has taken that mighty thing that used to make people terrified and he's tied them up in it and he's made the great creation of God his servant. Why the energy they produce flashes a million lights over in Canada energizes the machinery it's good for industry. He's able to take nature he's able to take the wind

and harness the wind to his windmill we don't use it too much these days except in certain countries.

And even when the wind is howling when it's ferocious they can change the gears on those things and they're still able to harness even something in the nature of almost a tornado at least ferocious winds. And man can take these things and subdue them. Just last night we were having a snack there and talking with Bill O'Bolin and we were exchanging some views and so forth and he said isn't it wonderful that Madame Guillaume the French mystic I think it was he we were talking about her and I'm sure he said she mentioned in one of her hymns and this would be I guess more than 200 years ago and she mentioned that God had ordained the atoms.

Now we've just discovered something of the power of the atom. You can put enough energy in a golf ball and then put it in some other can and you can drop it on a city and blast a city vaporize a city. You can destroy a thousand years of culture in less than 50 seconds.

In fact there isn't a city in the world you can't blast into shapeless rubble in less than 50 seconds. Maybe one of the great proud cities of Europe that shelters some of the great art treasures in the museums and what not. And these things are priceless and they've been gathered over hundreds and even sometimes almost thousands of years and yet a bomb drops and vaporizes the whole thing.

We're living in a day I've been reading a book recently on genetics just recently less than a week ago one of the great universities in America said that they had produced life. They'd found the secret of life. This book that I bought was a seven dollar book edited by the science editor of Life magazine and it's called A Second Genesis and it's worth reading it's a very very interesting book.

Because it tells how you can produce a race of people without marriage. Tells how they can take certain seeds and plant them in other people and how they can control the intellect and soon you'll go to a catalog and say well of course we're professional people we don't have time to raise a family but we would like a child. And they'll say well there's a woman lives up the road there so many miles and she'd be very happy to produce the child.

What kind of a child? And you go to a chart and say well you want this color of skin and you want that kind of IQ and you want male or female and it goes right down the list and it seems almost terrifying and this man says it's wonderful except that if you did get somebody as a dictator he could so retard that generation of people because he said we're sensible enough to know that only three things that natural man requires one is happiness the other is food and the third is comfort.

And so we'll build houses by the thousand by the state we'll furnish them better than the average working man could furnish them we'll give them nice big TVs in every room we'll give them a swimming pool between so many houses and men don't care after that give them better food and they come back and they've got food and they've got shelter and they've got creature comfort and you can retard their intelligence so you can make them a nation of robbers and slaves and if you tell them to go fight a war they'll go because they can't think you can eliminate that section of their mind science is coming up with some dreadful possibilities in the day in which we live and since we've put God over the other side we're going to live to see some terrible things in the day in which we're living the

power of man is so great if you told your grandpa years ago that there'd be a heart transplant he would have laughed at you if you told him that men would walk on the moon he'd say you better go and see somebody you're a lunatic yourself if you told him that you could go to from New York to England in two

and a half hours he'd say that's ridiculous it took Wesley two and a half months to do it but last week the Russians put the fastest plane the fastest commercial plane in the world in the air and it went at what 1,325 miles an hour way ahead of anything either the Concord Plane of Britain or any plane that there is in America and these are frightening days we're living in a shrinking world and an expanding universe if you struck a match and we went outside and you hold that match up to

the blazing sun what the light of that match is to the blazing sun that sun is to other suns away there in space the psalmist says when I consider thy heavens the work of thy fingers but until a little over a century ago we only had the names of about 22,000 stars and planets now we have the name of about 20,000 galaxies and in those galaxies there are multiplied millions and millions and billions of stars they're discovering at least there's one area in which we have to admit infinity and that is in space out, out, out we go and to go to the moon is nothing it's our next door neighbor sure we'll get somebody on the planet I met a brother here last year who asked me to go to his church just outside of Dallas and one day there we had lunch with a very brilliant young chemist and he said

well it's nice to eat with you preachers today two or three of us yesterday I had lunch with the astronauts and he said we were discussing various things and I said well this was before the man got on the moon will you get a man on the moon? he said oh that's no problem at all we got that solved the take off too will you get a man on the planet? he said I think oh yes I think we'll do that I don't think it's very serious getting a man on the planet what about getting a man on the star? well if you get a man on a star and you use the same kind of gadget that we took the man to the moon on instead of getting there in three and a half days he'd get there in something like a thousand years the nearest star is a thousand years away from us travelling at the same speed that they travelled at in

