

Learn From Christ's Speech and How He Spoke

by Tim Conway

The Christian life is a life of learning Christ, putting off the old man, and putting on the new man, with the power of God transforming the tongue and the mouth.

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Scripture: Proverbs 12:18, Proverbs 18:21, Isaiah 53:7, Matthew 26:62, John 7:16, John 8:28, John 12:49, Ephesians 4:29

Topics: "Christian Conduct", "Gentle Speech"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the transformation from the old Gentile ways to learning Christ, focusing on speaking with gentleness, knowing when to be silent, and speaking the Word of God. It highlights the importance of using our tongues to build up, dispense grace, and reflect the righteousness purchased by Christ's blood, urging believers to imitate Christ in their speech and conduct.

Transcript

Ephesians 4, verse 17, Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them. Due to their hardness of heart, they have become callous, and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

Now I would just have you notice, we're going to read all of this, but notice the shift in verse 20. 17, 18, and 19 describe the Gentile. And he's not talking merely about a physical Gentile.

We're Gentiles. He's talking about somebody who is truly Gentile. Somebody who is truly, in a spiritual sense, a spiritual Gentile.

A spiritually uncircumcised person. A lost person. And these Gentile Christians at Ephesus are told to no longer walk as Gentiles.

And he describes them. And in verse 20 he says, but that, here's the comparison, here's the contrast, but that is not the way you learned Christ. If you're a Christian, you have learned Christ.

And it's interesting how it says it. Not you've learned about Christ, although it might mean that, you've learned Christ. What can be learned of Christ? By watching Him.

By listening to Him. By trusting Him. Believing in Him.

This is not the way you learn Christ. Notice this. Assuming that you have.

It's not absolutely necessary, just because he's speaking to you, that you have learned Christ. That's not a given. But assuming that you have heard about Him, and were taught in Him, as the truth is in Jesus.

And how is it? What does this look like when you learn Christ? When you hear about Him? When you're taught in Him? As the truth is in Jesus? How is it that this truth affects us? Well, to put off your old man. ESV has self. You look at the footnote.

It is man. The old man. Which belongs to your former manner of life.

And is corrupt through deceitful desires. That's the old Gentile way. The old man.

And to be renewed in the spirit of your minds. And to put on the new man. Old man, new man.

Old man, former manner of life. New man is created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. And then at verse 25, what he does is he looks at aspects of the new man.

Therefore, having put away falsehood. That's what the new man does. The old man is a liar.

New man puts away falsehood. Let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor. For we're members one of another.

Be angry and do not sin. Old man is angry and sins. New man, there's a place for righteous anger and not sinning.

Do not let the sun go down on your anger. Old man does that all the time. Holds bitterness, unforgiveness.

Doesn't let go of things. New man does. No opportunity to the devil.

Let the thief no longer steal. Old man is a thief. New man, diligent.

Not lazy. Got a good work ethic. Let him labor honest work with his own hands.

So that he may have something to share with anyone in need. Old man will amass to himself. Think about his own needs.

New man is concerned about the needs of others. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths. That's what the old man does.

He's got corrupt mouth. New man, only such as is good for building up as fits the occasion. That it may give grace to those who hear.

Old man, corrupt mouth. New man, mouth flows with grace. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you. Along with all malice. That's the old man.

Old man, bitter, wrathful, anger, the bad anger, clamor, slander, malice. New man is kind, tender hearted, forgives as God in Christ forgave you. If you go back up, you'll now see the old man.

17, 18, and 19. The old man. The old man.

The old man is a Gentile. The old man is an uncircumcised Gentile. And if there's anything here that jumps out at me, we could settle in and look at all the different qualities, but notice in verse 18.

The old man, in his Gentile ways, is alienated from the life of God. Alienated from the life of God. Brethren, I want to talk about us learning Christ.

Because that's what the Christian life is. It's a life of learning Christ. The old man, alienated from God.

Now you have to understand, man in the garden, they sinned. Man fell. We talk about fallen.

But man didn't just fall down. We think about fall. We think of a little child stumbles and falls.

But man didn't just fall down. You have to understand, alienated from God. Alienated from the life of God.

Man fell away. He fell away from God. When he fell, he was put out of the garden.

