

(2006 Conference) 3.controlling Our Tongue

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the critical importance of controlling our speech as a reflection of true spiritual maturity and balance in the Christian life.

Duration: 1:00:32

Scripture: Proverbs 10:19, Proverbs 12:22, Proverbs 15:1, Proverbs 29:20, Matthew 12:34-38

Topics: "Taming The Tongue", "Spiritual Discipline"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of controlling our speech and the balance needed in various areas of our lives. It highlights the dangers of being imbalanced, focusing on small things while neglecting weightier matters like justice, mercy, and faithfulness. The speaker urges listeners to seek God's help in controlling their tongues, avoiding gossip, anger, and lies, and striving to speak gentle words that turn away anger. The message stresses the need for self-reflection, repentance, and seeking the Holy Spirit's power to transform our hearts and speech.

Transcript

We see areas in our life where we come short. God wants us to be balanced. He does not want us to be imbalanced where we are very good in one area and defective in another area.

When we think of the story of the Pharisee praying in the temple, what he said was true. He did fast twice a week and pray three times a day and take tithes. Everything he said was true.

But he didn't mention the things that he left out. Even Jesus told the Pharisees in Matthew 23, you have neglected the weightier matters of the law. Turn to that verse in Matthew's Gospel chapter 23.

They were imbalanced. They were emphasizing small things and neglecting weightier things. Matthew 23 and verse 23, Jesus said, woe unto you.

Now, when Jesus says woe, it means like a curse. A curse be upon you. You who tithe mint and dill and come in.

Was it wrong to do those things? No. Why should there be a curse on people who do those things? Because they neglected the weightier provisions of the law. They neglected the more important things like justice and mercy and faithfulness.

These are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. The small things are important, but there are more important things which you're neglecting. So you boast about doing the small things and you neglect the more important things.

It's a great danger in our churches where we can glory in certain things which are taught in God's Word, but which are not the most important things. For example, we could be horrified at somebody calling himself pastor. We glory in the fact that, oh, nobody in our church calls himself a pastor.

That's great. But if you don't love other people in other denominations, you're worse than the people who call themselves pastor. You see that? One is more important than the other.

Jesus said both you got to do. You should have done this without neglecting the others. Which is more important, sisters, to remove your ornaments or to stop gossiping? Meditate on that and think about it.

There are millions of sisters in India and many in our churches who have removed their ornaments, but who gossip, backbite, who are curious. And they don't see that as wrong. They are a million times more disobedient than those who have not removed their ornaments.

A million times more, but they don't see it. The weightier matters are ignored, but the small things they glory in. Jesus said, these ought ye to have done.

I'm not despising the fact you do the small things, but don't neglect the more important things. And it's a tremendous grace from God to be able to get light on these things. For many years, I have believed that the mark of walking in the light, how do you know whether you're walking in the light? I get light on myself.

That's the meaning of walking in the light. If you're standing still in the light, that's another thing. There's no such expression in the Bible of standing still in the light.

The Bible speaks about walking in the light. Walking means if I'm walking from here to Bombay, then every step I take takes me closer and closer to Bombay. And if I'm walking in the light, it means every step I take, every day of my life, I get closer and closer to God, which means I get more and more light on myself.

Can you tell me some area where you got light on yourself, not on other people, but on yourself in the last one month? Some new area where God gave you light on yourself. If not, you have to say, I did not walk in the light in the last one month. Maybe you stood still and it's difficult to stand still.

Usually, those who stand still go backwards. So many, many people, I'm sorry to say, in our own churches, I've observed them over the last 20, 25 years. They are like good students who get 100% in second standard.

20 years later, they are still in second standard, still getting 100%. They're not evil. They don't get 50%.

They get 100%, but they're in second standard. Will you be happy with your child getting 100% if he's in the same class? You'd say, I don't want you to get 100% if you're in the same class. I want you to go to, I would say, I would rather my child gets 80% in third standard than continue in second standard another year and get 100%.

I'm sure you agree with me. And the next year, I'd rather he goes up to fourth standard and get 70% than still stay in second standard and get 100%. That is the condition of a lot of our believers.

They are good people. They were good people 20 years ago, but they haven't got any more light on themselves. They didn't go to movies 20 years ago.

They don't go today. Some of them do. They've gone backwards from second standard to first standard.