going to the moon now I don't know what you think but I think his tongue may have run out before he gets there and his sandwiches might be dry you see man is getting more inflated he's man his intellect is just waking up George Bernard Shaw said that any man should live till he's three hundred years of age he says I'm eighty and my brain is just beginning to wake up I didn't think it had wakened up then but that's his opinion he thought it had so that the old boy had died at about eighty four or eighty five years of age and he said you see there's something in me that's beginning to expand that I'm going to dry up oh what a marvellous personality you and I have what a marvellous thing the human brain is were you looking at a book list my wife and I just a few days ago a new book published

by an American lady if I remember right which is called the mind of a child and one of the selling points of the thing is that over in Uganda and in quotes it said an uncivilised people the babies sit up at seven months when they're seven months no seven weeks and they walk when they're seven months and they have a better orientation to life than any civilised children in the world and they can speak languages other tribal languages in their infancy because these people major on raising their families they give all their time more than money more than their beasts more than their possessions their children and everything I'm convinced that almost any child normal child is almost a genius if you only began to teach it the right things at the right time but we don't have time to do that we

shove them off to a stupid TV and ask them to watch some lunatics and Mickey Mouse and Saturday morning isn't it good Saturday morning that one after the other all the comics come on you wonder why your child's such a comic well you stuffed it into him why is it so stupid you stuffed it into him when you're there you laugh and when you're not there they say isn't he like his father that but the possibilities of human personality are fantastic we've just discovered what we can do with certain elements not long

before Mr.

Roosevelt died he brought the leading intellects of America together they were invited to come and hear a discussion or really hear a lecture and when they came along some of them are very very very distressed to see that the lecturer was a black man couldn't even walk very well he shuffled his feet and he was stupid Mr.

Roosevelt said this great scientist he's going to speak to and they shuffled and turned up their noses till he got cracking and then they were on the edge of their seats they listened to the man you've read his life stories some of you and he told them about his secret the problem was of course he'd never been trained as a scientist they asked him about his secret well he took some shavings off the floor of a factory and put them together and made a block of marble and submitted it to a geologist at the side of a piece of marble cut out of the side of the hill and the scientist couldn't tell the one from the other he said I I haven't a clue which is the one from the side of the hill and which is the one synthetically made he said I got up one morning as I always do at four o'clock and I

go down into the garden and I have a text book could we have the name of the text book yes just a minute and they pulled out give us the name of the text book he said the bible you're kidding no I happen to be in contact with the one that put everything in this universe wherever he's hid it whatever he did with it and one morning he said I got up and said to the lord now lord you show me how to get the yolk of an egg out of two or three sweet potatoes and before lunch time he produced the yolk of an egg out of sweet potatoes he gave us more than a hundred and fifty wonderful almost miraculous inventions out of peanut and the scientists were unable to accept that it was perfectly true this little colored man because he had given himself over to the lord and because he waited on the lord

even in the natural realm after all the heavens and all the earth is there it's the workmanship of god and he put all the secrets there and we're going to discover more and more and more if we discover a remedy for cancer in my judgment we'll get the remedy for cancer out of herbs because after man fell and diseases came god put herbs there and I believe they're the answer not in these other things that we get so much of these chemicals and so forth but here is man he's got a shrinking world he's getting faster and faster he's going higher and higher he's going deeper and deeper not many secrets left now in a bathysphere the Frenchman went down just a few weeks ago and there they explored the whole of the channel that we call which is between Bimini and of course the United States of

America we call the ghost stream and he crawled on the bottom of the ocean for miles went way, way, way up to the Canadian coast without surfacing had a laboratory down there in the ocean and made new films and discovered a new world and so where do we go from here? man has conquered the world he's conquered the air he's conquered the sea he's conquered the forces of nature but the greatest possession in the world is not two thousand acres of land the greatest possession in the world is self-possession and man is baffled by the mystery of his own personality the psychologists and the epidemiologists are still puzzled about the behavior pattern because in a given situation they say that human nature is unpredictable and so it is unpredictable apart from the grace of God but not when the

grace of God is there now this amazing man James says the world around us can be controlled it can be harnessed it can be governed by the power of man his genius this inborn gift that God has given to him he's so like man he's made to be created he's made to control and he's done it very well but then he says when he comes down to this little member the tongue is an unruly member I remember walking down the