When man fell, he was put out into the wilderness. And I've been thinking all on this trip, man has been trying to get back ever since. But he's out there.

He's in the world. What does Paul say earlier in this letter? Without God in the world. He's just out there.

Away. He's fallen. He can't get back.

Man is cut off. That's what's being said here. Alienated from the life of God.

He's an alien to it. He's a foreigner to it. He doesn't know about it.

He's fallen from God. This is the issue. It's not that man has fallen and he dies.

His death is that he's fallen away. He's back away from God who is life. There's separation.

Man talks about life. Well, that's living. He goes and he climbs a mountain.

That's living. But that isn't living. Living is to know God.

That is a form of existence man doesn't know. Why? Because what did we see about Gentiles? They're ignorant because of the darkness that's in them. And so what they think is life is not life.

And they know it. They know it because when they come down off that mountain, there's an emptiness again. And they got to go do something else.

They're always striving. They're always looking. Always more.

Always going on. That emptiness. There's a longing.

He's trying to get back to the garden. And in his ignorance, maybe he doesn't even know what he's looking for. But he goes to the bottle.

He goes to this. He goes to the other thing. You saw these people there that were at the rehab clinic.

They're in the rehab clinic just because some parent, they're probably rich Nicaraguans, and they've got some parents with some wealth, and they understand they've got some children that need help. But you know what? All of us are just like them in our lost state. What are they like? They're like Gentiles whose hearts are longing and looking, and what they think is life is not life.

It's not at all. It's just existence. Man is alienated from the life of God.

He's no longer in paradise. He's out there. He's out there, and he wanders, and he's discontent, and he's dissatisfied.

Brethren, isn't that how we were when we were Gentiles? Just dissatisfied. Always complaining. Never happy.

Always longing. Always discontent. Always troubled.

Always seeking. What's on the next horizon? What's next? There's got to be something better. That was always it.

Is this really? You think you want money. You think you want this. You think you've got to have that.

But then you get it. And then what? Is that all there is? It's like, remember Christmas? Those of you that observe Christmas. Christmas morning.

Was that it? I mean, it's like the expectation was better than the actual... Is that all? Ever seeking. Brethren, our hearts, just like the waves of the ocean, just tumultuous. Just never at rest.

Never at rest. There's no peace. It's not there.

Brethren, we're ignorant in our lost state. So we don't even know. We don't have any idea about the joys of God.

We don't have any idea about... We're just blind to so much. The devil keeps us blind. But even in all of our blindness, it's like there's something in our being.

Solomon probably touches on it when he says that there's eternity written in our heart. But even in our fallen state, it's like there's something resonating, something in there in our being that seems to know what we once had, but we're on the outside and we don't know how to fix it. We don't want it fixed.

In our hardness and our callousness, we don't want it fixed. So what do we do? We come up with all of our idols. We create all these false religions.

There is a desperate ache. But notice this. It says no longer.

17. You must no longer walk as the Gentiles do. Why? Verse 20.

Because that's not the way you learned Christ. That's such a tremendous description of the Christian life. That's not the way you learned Christ.

Some people tend to have this old man syndrome. Well, you know, old wretched man that I am. Wait a second.

That doesn't fly here. I'm just an old wretched man and I really can't live a righteous life. I really, as a pattern, as a habit, I cannot habitually do right.

I cannot habitually be a worker of good works. That's not what Paul's teaching here. Paul's teaching that you must no longer walk as the old man.

You must no longer. Why? Because that's not the way you learned Christ. If you have learned about Christ.

Notice how he puts that. He doesn't just make the assumption. The whole idea here is if you've learned Christ, it has impact.

If you have learned about Him, there is a way that people live who have learned about Christ. Just look down at 5.1. Therefore, be imitators of God as beloved children. Does he say, well, it's okay as beloved children of God just to be this wretched man and to be chronically failing, abject failure in the Christian life? That's not what he says.

How do we learn Christ? Imitators of God as beloved children. Or look at 5.2. Walk in love. He's not saying walk in hate.

Walk like the old man. Walk like a wretched man. Walk like the liar that came forth from the womb.

He doesn't say that. Walk in love. And if you go a little bit further, if you go down to 5.8, he says one time you were darkness, but you're not still darkness.

Now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. You see how he says that? Walk in love.