It's sad when you see how many, many, many, many people, even many elder brothers, not getting light on themselves. If you don't get light on yourself, you're not able to give light to other people. The content of our ministry must be the areas where God gives us light on ourselves.

God's word is like a two-edged sword that first cuts me before it can cut the other person. It's got two edges. If it hasn't cut me and you try to cut other people, you'll be a Pharisee.

So we need to really ask God to show us areas in our life where our balance is imbalanced, where it's too light on one side. We got some heavy stuff on the other. Very good.

We need to put some heavy stuff on the other side too to be balanced. So I want to consider today with you the area of our speech because this is an area I find, even after many years of talking about it, most people in our churches still have not got victory and that is destroying their life. Many who have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, all the power has leaked out through the tongue.

It's like bringing a vessel to God and say, Oh God, please fill this vessel and God fills the vessel and there's a big hole underneath. The whole thing leaks out before the day is over. What's the use going to God and say, God fill this vessel.

I'm sure many people are very sincere in asking God to fill the vessel, but there's a hole underneath and that hole is usually in the tongue. Everything leaks out. And so people are trying to get filled again and again and again and everything's leaking out.

You'd never do that if you went to buy milk somewhere. You would never take a vessel with even a small pinhole in it because milk costs money. We don't care so much for the power of the Holy Spirit.

And I want to tell you, the vast majority of us do not have the power of the Holy Spirit. That's obvious to me. Most of our elders don't have the power of the Holy Spirit.

It's so heavy their life. It's so boring their ministry because there's leakage through the tongue. If they can plug that leakage, what a difference will take place in their life and their ministry.

A lot of our sisters, the tremendous leakage through their tongue, huge holes in the vessel. They never seem to plug it. So I want to show you a few verses.

One of the first things I want to show you is in Acts of the Apostles chapter 2 verse 4. When the New Covenant began, the New Covenant did not begin in the Gospels. It began in Acts chapter 2 verse 4. That's where the New Covenant began. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

It's only after that, that you know, we can say now we can see what the New Covenant is all about. So we see here, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit was giving them utterance. So and then it says tongues of fire sat on all of them, verse 3. Tongues of fire sat on all their heads, 120 of them.

It was not a hand of fire. It was not a leg of fire. These are all important parts of the body.

Not a ear of fire, not an eye of fire. It was a tongue of fire by which God was saying in this New Covenant age the part of the body which you have to be most careful about is your tongue. Because that is the part of your body which I'm going to use the most in the New Covenant.

Yes, I will use your legs to take you to some place to preach the gospel. I will use your hands to bless other people. I will use your eyes to read God's Word and to see visions.

I will use your ears to hear the troubles of others so you can comfort them. But above all these things, I'm going to use the tongue. I don't think many of us have understood it.

I don't think many of the Pentecostals and Charismatics have understood it. They speak in other tongues, but when they speak at home they can't control their mother tongue. And that's not the Holy Spirit.

When God baptized me in the Holy Spirit and gave me the gift of other tongues, He also gave me grace to control my mother tongue. And I tell you, if you speak in other tongues and you can't control your mother tongue, probably what you got is an evil spirit, not the Holy Spirit. You mean the Holy Spirit can give you other tongues but He cannot control your mother tongue? That's not the Holy Spirit.

That's why I don't believe that 90% of the tongues I hear in Charismatics and Pentecostals is the Holy Spirit. It cannot be because then I see them getting angry and losing their temper at others. I say that can't be the Holy Spirit.

You can't switch on and switch off like a fan. You can switch on and switch off light. You can switch on and switch off.

No. There's a tremendous amount of counterfeit in the world today because they don't study the scriptures. Let me turn to you to another verse which is not found in the Old Testament.

James chapter 1. I want you to see the importance of this. I've spoken on it many times, but I'll tell you this. The vast majority of believers in our church just have not understood the seriousness.

That is why they don't have power. They pray to get somebody to lay hands on them, pray for them. They go to meetings, pray for the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

All leaks out through the tongue. Please plug that today permanently. James chapter 1 verse 26.

If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and I believe in this context it's referring to spiritual not religious as we talk about it, but if a man thinks himself to be a spiritual man and he cannot control his own tongue, he's actually deceiving his own heart. His religion is worth zero. You come to every conference.

You're an elder brother in your church or you're an elder brother's wife and you're a senior brother, senior sister. You know the Bible and you're sharing the word and you're active. You're giving money for God's work and you're humbling yourself.