street in a city where we did have a touch of revival thirty years ago and sometimes when I hear people praying that depression won't come to the country I think they're praying against revival in fact I would dare say this you never have had revival in history when there's success and material prosperity revival comes in a vacuum revival comes when everything's drying on the vine

revival comes when creature comforts die God drives us to himself we had had a period of depression in England in the 1930s and we went to a city in the north of England there we were going down the street one day and there was a laboring man he was poorly dressed and as two or three of us evangelists came up he suddenly did this he put his hand up like this and he said look I want you to do can you do anything for this and he pulled his tongue out can you do anything I have a blaspheming tongue I have a lying tongue I have a tongue that exaggerates I have a tongue that's full of bitterness we used to sing in Sunday school if I remember right something like this angry words or let them never from the tongue and bridle slip with the soul's best impulse ever check them ere they soil the lip

bitter words are quickly spoken angry thoughts are rashly stirred the fondest links of life are broken by a single angry word there have been more there have been more fellowships torn apart by gossip and slander and criticism than by any other thing there are more friendships being severed there are more preachers against each other because of gossip than any other thing that any other sin that you can mention now I think the first thing to say about the tongue is this that the tongue is an index your tongue will give you away in the language of the New Testament thy speech betrayeth thee who are you you go to the north of England the north of America with your nice southern drawl and you say well well well sure I'm from Boston they'll say you're from where you're not from Boston you're

from Alabama or somewhere down there your speech betrayeth you the tongue is an index our second son is working with you through the mission one of the finest groups in America and the leader of that is a man by the name of Loren Cunningham he's almost a genius he's loaded with degrees he's a man who lives by faith and this year this summer while he could be having ten crusades and all he could be putting on a big show he is one of the most gifted and able preachers that I know instead of that he has 50 groups working in 50 different countries nearly all American young people that sell their automobiles or sell their radios or sell their TVs in order to be part they have to pay their own expenses and that's how they prove part of their sincerity and not too long ago he was going to preach

in a certain town he got there a little late Saturday night he was behind time and as he went down the street he thought now I don't know which way to go and he saw a man coming out of a church so he pulled over and hailed him he said hi he said my name's Loren Cunningham I'm an evangelist he said oh I'm so and so pastor of this church well he said I'm trying to find do you know a brother so and so oh yes sure yeah they've got a service in their church tonight yeah I'm supposed to speak there could you direct me from here to his church I've never been before oh yeah now go right down the road here you'll see a big Presbyterian church turn right you go about three blocks and on the left there's a Baptist church you turn left at the Baptist church you go a bit further down and oh it must be

a mile and a half and you'll see a great big Methodist church with a spire well go right past that and the next church with a great big spire is a Roman Catholic church you turn right there and you just go down that street about half a mile and you'll pass the Salvation Army and then at the corner you'll see another church at the other side it's a holiness church turn left there and down the street you'll find the church you want well he said thank you how is he going to keep all those denominations or as the old lady said abominations straight in his mind he was going to turn left at the wrong church and right at the other one

but anyhow he went on and he got lost so he thought oh boy here and he pulled into the gas station he said sir I'm wanting an assembly of God church would you

happen to know so and so he said oh yeah he comes in here for gas oh it's quite away from here but he said if you go down the street here there's a Texaco station turn right at the Texaco station and about a mile down there's a there's a what is it Canoco station well go past that and then on the left there's a there's a standard station and if you turn left at the standard station and go right and he mentioned about four or five different gas stations and my friend said well there you are you see see where his interest is his tongue gives him away the preacher could only direct him by the churches the other man directed him because of the gas stations they were rivals and competitors but his tongue immediately showed where his interest was now your tongue and mine is an index you get on

a bus these days and you hardly get sat down and somebody says what's the score and you kind of figure he might be a baseball fan the tongue is an index and this scripture makes it very very clear you know you hear people say well of course it's alright for her I don't think anything would ever upset her she's not good like me I'm fiery you know I really and then afterwards I kind of wish I could bite my tongue and pull it back oh oh didn't Wesley say there are three things you can't recall a sped arrow wasted time and the spoken word they won't come back if you're as rich as Croesus no no the tongue is an index and the scripture here says that you can't get at the same time out of the same fountain salt water that way and sweet water this way you say well I I I you see when I get under