Walk as children of light. Be imitators of God. That's how you live if you've learned Christ.

That's what Christ did. And if you learn Christ... See, the whole idea is imitation. He said, follow Me.

That's what He said. He said, learn of Me. When He said, come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, He said, learn of Me.

Learn of Me. If you're His disciple, you are a learner. You're a Christ learner.

That's what this looks like. Walk as children of light. Not in darkness.

Not in wretchedness. Not in abject failure. Not always doing the evil that you don't want to do.

But how do you walk? As children of light. You know, Peter hits on this truth. In Peter 2.24, he said this.

He said concerning Christ, He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree. You know why? Why? That we might die to sin and live to righteousness. The cross is not just about forgiveness.

If that's all you think the cross is, then you have not gone far enough. You have not learned the cross rightly if you believe, well, yes, I'm forgiven. No.

Sin shall no longer have dominion over you. They call His name Jesus, not just because He's going to wipe your record clean. He's going to save you from your sin.

And that's what we see here. He delivers us from the power of this present evil age. Now notice v. 17 again.

This I say and testify in the Lord that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do. No longer. Brethren, no longer means what? No longer.

Never. That means you once did walk that way, but now you don't anymore. There's a reality to the unregenerate life.

And never underestimate the reality of the regenerate life. That's what He's saying here. There's an old way.

There's a new way. The Christian man is a new man. The old man is to be put off.

We were darkness. Now we're light. We were dead.

Now we're alive. He says no longer. No longer walk.

No longer walk as the Gentiles means that I have a past. You have a past. If you're a true Christian, listen, if you still walk the way you've always walked, that's not an indication of a regenerate life.

Why? We're new creations in Christ. We're told that the old has passed away. The new has come.

There's an old way, and now you don't walk that way. You must put that off. Must I? Yes! The power of God demands it.

Because if you learn Christ, and that's what a Christian is, they're a learner of Christ, you learn Christ. It's much like Moses. Moses saw the glory of the Lord.

It reflected off of his face. We learn Christ. It reflects off of our face.

If you don't have that reflection of Christ, it's because you're not gazing upon Him. If you're not gazing upon Him, it's because the veil is still there. See, when the veil gets taken away, then you see Him.

When you see Him, you become like Him. You must! You must! That's a necessity. No longer means that I have a past way, the way I once was, the unregenerate life.

It's a real life. There's a way it was. There's a way I was.

But Christ bursts upon my darkness and shines upon me. God says, let there be light. And it comes.

You must. And He shines. And you learn Christ.

Brethren, the true Christian life is no mere exercise of morality or religion. It's transformation. Don't underestimate the power of it.

That's what we see here. If anyone is in Christ, he indeed is a new creation. The way we learn Christ, you know how we learn Christ? If He comes and claims somebody, if He touches you, if He puts His hand upon you, He changes you.

He doesn't leave you as you are. He will never leave His people as you are. Transformation is what we know to be true about Christ.

He transforms those He saves. You can see the word created in verse 24. You see it? Put on the new man.

Created. Notice that word. Created.

Created means that something comes into being that didn't exist before. That's what created's all about. In the beginning, God created.

God created the heavens and the earth. Before He created them, they didn't exist. Before He creates the new man, the new man doesn't exist.

But He creates the new man, the new man exists. And if He creates the new man, the old is passed away, and things become new. This is the kind of salvation that you want, brethren.

This is the real deal. Jesus makes things into what they were not before. Whatever Jesus touches, He changes.

Now, here's what's interesting to me. I'm going to get very specific here. If you notice verse 25, when He moves from this general teaching, ignorance, that's general.

Walking, no longer walking as the Gentiles, that's general. Dark, general. Alienated from God.

Hard. These are general descriptions. But in verse 25, He gets specific.

And what's interesting to me is that the very first thing that He hits on has to do with the mouth. And actually, throughout these verses, He comes back to that. As much as He goes in different directions and deals with different things, He deals with the mouth first and in repetition more than once.

And so I want to talk about that. Learning of Christ and the mouth. Notice verse 25.

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. You see that? Then again, verse 29, let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up as fits the occasion that it may give grace to those who hear. And then again, in 5-4, let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking which are out of place, but instead, let there be thanksgiving.

The mouth. It's as though Paul sees. You got a new man? Look at the words.