You're getting victory over dirty thoughts and you're controlling lust and everything else, but you lose your temper. You ask God how much you get? Zero. Lord, zero? After all that I did for you? That's right.

Zero. Because you cannot control your tongue. How many of you believe that? I doubt whether 95% of you believe that.

You think that because you're doing so many things for the Lord, your tongue, you get to lose control of it a little bit. It doesn't matter. That according to this verse is the test of whether you're spiritual.

At least from today, say to yourself, if I cannot control my tongue, all my Christianity is worth zero. If necessary, write it on a piece of paper, put it in front of your bedroom or table or somewhere where every morning you'll get up and read it. If I cannot control my tongue today, all my Christianity is no better than any other religion in the world.

Being born again, rubbish. You're no better than a nominal Christian if you cannot control your tongue. It's the truth.

But 95% of people in our midst don't believe it. I preached on it for years. People are curious with their tongue.

They gossip with their tongue. They're angry. They're bitter.

They criticize and they think they're spiritual. Can you imagine such deception? I want you to wake you up before you discover this at the judgment seat of Christ, where Jesus sits on his throne and says, you get zero out of hundred. But Lord, I was in CFC.

I went to all the conferences. I went to so many meetings. I got victory over this victory over that.

But the Lord said, you never control your tongue. Didn't you read in the word that your religion is worth zero if you can't control your tongue? I tell you, I took it seriously years ago. I cannot control my tongue without God's grace.

If God's grace were removed from me today, I'd be finished. I would gossip like many of you. I'd be curious to find out all types of things like many of you are.

I would backbite like many of you. I would lose my temper like many of you. It will all go.

It's only God's grace that keeps us from sin. The Bible says no one can control the tongue in James chapter three, only the grace of God. Man can tame animals, lions, snakes, but you can't control the tongue.

It says that in James chapter three, verse eight. He said, this is scary. You can tame a tiger, but you can't tame a tongue.

It's never been done. It has never been done. With the same tongue, we bless God our Father.

And with the same tongue, the same day we curse or shout at other people. It has never been done. It can only be done by the Holy Spirit's power.

If there's one area you can never get victory without the Holy Spirit's power, it's in the use of the tongue. It's so important. It's the main instrument in the New Covenant age.

God wants sons and daughters to prophesy. Do you know that God wants all of you to prophesy? Every brother, every sister sitting here, you won't be a prophet. Prophet is a special calling, but you can prophesy.

A prophet is a man who stands up in the pulpit anointed by God to expose the sins of God's people and to show them the solution. Prophesying is in your ordinary conversation where you share God's word with somebody two minutes and you bless that person. Do you want to be one like that? Every single brother, sister, young and old here can prophesy according to, it says in Acts 2 17, I'll pour out my spirit on all mankind.

Turn to that verse. Acts chapter 2 and verse 17. In the last days, I will pour out my spirit on all mankind and your sons and your daughters will prophesy.

Your teenage sons and daughters will prophesy. So that means God's not going to pour out his spirit on the dogs and the cats, but there are no dogs and cats in this meeting. All mankind.

Do you belong to all mankind? My brother, sister, it's for you. The promise is unto you. Later on, Peter said, it's for you.

You can prophesy. You say, no, no, no, it won't happen. Then according to your faith, it be unto you.

It will not happen in your case. But if you will take God's word as it says, God, I want, I won't don't, I'm not called to be a prophet, but I can prophesy. I can bless people with the words I speak.

And it also says it's repeated in 1 Corinthians 14. Listen to this word. Verse 31, 1 Corinthians 14 31 is telling in a church, you can all prophesy.

You don't need a clearer word than that in scripture. You can all prophesy one by one because some of our elder brothers have got a brethren type of background. They have stifled the voices of the sisters in our assemblies for many years.

I've always been against it, but what can I do? I'm faced up with a massive number of elder brothers who will never allow their sisters to say anything except get up and say amen. When the Bible says they should prophesy while you are answerable before God for hindering God's word and God's work in your church. And I believe that's the reason why many of our younger sisters are suffering because the elder brothers have stifled the older sisters from prophesying for many years.

And you keep a person quiet for years and then you suddenly try to open their mouth, you can't do it. My dear brothers, get rid of your brethren theology. Come to the scriptures, read the scriptures.