pressure look I hear a brother spoke on this yesterday the prince of this world cometh and findeth nothing in me if there's no bitterness in you it can't come out the only reason you speak bitterly or angrily or selfishly or with you know some way to bring condemnation to somebody oh the tongue is an unruly member and you heard some people say very often and I have well you know a rolling stone gathers no moss no it doesn't but a rolling snowball does you said a story often brother by the time it's gone around one day you couldn't recognize it by the next time you hear it and you can pray your head off about revival supposing there were a marriage here this afternoon and the bride comes in so sweet so charming and the flowers are here and then suddenly somebody comes in and brings a nice

garbage can and puts it down at the side of the bride wouldn't that be a lovely fitting spectacle full of stinking fish and garbage and oh it doesn't matter how nice it is on the outside it's full of corruption and you say well I thought I'd bring you a little wedding present and I brought you this bag of rubbish you say nobody would do that no I hope they wouldn't but I'm afraid the analogy holds that very very often we go to the house of God and we start praying and not many minutes before our lips were running with garbage gossip criticism exaggeration lying and all the other things no good praying God won't hear us God won't hear us I was crossing on a transcontinental plane in Canada a few years a train in Canada a few years ago and each morning as I came out about three days on the

train and nights and enjoyed the scenery it was fantastic and I noticed a fellow sitting over the other side eating and he looked at me occasionally and I looked at him and on the last morning he came over and he said are you Brother Ravenhill that's going to speak at Prairie Bible Institute and I said yes sir and he said well I'm Dr.

Soames so I said well I'm happy to meet you he said you know Brother Ravenhill I've just had one of the most terrible experiences I've ever had in my life I said oh in your family no no I was at a conference last week and he said they had two main speakers I was giving the missionary message they had two main

speakers one from the Sunday night to Wednesday and the other from Thursday to the following Sunday night and when we were being there and there too we were having a meal with the director of the conference and this evangelist said you know I wish you'd inform me as to who was speaking because if I'd known that so and so was coming on Thursday for the balance of this I wouldn't be on the same platform do you know do you know what there is in his life there's this and this and this

and the slander about him and the scandal about him and it must be right because I've heard it in two or three different places and I don't want to be identified with him next time you invite me you tell me who's going to speak and I'll be choosy about coming and he said he's not fit to handle the Bible I know he's eloquent but if you knew his life how corrupt he really is and he said the preacher just sweat and said oh brother I can't cancel him now he'll be in tonight anyhow and while the first evangelist was finishing the message as he finished the other evangelist came and sat at the back and the evangelist finished he said well there you are now I've discharged my obligation and I've given you the words the Lord gave me and I've just seen Brother So-and-so come in at the back and I'm

so glad to see him do you know he's one of the finest evangelists in America I only wish I could stay the rest of the week and listen to him he's a prince of preachers he's one of the finest men I've ever met don't you miss a meeting if you're going to miss any part of the meeting don't miss the meetings he's speaking he's just and he laid it on so heavily the director of the conference went to the second evangelist and he said I'm glad you got here in time and I'll run you to the motel going to the motel he said you know I was a bit shocked when I came in and saw So-and-so I didn't know he was going to be the first preacher this week and I think if you had heard all the stories about him I've heard about him during the last three weeks you wouldn't have had him on the platform he's not

fit to preach actually and he went down the line and he really scandalized the preacher so this brother said to me the director said could you come to my office in the morning at nine the meeting doesn't start until nine thirty he said I'd be happy to come he called the other preacher and he said could you be at my office in the morning at nine and he said I'd be happy to come and when they got together he said look he said you vilified this man and made him the worst evangelist in the country and last night he vilified you and made you the worst evangelist in the country and you said you wouldn't ever follow him again and he said he wouldn't be on the same platform with you and the pair of you have just destroyed each other in my mind and I'm going to do a simple thing with you I'm going

to leave you here to straighten this out before God and if you don't straighten it out neither of you ever come on this platform again in half an hour he went back and when he went back they were both weeping with their arms around each other crying and putting the thing straight why? because they scandalized each other too much you know usually singers don't have any trouble with preachers singers have trouble with singers and preachers don't have much trouble with singers preachers have trouble with preachers Potter envies Potter oh it's really difficult but you know when the heart is really filled with love you don't say well of course you know I happen to know that he got part of that message from so and so you don't say that you rejoice in the fact that this man has been able to

rightly divide the word of truth and bring inspiration and illumination where you can do it if you tried because there's only one thing any man has to do in the service of God and that is find out what his gift is and the word of God says a man's gift will make room for him and years ago I ceased trying to be a competitive preacher if a man can preach me under the table hallelujah if he can feed them better than I can feed them alright if I give them corn bread and a bit of butter fine if he can give them turkey and

Oh, out of our mouths we're going to be judged, the word of God says. Our speech is going to be judged. It's all going to be exposed there, the angry words, the bitter words.