Look at the use of the tongue, the vocal cords, the lips. What's produced? Because Scripture makes a connection between the heart and the mouth. No question about that.

Here's the thing. Think about what James says. Just listen to these words.

Stay right here in Ephesians, but listen to these words. I know many of you know them. James 3, 4-8.

James says, Look at the ships also. Though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they're guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also, the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.

How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire. And the tongue is a fire. A world of unrighteousness.

The tongue is set among our members, straining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life and set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird and reptile and sea creature can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind. Notice this, but no human being can tame the tongue.

It is a restless evil full of deadly poison. Isn't it interesting, Paul in Ephesians 4 is speaking about how we are recreated, the new man. And you know the tongue, no man can change that.

No man can tame that tongue. If you want to look at somebody's Christianity, if you want to look at fruit, if you want to look at evidences of the new man, look at the tongue. Because in the abundance of what's in here, it will come out here.

The mouth. No man can tame the tongue, but I'll tell you this, Christ can tame the tongue. And He went to that cross, we are told, and bore our sins in His body on that tree that we might die to sin and many of the sins that we die to are sins of the mouth.

It's how we speak. It's how we talk. It's what we do.

Isn't it interesting? Think about this. I am able actually to push air across these vocal cords in a way that is making these sounds, these noises, these clicks, whatever it is, and you're able to hear words that go in your ears and it communicates something. And through all of that, you are able, that thing, this contraption that God has designed right here is capable of so much good and so much bad.

And the thing is, it is impossible to tame it. Why? Taming it is the opposite of wild. Taming is the opposite of a wild animal.

And the thing is, our tongue is a wild animal because it's connected to a body and a mind that all is together. What goes on in our brain and our thoughts and our heart and the soul of man, it comes out at the mouth. The mouth gives expression.

It is full of deadly poison because the Gentile way, the old way in which we walked, it's corrupt. It's defiled. It's full of deadly poison.

That's us. Asps. Romans 3 says.

We're like vipers. We've got poisonous mouths, poisonous fangs. That's a picture of Scripture.

The truth is, there is great power in the tongue to do good and to do harm. And you know, one of the things that we could just think about the health of the church, the health of your family. You show me a spiritually healthy church and I'll show you a place where the mouths of the people that make up that church are being used in profitable and up-building ways.

Show me a bad church, an unhealthy church, and I will show you a place where people are using their mouths to do, you know, preachers stand in the pulpit and preach bad doctrine. People are slandering, they're backbiting, they're devouring, they're using their mouths in wicked ways. Same thing's true in a family.

There are families that are good and there are families that are bad and the same thing can be said of churches. There are churches that are good and churches that are bad. And if you look at a family that's

messed up, you will find a place where the tongue is not tamed.

Messed up families have messed up tongues. Messed up churches have messed up tongues. And the opposite.

That's just true. No human being can tame the tongue. But I'll tell you right here in Ephesians 4, we're not talking about what man can do, we're talking about what God can do.

And this is the work of God. This is what Christ accomplished on the cross. We're talking about the regenerating power of the living God.

Brethren, what have you been saying? I mean, what have you been saying? What have you been doing with the tongue? Are words built up or corrupt? You can see that in v. 29. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion. Now in the first part of that verse when He talks about corrupting talk, look, you could go out in the middle of a field and curse and swear and damn everything.

And I suppose that could be corrupt talk. You could swear when you hit your knuckles against the side of the engine block when you're working on your car. But the idea here is not just any random corruption that might come from your mouth.

Obviously, it's set over and against. There's a contrast here. It's a comparison of corrupt talk over against talk that builds up that gives grace to those that hear.

The idea of corrupting talk is what your talk does to other people. That's the picture here. The idea is what does your tongue do to other folks? How does it help or how does it hurt? How does it corrupt or how does it build up? Does it extend grace or does it rot? How are you impacting the lives of others? Do your words positively affect or negatively affect other people? That's the issue.

If we could take inventory of our words that we've spoken over the last week, are they mainly helpful? Are they mainly profitable? Are they mainly building up? Or do they tear down? Brethren, the thing about our words is they not only give a picture into the inner spiritual reality of where you're at, they also are a picture of the carnage and wreckage that you are bringing upon your family and your church or even your workplace or your schoolmates or whatever versus whatever kind of building up and impartation of grace that are in place. The Proverbs compare these two things. The tearing down, the destruction, or the building up.