We've got traditions which are totally unscriptural. Our brothers and sisters must prophesy. They are not prophets, they are not elders, they are not called to teach, that's clear.

But they must be encouraged to prophesy. Young brothers, young sisters, older brothers, older sisters must prophesy. You need only two minutes, but you got to control your tongue.

You don't do that, you can't. See what the Lord told Jeremiah in chapter 15 of Jeremiah. Jeremiah chapter 15 and verse 19.

The same spirit that rested on Jeremiah is the spirit that in the new covenant God has poured upon all mankind. What did God tell Jeremiah? You can't be my mouthpiece or my spokesman easily. Verse 19, if you return and stand before me, I tell you if you want to prophesy, you got to learn to stand before God all the time.

All the time. When you speak to your wife at home, remember Jesus is there listening to what you're saying. When you speak to your husband at home, remember Jesus is there listening to what you're saying.

You are so careful in the way you speak to your husband or wife. If a brother is standing there, why can't you be more careful when Jesus is standing there? The Lord says you got to stand before me if you want to be my spokesman. Develop the habit of standing before Jesus.

When you correct your children, remember Jesus is there. Should we correct our children? Yes, but in the presence of Jesus. Everything must be done in the presence of the Lord.

I tell you we'll have a lot of spiritual people in our church if you just practice this one thing, Lord I want to do everything in your presence. You will stand before me and the next thing you got to do is you got to get rid of all the worthless things from your conversation. You know like when they collect gold from these gold mines and they dig it all up, the gold is mixed with mud, tin, other alloys and they wash off all the dirt and they put it in the fire and get rid of all the other alloys till they get only the gold.

Because that's what they're after and the Lord says when you are like, when you're after it like that in your speech, you get rid of all the mud, you get rid of all the alloys and you're going to have only the gold in your speech. You take forth the precious in your conversation and get rid of all those other worthless things, what will happen? You will become my mouthpiece, you will become my spokesman, I will speak through your mouth and you will never go to them, they will turn to you. Jeremiah, God told Jeremiah, you don't have to worry, I tell you if you become a man or a woman with whose mouth God is, people will come to you to listen to that word.

Why is it people don't come to your church? Oh nobody's coming, maybe you got nothing to say, why should they come? Why should they come to hear a man speaking? The world is full of men speaking, they want to hear God speaking, don't blame people. There are a lot of people in this country who want to hear God but they want to come to, they don't want to come here hear you because they've come and heard you a few times and there's just another man giving his opinion and why is it? Because you're not careful with your speech, you're not careful with your tongue. I know times where I believe in history, God has used sisters because he couldn't find brothers.

In the Old Testament, he used Deborah as a prophetess because he couldn't find any man, she was a judge. It's a shame on the women, on the men of Israel that God could not find one man in Deborah's time. When God wanted to reveal the truths about the way of the cross in past centuries, do you know he used women like Madame Guillaume, Jessie Penn-Lewis because he couldn't find a man and when he can't find a man, he will find a woman.

And I tell you, if Madame Guillaume came to our church, I would let her speak more than many many many brothers or elder brothers, she'd have something to say. If Jessie Penn-Lewis came to our church, I would let her speak because she's got something to say, which is 10 times more edifying than what a lot of brothers have to say, who waste people's time. Why do they waste people's time? Because they're not careful with their mouth, they don't stand before God.

Imagine they're going to stand before God when they stand in the pulpit, rubbish! You've got to stand before God 24 hours a day if you want God to stand with you when you stand in the pulpit. God will not be with your mouth in the pulpit if you don't stand before God 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Let me tell

you that.

Any brother, any sister. And I want to encourage all of you brothers and sisters wherever you are, really seek to prophesy. And if your elder brother is a brethren type of man who won't allow you to prophesy in the church, forget it, don't do it.

Submit to him, let him live in his blindness, let him be the blind elder brother he is, you visit different homes and bless people in the home sister. Don't limit God's word just because your elder brother is blind. You can be a sister who can prophesy according to Acts 2 17.

Don't listen to these old-fashioned people who sit with their traditions. You bless the sisters, if you can't bless all the brothers in your church, go and bless the sisters in different places. People come and visit your home, bless them with a two-minute word of prophecy.

God can use you and God can open doors for you no matter who tries to shut them. I really believe we need to get rid of this imbalance. It's a terrible imbalance.