My father was a real old-fashioned hellfire preacher. A layman preacher, but he preached. And as good as he was, he was a good man of prayer.

But you know, the most convincing person I ever met on the level of Christianity as a child was my mother, because I never heard her criticize anybody anywhere at any time. There was a sweetness in the home. If she'd gone off flying at the handle like some folk, I'm afraid I might not have been a Christian today.

She'd been bad-tempered and critical and spoken to the husband as I've heard some people speak, even when we've been in the home. I don't think I would have wanted to be a Christian. You can put a bridle in the mouth of a horse, sure you can.

This is what the word of God says. But when it comes to bribing our speech, oh, that's an entirely different thing. The tongue is an unruly member.

Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing. Isn't that terrible to think that a man can preach eloquently and stir a congregation of people, and then he can turn around and with bitterness to make a woman shrink and wish to God she'd never even married him. There's a very famous expositor, and every one of you preachers have his books.

And I was in a certain famous church in this country, a very large church, and noticed these books, and I said to the preacher, did you, I see you have his books, I like his expositions, he's great. Did you ever hear him? Hear him? He stayed in my home. And I sent him to a church, to a friend of mine, and he stayed in that hall for a week.

And on the Wednesday night, the preacher said to him, look sir, you're a world famous person and you're a brilliant preacher, but I want to tell you something. If you don't treat your wife differently in the next 24 hours from the way you've treated her here, if you speak with anger and bitterness and wrath, I'll give you your money tomorrow and I'll take you out of town. You're not going to speak the words of the smooth and comforting here and turn around with hatred and bitterness.

No. Oh, the tongue is an unruly member and alas it sends out until God has come in his cleansing. Because this man goes on to say, cleanse your hands ye sinners, and our hands are typical of our relationship with the world, but purify your hearts as our brother mentioned earlier this morning.

And the Hebrew word there in the 51st chapter of Isaiah, there are two words. The word for cleanse is like washing a surface if you had some dirt here and you wash the surface. But the Hebrew word for purge is to take something like this and drop it in a solution so the solution can go through this side and this side and purge out, drive out.

As he quoted there from Hebrews, purge out the 11. Now I'm not talking about stages in grace, I don't care how you interpret it as long as you get there and as long as I get there. But unquestionably the work of salvation, or at least pardon, merely deals with my past record.

And I need something more than a God who can erase my past record, I need a God who can cleanse my heart from sin and indwell me by his divine spirit. Cleanse your hands ye sinners, purify your hearts, he double-minded. And then we become single-eyed, the word of God says, and we become single in our

purpose and we become single in our conversation.

The tongue is an index, the tongue is an infection. I've heard more preachers in the last two or three years say they're on the verge of giving up because they're tired of criticism and tired of bitterness in the church than any other period. Africa was opened up not merely to the gospel but to trade by a brilliant little Scotsman, not very tall, about as big as our wonderful song leader here, David Livingstone, Dr. David Livingstone.

He married the daughter of Moffat, the famous missionary. And when he went to explore Africa they didn't have antibiotics and the stuff, the only thing they carried was quinine. And he was going through an area where there wasn't even a cow path.

They cut their way through with machetes. He had to take a sextant, he had to take a compass, they had no maps, it was virgin territory. He didn't know whether the next mile he'd drop off into the sea and he pushed his way through that area.

He got bitten. Fellas packed up, they couldn't stand the strain of the pressure of pushing on. And way back home in Scotland was his beautiful little wife, Mary Moffat, now Mary Livingstone.

A child had been born since he left. And she wrote home and told him with great delight that the child had been born. I forget how many years he was out, he went home again, and if I remember right a second child was born.

And he got lost in the jungle, he got fascinated with his work, he was breaking open a continent, he was writing things scientifically. The one part of his Bible that was worn, I've seen the very Bible there, was at the 23rd psalm where his fingers, because there were no bathrooms around. And he opened up the psalms like Scotsmen do and feed on the psalms.

He kept getting letters from his wife saying, David, I wish you'd either come home or let me come out there. You know the people over here are saying he doesn't care. He's just been home a couple of times and he's got a nice wife and they have a couple of children but he hasn't been home for years.