You have verses like Proverbs 12.18. There's one whose rash words are like sword thrusts. You have somebody whose words... imagine a sword. It's like you come up to somebody and you use your mouth to speak in a way that Scripture likens to thrusting a sword into somebody.

That's the bad. That's the corruption. That's the harmful.

Over against what? But the tongue of the wise brings healing. You see the comparison. In Proverbs 12.18, it's healing.

In Ephesians 4, you have the idea of the impartation of grace and the building up. Over against corruption, where the Proverbs says sword thrusts. Or we have it again, Proverbs 18.21, death and life are in the power of the tongue.

First you have the negative, second you have the positive. Death and life. How do you take that? How do you take death as in the tongue? How can death be in the tongue? Well, whatever you want to take death to be, death is that which is destructive.

Death is that which is harmful. Death is that which is bad. It's the mark of the curse.

It's the mark of destruction. It's damaging. Death is the ultimate harm.

Whereas life, life has to do with what is a blessing. Life has to do with what is good, what is desirable, what is healthy. Life, death.

Life has to do with all that is desirable, pleasant, wonderful. Do you see this? God gives power to the tongue to lead men to Christ or to lead men away from Christ. You know, you can be a professing Christian.

You can be a professing Christian and you can do great damage with your tongue. You can go to church and you can speak in such a way in front of your children that you cause them to despise Christ. You can make Christ small with your words.

You can exalt Him with your words. You can do much damage. You can make people think your Christianity is a sham by the way you speak.

Life and death. Yeah, you can speak the Gospel or not, there's that. But you can be a hypocrite.

You can use your voice as sword thrusts. Or you do harm. You're not building up.

People can tear apart churches with their mouth. They can tear apart their family with their mouth. You can frustrate with your words.

You can provoke people. You can destroy your testimony. You can destroy peace.

Or by your words, they can be a fountain of life. They can be life-giving. They can be the voice of God to others.

We can speak what God says. I want to talk about learning of Christ when it comes to the mouth. Because that's what we're told about here.

Learn Christ. The way we've learned Christ. Think about the way Christ used His tongue.

Here's the first thing. I've got three things. And then we're done.

We're told to learn of Christ. Brethren, learn of Christ. In your speaking.

This first one. He spoke with gentleness. Thomas was unbelieving.

Thomas said he was determined in his unbelief. I'm not going to believe unless He comes here and He shows me. They didn't believe when the women first came.

They were struck with unbelief all through the way. Jesus did not appear there seven days later. After the time He appeared and Thomas wasn't there.

He did not come with harshness. Thomas... When you read Scripture, you can't read tone. But you can look at the words.

Thomas, don't be unbelieving. Now that's the tone I'm putting on it. But you can see by His words.

It's just come here and put your fingers in there. You think about how He spoke to Peter after the denial. Peter, do you love Me? Do you even imagine that He said it harsh? Peter, do you love Me? No, I don't think He said it that way.

I know He didn't say it that way. Because you see, I'm sure He said it in a way most calculated to get Peter's attention. And a harsh response or a harsh way of speaking does not promote what I'm sure Christ was wanting to promote in Peter.

A soft answer or a soft manner I'm sure was most calculated to break Peter's heart. After what he did. Peter, do you love Me? Feed My sheep.

Not harsh, not rude, not showing impatience. You know the thing is, I'm talking about here Christ spoke with gentleness. You can tell.

How? Remember in Luke, I remember this often, Luke 15. That the tax collectors and the sinners came to Christ. It says tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Him.

I know this. They didn't draw near to hear the Pharisees. Why? The Pharisees said things like, Oh, if they knew what kind of woman that was, He wouldn't have any contact.

They thought themselves superior. You can tell when people look down on you. You can tell when people think you inferior.

And you can tell when people condescend. This condescending attitude. The rich speak roughly, the Proverbs says.

You can tell when people think they're better. When people look at you like you're scum, you're filth. Why do you think they so freely came to Christ? Well, you can hear it.

Can't you hear it? When you have the tax collector and the Pharisee. Do you hear how the Pharisee, I thank you Father, or I thank you God, that I'm not like Him. Do you think that attracts sinners to people? Why do you think they approached Him? The approachableness of Christ.

Because He spoke in a way, He dealt with the basest, most ungodly people, and they freely approached Him. They came to Him. They were willing to sit at His feet.

Why? I'll tell you, it's not because He was rude to them. It's not because He was ungracious to them. Because if He was, they would not have approached Him.

Brethren, so often the faults of others are the very things that bring out harshness from us. And Jesus was perfect. And He came into a world of people full of faults.

You get around people that mess up. They make mistakes. They do this.

They do the other. Faults. People's incompetence brings rudeness out.

Especially those of us that are more inclined to be perfectionists. It brings out something in the voice. Jesus was surrounded by people with imperfection.

People with fallenness and depravity. And people that are broken. And people that are the most base, vile, imaginable, God-rebellious.

And He was approachable. There was a kindness in the way He spoke. Remember, brethren, remember those Christ-hating religious leaders and the things they said to Christ.

Here's a demon. He's a Samaritan. And He says in John 5, I don't have to say what I'm saying.

I don't need John the Baptist's testimony. But I say these things that you might be saved. There was a kindness.

He's saying that to those guys who led the crowd in killing Him. I say these things that you might be saved. They came... What did He say? Learn of Me? Because I'm how? I'm harsh, ugly, nasty towards sinners.

I'm meek and gentle. You remember, He wouldn't quench that smoldering wick. He didn't throw cold water on things.

Remember the woman taken in adultery? Neither do I condemn you. How would many religious people speak to a woman taken in adultery? And I'll tell you this, those people, those tax collectors and those sinners and those crowds that saw the way He talked to people just like that, saw that I can go to Him. And they did.

They went to Him. He was approachable. Gentle.

Jesus spoke. His words rang with care and concern. I say these things to you that you might be saved.

Yes, they were cutting at times. Yes, He could be sharp. Yes, He could rebuke.

He could. But it was necessary at those times. And it wasn't rude.

He was righteously angry at times. But they were words of truth. They were words of life.

They were words that were meant to bring men good, to build up. Yes, He got sharp with certain people. Why? Because they were leading others astray.

And for the sake of souls, He would become angry. But His words were meant to build up, to save, to bring salvation, forgiveness, eternal joy. All of our Lord's sermons, they were calls.

Think, come unto Me, you that labor. Come unto Me. Come to Me.

Come. I was thinking when we were down in Nicaragua, they have these, I guess the president's wife down there calls them the trees of life. Everywhere you come in along the main road, you've got these great big man-made trees that are all lit up.

The tree of life. Do you know what Scripture says? A gentle tongue is a tree of life. The old man, be honest, the Gentile in us, by nature we're not gentle.

By nature, we are harsh. By nature, we are critical. By nature, we are sarcastic.

By nature, we are condescending with our words. That is true. We are not naturally soft.

We are not naturally gentle. We tend to be proud with our words and hard and critical and cruel. By nature.

And yet, Scripture says a soft answer turns away wrath. A soft answer is healing. A harsh word stirs up anger.

Adorning our words, this is how we learn Christ. You want to learn Christ about the way to speak gentle? Hear how He talks. Watch how He interacted with people.

I was telling the men down in Nicaragua, if every husband and father would put away the old man tongue, think about how that would transform our church and your family. If just every man, because I'll say like Randy Pizzino says, 90% of the problems in the families have to do with the men. And it's men, right? Men are the ones told not to be harsh.

I don't find that specifically the wife is told not to be harsh with her husband, although that would be true. But it's the men. Why? Why? Why? Because men typically have the rude and the mean and the harrowed, cruel and gracious.

Put on the new man tongue that is gentile. Or that is gentile. Those are close.

Not gentile. The gentile is not genteel. Those two words look a lot alike.

The second thing I would say about learning Christ, He could hold His tongue. Think about the times, if you just do a study on the silence of Christ, the times when He did not speak. And I'll tell you, a lot of those times He didn't speak is when He was being accused.

And if there is a time when proud, gentile tongues can't stay silent, it's when people are accusing us. And He was being falsely accused. And the thing is, as Gentiles, we most often are very much... There's a lot of truth in what's being said.

But Christ held His tongue. Just listen to this. Isaiah 53.7 He opened not His mouth, like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shears is silent.