You know it's easy to live it up in Africa. You can do as you like and nobody knows what you're doing. How do you know he doesn't have some wives amongst the African women? They began to raise a lot of questions and she began to get tormented mentally.

And one day she said, David you've got to do something. I'm desperate, the scandal is rising to high heaven here in Scotland. David sent a letter back to her and he said, Mary, come as quickly as you can.

I'll have someone meet you here and I'll have someone meet you there. And Mary went. Would you like to go into a bush like that with little babies? You couldn't get milk, you couldn't get anything.

You're struggling with raw nature, you're struggling with men who will just easily cut your head off as they kill a fly. There are more hazards here now in every way. Physiologically, temperamentally, psychologically, spiritually.

Not the right food, not the right things for the children. No clean water, drinking from anything you could get. Scarcity.

Before long she got bitten with something. Maybe a malarial mosquito, I don't know. And she took sick.

She recovered, but one of the children got sick and died and had to be buried. Then another child, if I remember right, got sick and that child died. The grief was a lot to bear out there.

And then lo and behold, Mary got sick. And she died. And David went out to the forest where they buried the other two babes and they scratched a hole in the ground and they lured her in the ground.

And before he threw the dirt in, he said through his tears, Mary, Mary, I suppose that history may say that you came out here to see me and you were killed by malaria or you were killed by some infection that you got. But Mary, you were not killed by any of those things. You were killed by the gossiping tons of people away there in the churches.

It pulls people down. It clothes people with beauty. It tries to distort them.

And paint them as ugly as ever we can paint them. The tongue is an infection. But oh, what a difference when the tongue is really illuminated and controlled by the Spirit of God.

Then you can sing, as Isaac Roth said, Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise. You think of the tongues of men anointed by the Spirit of God that have moved whole congregations of people. Men that have hidden in the secret place of the Most High and then they've come out and when they've come out, they've come out charged with the Spirit of God.

Again, you take a young man in his early twenties, one of the greatest men that ever lived, in my judgment, as a preacher, George Whitefield. Oh, the power by which he spoke. One night he told that congregation, I have received the anointing of the Lord and he said, I'm going to shoot all the arrows.

My quiver is full of arrows. And I'm going to shoot the arrows of the Lord into the hearts of all of you in here. And he pretended to put an arrow in.

He said, here comes the first arrow of conviction. And there it goes. And all the congregation ducked down.

He described a man who had been refusing the Spirit of God, getting nearer and nearer and nearer to the abyss. And Lord Chesterfield had come in the meeting. When Whitefield saw him come in, and this has happened very often with preachers, when somebody's come in and they've been a bit sleepy, suddenly they get galvanized.

And somebody said, did you see the change on Whitefield when Lord Chesterfield came in? And Whitefield preached as he did preach. They said when he preached on heaven, you'd think he'd been there for a week. They said when he preached on hell, you could smell the brimstone before he ever gave out his text.

And he described this man refusing the claims of God and going further and further, nearer and nearer to the edge of the abyss. And he said he's only got about two more steps to take. And he spoke for a minute and suddenly Chesterfield jumped up.

Lord Chesterfield, dignified aristocrat. He said, Whitefield is born. Whitefield said, not yet, not yet.

The harvest isn't passed for him yet, the summer isn't ended, he still may be saved. Oh, the Bible doesn't estimate the power of speech. They said of Jesus, didn't they? But this man's words, they were not like the words of ordinary men.

Whence hath this man wisdom, having never learned? Doesn't Paul say on one occasion, he says, let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt. My mother used to say sometimes, now you sit down and don't say another word. Think twice before you speak once.

And I thought that was good advice, speak twice before you speak once. Think twice before you speak once. But I've discovered if you think three times, you may not speak at all even.

Oh, it's going to be an embarrassing thing when we stand at the judgment seat. I am amazed, and I'll tell you this behind the seat, I'm amazed at some of the conversation even of preachers. A very famous preacher in this country.

I wouldn't tell you his name if you gave me \$10,000, and I mean that because I don't want to slander him. But I know not very long before he swayed a great congregation, he was sitting in the church with a bunch of preachers and others, and he told the dirtiest jokes they said they'd ever heard, even before they were saved. I traveled down the turnpike in Pennsylvania with world-famous personalities.

A book was written about one, and the other has written a whole stack of books, and every one of you know his name. We hadn't been in that car five minutes before they told the dirtiest sex stories I've ever heard. And I was embarrassed and humiliated.

And if I could have done it, though we were on the pike, if I could have gotten out and walked on that turnpike, brother, I would have done it. Oh, the tongue is an unruly member, the lips are defiled, gossip, slander, bitterness, strife, envy, they all come out through the tongue. But oh, when the tongue has been tamed by the Spirit of God, when the heart has been made pure, the fountain isn't sending bitter words out one minute and sweet words out the other.

We're not dragging some brother down in the dust and then say, OK, let's all stand up and praise him and magnify him. You can't do it, those lips are too unclean. They're too stained, they're too sordid.

The tongue is an unruly member, full of deadly evil. It cannot be controlled of man. It can set on fire.

It's set on fire by the very nature of hell. I noticed in the news this morning a big upset in the political battle in England. The prediction was, of course, the Labour Party would go in and Mr. Wilson would have an unprecedented place in history.

He would be the first Prime Minister to take a third consecutive run of four years. And all the polls, with the exception of one, and it didn't vote against him, it said it didn't know, but all the polls said it would be a landslide victory for Labour. Instead of that, the Conservatives got in.

Some years ago we had a very eloquent fellow in England. He was really a man that carried conviction and he was fearless. And he began stomping around the country and wherever he went.

If there were three other political speakers, he would have more listening to him than all the others put together. And they criticised him in the press, they drew cartoons of him in the press, they ridiculed him, they exaggerated everything they could about him. And what happened? The crowds got bigger.

Bigger. The more they fought, the bigger the crowds got. One day they called the warlords together in the press and they said, now what are we going to do about this fellow? He's just going to sweep the country.

The more we criticise him, he turns it back on us. The more we ridicule him, the crowds go greater. What are we going to do? He doesn't have the money of the other men, but money, he's just storming the country, what shall we do? Any suggestions? What shall we do? We'll silence for a little while.

I've got a suggestion, sir. What? He said, let's not one of us report a thing he does for the next two weeks. Do you know by the end of the next two weeks he was politically bankrupt, nobody was going to him.

Why? Because nobody was criticising him and gossiping about him. You can be sure about this, the man that talks to you about others will talk to others about you, and so it should be. We're going to have to have a clean up in this area, in the work of God.

We're going to have to say to the psalmist, set a watch at the door of my lips. Not long ago, when I finished with this, I was preaching with a certain fellow, and he pointed out these major things. Well he listed so many, I couldn't remember them, I don't have a memory like that.

And I thought to myself, now how are these people, most of them are not trained, we are supposed to be trained to memorise. Somebody said to a preacher that, he got lost in his notes. If you can't remember to preach it, how do you think I can remember to live it? Logic can be cruel sometimes, I know.

But, what was I going to say there, I've forgotten now. Son? Oh thank you, yes. The preacher making a catch-word, thank you so much.

And the preacher made this list. And I thought to myself, now how are these people going to memorise this? Don't do this, be careful of this, you mustn't do that, something else. And suddenly I realised, it wasn't a case of me putting a new ten commandments in my mind, or something else, it's a case of this.

When the Holy Spirit really comes to abide in the heart, he does, amongst other things, two things. He constrains us and he restrains us. And as I said last night, the old Quakers used to talk about an authentic stop in the spirit.

If you were to say to me, where are you going? I say, well I'm going with this good brother next week to Eros, somewhere up in the hills, I don't know where it is yet, but I'll find it tomorrow I hope. And then from there we expect to go way out west to California, and then from there we go up to Vancouver, and then from Vancouver across the Trans-Canadian Highway, down north of Pittsburgh to Dusty Roads Conference at Maranatha, and then down here somewhere to Laurel in Mississippi. Now as far as I know, that's where I'm going.

And if you had met Paul on a certain road and said, oh Paul, how are you? He says, the fire's still burning. Man, I just had a revelation from God. You know where I'm going? Where I'm going into what the theologians now call the North Galatian Theory.

I'm going to a place called Bithynia. And you know what? I feel real preyed up on this. I believe we're going to have a Holy Ghost revival, we're going to have a Bible revival.

Do you know why we don't have revival? Because we don't go the Bible way about it. I hear fellows say they preach the gospel. I'd like to check on most of them and they could check on me too.

I'll tell you how to find where to preach the gospel. Read the first three, first four verses in the second chapter of Hebrews. Do you know what it says about the gospel? And remember the epistle to the

Hebrews doesn't have one word to the unsaved, not one.

You say, well it says there at the beginning of the second chapter. How shall we escape? Yes, we, we believers. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? And then it goes on to tell you what that salvation is, doesn't it? Signs and wonders and divers, miracles of the Holy Ghost.