So He opened not His mouth. We have this reality in Matthew 26.62 The high priest stood up and said, Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you? But Jesus remained silent. Matthew 27.12 When He was accused by the chief priests and elders, He gave no answer.

Mark 15.4-5 Pilate asked again, Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you? But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed. Brethren, in Ephesians 4.29 Listen to this. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up.

Notice these words. As fits the occasion. Our words need to fit the occasion.

One of the problems is, as Gentiles, our words so often are inappropriate. Christ spoke perfectly as fit the occasion. And you know what? A lot of times what was most fit to the occasion was to remain silent.

One of the problems with the Gentile is they talk too much. Just speaking whatever you feel. Whatever is on your heart.

Just giving vent to everything that's there. Christ held His tongue. The wise man knows when to be silent.

The wise man ponders before he answers. He doesn't just give full vent to his spirit. That's a fool.

Christ thought. Often Christ was silent. He held His tongue.

The wise man ponders what sort of occasion it is that he finds himself confronted with. And only then does he answer. And only if an answer is necessary.

Remember, even the fool is counted wise when what? When he holds his tongue. When he is quiet. You want to know the fool? Listen to who's talking all the time.

You're probably thinking, brother, right now, you are. But I'm supposed to do this, right? If you're a preacher, you've got your time. We have to think about what we say.

We have to be silent when the occasion calls for silence. Christ held His tongue. We can talk too much.

We need to practice silence when our emotions, emotions, brethren, they get the best of our tongue. We get heated. We get angry.

We get passionate. We get upset. And what happens? Bang! We talk.

But that is not how you learn Christ. They're getting ready to put Him to death. They're making false accusations.

And He can hold His tongue. He was a man of self-control. He could control His tongue.

We need to control that tongue. That's how we learn Christ. A fool gives full vent to his spirit.

The wise man, what does he do? He quietly holds it back. That's wisdom. The Christian's tongue should never be out of control.

Self-control. That is one of the fruits of the Spirit. Self-control.

That's what we find in Christ. Watch His words. He did not let people provoke Him except to righteous anger, but He kept in control.

His words were calculated. His words were life-giving. He had a very specific agenda.

The first thing was Christ spoke with gentleness. The second thing, Christ could be silent. The third thing is Christ spoke the Word of God.

Just listen to these. There's many others we could look at, but John 7, verse 16, Jesus answered them, My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. Brethren, if we're going to learn Christ, we need to recognize as ambassadors of Christ, what does an ambassador do? He speaks for another.

That's what we're called to do. We need to imitate Christ. We need to speak what He spoke.

We need to have an agenda with our mouths. We need to not go around this world just saying whatever we want to say. Listen, your mouth has been purchased with a price.

It is not your own. You have been bought. Your mouth is to serve a purpose.

Listen to Christ. I do nothing, John 8, verse 28, I do nothing on My own authority, but speak just as the Father taught Me. John 12, verse 49, I have not spoken on My own authority.

The Father who sent Me has Himself given Me a commandment what to say and what to speak. Can I tell you this? Those who do not know their Bibles, but speak a lot, are just bags full of hot air. You ever get in a conversation? I'm talking in the church.

And you're in a conversation and somebody's got a lot to say, but it's not resonating with Scripture at all. They're just blowing hot air. We get people that don't know when to shut their mouths.

That is a quality. Now, Scripture says it's a quality to be found in women. That doesn't mean women have to be silent all the time, but it's a posture of respect.

But men, men likewise, we need to speak the Word. And brethren, you're never going to speak the Word unless you know the Word. And I'm not saying you always have to be quoting Scripture.

Your words can be seasoned with salt when you know Scripture and you're able to loosely be paraphrasing as you walk through life. Look, I'm not saying you have to memorize your Bibles cover to cover, but you need to be reading your Bibles cover to cover, because then you have a feel. You get a feel for God's Word.

You get a feel for God's truth, for God's commandments. You get a feel for what Christ taught. You get a feel for right and wrong.

You're able to test things and you're able to speak with wisdom. You have no wisdom aside from the wisdom of God's Word. Brethren, you've got to know your Bibles.

You've got to study your Bibles. You have to be in the Word. There is no excuse.