That's the gospel, anything less isn't. It's merely advice and lectures on Christ who died and rose. I'm going to Bithynia.

Oh, I'm excited about it. I believe God's going to pour out his Spirit and write a new chapter there. And when he got halfway to Bithynia, the Holy Ghost said, Stop, turn left and go down to the coast.

And he got to the coast and had a vision of Macedonia. And it was there he broke into Europe. Don't you think he might have been embarrassed when he saw somebody and said, You told me you were going to Bithynia.

You lied about it. No, he didn't lie at all. He made a mistake.

As far as he knew then the revealed will of God, he was going. But no, no, no, no, the Spirit says, no, you stop right here. Oh, it really is wonderful to be led.

The sons of God are led by the Spirit of God. And sometimes he does some things that are pretty embarrassing. Now, I'm not disagreeing with you.

Do as you like. Do as you're led. Somebody said to me not long ago, I try to get songs to my church.

And you know, he hasn't got an open bed till 1975. Isn't that something? I said, I don't know. What do you mean, I don't know? He's booked right till 1975.

Five years ahead. I said, Brother, I don't even know sometimes what the Holy Ghost wants five days ahead. Years ago I used to get my calendar and fill it up.

And oh, the big churches and foreign countries and over here and preaching at that conference and these brilliant personalities. Well, this is wonderful. I began to realize there's not much to it really.

I very, very seldom even make a date ahead. Occasionally. I might make one in a year or two in a year.

I don't think I'll preach more than about four times this year anyhow. I don't think I preached more than four or five last year. And I came to this place.

I won't come next June. It was my birthday yesterday. And while I remember, thank you.

Some people sent me cards and some people gave me a book. And I appreciate them very much. But I don't want to start saving up for a present for next year because I won't be here.

I've already a commitment in Canada to go through a certain number of churches there where you really have prayer warriors who are seeking God's face in revival. I'll promise you one thing, Jimmy. I'll be here every day in spirit.

I think I come to this little campus every day of my life. I don't think it's every day I miss praying for it. I don't always know what the Lord wants.

And I finish with this. I got a letter from a brother in India, a man I esteem highly in the Lord. And he said, you know, we have real meetings out here.

Thousands. Thousands of people. And I feel it on my heart to say I believe the Lord wants you here in the New Year.

This was this past New Year. The Lord wants you out here. You'll have a great ministry.

Thousands will listen. And they stay on the campus. And the meetings last four or five hours, which suit me, as you would imagine.

And I thought, well, that's nice. I'd better pray about it. And then I got a letter from Africa.

And this man said, we'd like you to come and do a tour of Africa for about a year. And everything will be taken care of. And you'll get to great conferences.

And you'll see some of the country. Now both those men were certain that the Lord wanted me in their country. I wasn't certain about any.

And I didn't go to any of them either. I'm not saying that to show I'm in demand. Forget that.

That's nothing at all. I don't think I've got aught to do with the business at all. The evangelist, the man of God, the housewife even, can know that gentle leading of the Spirit of God when all's clear.

When my conversation is an edifying conversation. When I spend more time in prayer than I do in criticism. When you're in a group of people and somebody says, well, did you hear this? Well, I heard this.

Well, do you know that? And did you imagine that? And you know about his wife? And you've got the thing that could really put the crowning thing on top, you know. You've got the hardest, bitterest, dirtiest thing about him. And you think, now, they think they've said to me, wait till I drop this.

And then you suddenly say, supposing they were in the other position. I wouldn't want him to criticize and gossip and slander me like that. Ah, may God help us to set a watch at the door of our lips.

May it be true of us that our speech is always with grace, seasoned with salt. May people welcome us because our conversation is always edifying. And it leads to holiness of life.

And I pray you mothers in the home will have got that touch from God in the morning. So that when those upsetting things come, you don't shoot something out like a rifle shot. And tell them to get out and do this, that and the other.

The famous preacher Shellhammer said one day, when he stood at the grave side of his beautiful daughter, his eldest daughter. She was a darling girl. And she had a habit of coming to him, and very often when he was studying, he'd say, you go out, I've no time, and he'd shut the door.

And he said, when I saw her in a casket, I said, oh darling, I'd give you a whole hour if you were back today. Sometimes it's too late. Who is a spirit-controlled man or woman? The one that bridleth his tongue.

Don't take my word for it. Take the word of James in this epistle.

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