You will never use your mouths properly unless you know the Word of God. Learn of Christ. He spoke God's Word.

He spoke the truth that God had given to Him to speak. Our Lord spoke truth. Our Lord spoke with purpose.

He spoke on purpose. He held His mouth on purpose when it needed to be held. He spoke to teach men the way to God.

He spoke to tell people who God is. One of the things I'm absolutely convinced of about Nicaragua, they don't know God. That's the problem with Americans too.

They don't know God. Why do we have people going around saying God hates sin but loves the sinner? Because people don't know God. Why do we have people going around with small views of what was done on the cross? Because people don't know God.

Why can people talk the way they do? Why do they have these images of God? Why do people not fear God? Because they don't know the God of Scripture. Christ came to tell us about the God of Scripture. He came with truth.

We need to be speaking like He spoke. He came to show men the way of life. He came to expose error.

He came to build up. Not a single idle word from His holy lips. Brethren, we're told that we're going to have to give an account for every idle word.

Don't use your mouths for idleness. And you will remove yourself from idleness as you fill your mind and heart with the Word of God and you begin to apply it. You test everything.

You're testing the good and the bad. You're being Berean. You're examining things.

Everything is examined. You're testing. You're approving everything.

You're testing the spirits all the time. You're checking the quality of things. And when you speak, you know, we should think.

Think. How does Scripture apply to the situation? The fool just says, whatever. They just say it.

They say what they think. They say what their emotions. People who speak with their emotions, that's the opposite of self-control.

The tongue goes. It's loosed. The Lord didn't give you a mouth just to blow steam with and to blow hot air.

The fool just spews out all of his opinions all the day long. Brethren, He who bled for us, purchased us. We are told that He did so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

Brethren, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling and bridle that tongue and use it as fits the occasion. Use it to build up. Use it to dispense grace.

Your tongue is one of the main instruments that can be used for righteousness. Have you ever thought about when we come together, stir up one another to love and good works? Yeah, you might be able to do that by your example, but I tell you, primarily, that kind of stirring up is done as we encourage and we admonish and we exhort. Your tongue is one of the most powerful instruments that has been given to you to bring life to family and church, health, goodness, blessing, but it is also a member that can be used.

It can be one of the main instruments to wreak carnage and destroy churches and destroy families. We need to learn of Christ. May God help us to realize this.

The power there is in the tongue. You are new men. Don't walk like Gentiles.

Don't use your tongues like Gentiles. Use their tongues. Learn of Christ.

He says, the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. That's how He spoke. That's how He spoke.

Christians, we are to be the mouthpieces of God in this world. There's not another mouthpiece. This is the truth.

And our mission is to teach whatsoever things Christ commanded. We are the ambassadors of Christ. We speak for Him.

This is what it says in Scripture. God makes His appeal through us. Our mouths work on His behalf.

We implore you on behalf of Christ, the Apostle would argue. Will we speak for Christ and use... Brethren, are we going to use our blood-bought mouths to complain and moan and justify our own sin and slander and cause damage and gossip, exaggerate, or to speak filthy like it says in 5.4. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking which are out of place. Brethren, nothing out of place.

It is out of place for you to be using your mouth in a way that is not becoming of one who is a child of light. You're to walk as Christ loved. You're to be imitators of God.

You're to walk in love. This is how we learn Christ. Assuming that you have heard about Him and were taught in Him.

There are things that are out of place to be found in the Christian's mouth. Brethren, we've been told this. What is it? For Christ also suffered once for sin.

Sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. You've been brought to God. We're even told in this letter, we're seated with Christ in the heavenly places.

There's a way that's becoming of you seated in the heavenly places. You've come to God. You've been brought to God.

You dwell in the presence of God. You're one of His children. You're to be imitators of Him.

Use your mouths in ways that reflect that. A gentle tongue is a tree of life. You need a tongue that is befitting of the cross.

Befitting of the blood that's been expended on your behalf. Remember, there's a way the Gentiles walk. That is not the way you learn Christ.

You put off that old man and his ways, deceitful desires. You put on that new man. That's the way you learn Christ.

Righteous, holy, God-like. Father, I pray that You will speak to Your children. We would imitate Christ more thoroughly, more fully.

Show us Christ. Teach us of Christ more and more. We pray in His name, Amen.

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