I don't know how many people will take it seriously. I've spoken on these things before but some people still continue with their imbalance. That's why I want to show it to you from the word.

We are hindering God's work when we don't stand before him and we don't, you know the Lord once told the Pharisees, you won't enter the kingdom yourselves and you won't let other people who want to enter, enter. That's what I sometimes feel about some brothers. You've got nothing to say yourselves and some sister who's wholehearted, you won't let her speak also.

What type of Pharisee are you? You've got nothing to say yourself. You bore everybody with for 45 minutes with your message and some sister there may be more spiritual, you won't let her speak. Exactly like the Pharisees, you hinder them from it.

You don't enter the kingdom yourself, you won't let others enter the kingdom. We've got to get rid of this imbalance. Lot of loss has come to our churches because we think God only uses brothers.

That is the biggest rubbish I've ever heard. It's all right for the Plymouth brethren, let them hold on to that teaching. It's not in scripture.

Jesus had co-workers who were women, Paul had co-workers who were women. Aquila and Priscilla knew the word so well that Aquila needed Priscilla, his wife's help to be able to convince Apollos about the right doctrine. It's in scripture.

But it all depends on the control of the tongue. That's very, very important. If you don't control the tongue, whether you're brother or sister, it makes no difference.

Remember among the 120 on which the tongues of fire rested, how many of you know whether there were any women there? You know whether all 120 were men? In the Old Testament, when Moses said, call 70 people, they were all men on whom the spirit rested. You read that in numbers, call 70 people, let the spirit fall upon them. They were all men, but that was old covenant.

But you read in Acts chapter 1 that when the spirit fell upon the 120, a number of them were women who spoke in tongues. Tongues of fire rested on women. I wish all the brothers would understand that and get rid of the brethren traditions.

Seek to live before God. I want to show you a few verses in the book of Proverbs. Proverbs chapter 13.

Oh, I long that this imbalance will be restored and that we will get a little more balanced in our churches, even if it means breaking down fortresses. It says in 2 Corinthians 10, there are fortresses in our mind. You know that? Break down these fortresses that have been built up through the years so that we can bring every thought, all these thoughts hidden in captives to the obedience of Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

Proverbs 13 and verse 3 reads like this. The one who guards his mouth preserves his life. Do you want to preserve your life? Let me give you a little suggestion.

Guard your mouth. The one who opens wide his lips comes to ruin. And an even stronger verse in chapter 18 and verse 21, death and life are in the power of the tongue.

And those who love it will eat its fruit. If you love death, you will gossip. You will backbite.

You will criticize. You'll be curious. You'll be a busybody in matters that don't concern you.

You'll get angry. You'll speak bitter words because you love death. You say, no, I don't love death.

You do. If you didn't love death, you wouldn't be such a gossip. Those who love life, they'll be very careful.

To avoid all that and say, hey, I don't want any death to come out of my tongue. I want life to come out of my tongue. They will seek to speak words of encouragement to bless other people.

They'll hold back words, which the devil says, say that. They'll be very careful. Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

And the one who loves whichever will eat that fruit. I told you about the fire of the Holy Spirit that sat on the heads of people on the day of Pentecost in the shape of a tongue. In James chapter 3, it says about another fire.

It says here in verse 6, James 3 verse 6, the tongue is a fire. The very world of sin. Imagine a world of sin sitting inside our mouth.

The tongue is set in the members defiles the whole body. How many of you know that your tongue can defile your whole body? It is set on fire by the fire of hell. Here's another fire.

Your tongue can be set on fire by the fire of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2, 4 or set on fire with the fire of hell. Acts 3, 6. Now the only book in the Old Testament, which is like a new covenant book in Old Testament is the book of Proverbs, which emphasizes the tongue.

All the other books don't speak much about the tongue, because nobody in the Old Testament could control the tongue. It was only in the new covenant that God could help us to control our tongues, because there was no outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all people in the Old Testament. It's no use telling people in the Old Testament, hey, control your tongues, when they don't have the power.

You get tired after a while. If we were to ask somebody to turn this fan without electricity, yeah, you can turn your fan with a hand for a little while. After a while, you get tired.

And that's how it is, trying to control the tongue without the power of the Holy Spirit. You try to control it for a few days, and then you just get tired and give up. You cannot do it without the power of the Holy Spirit, and that's why you don't find such a teaching in the Old Testament.

But why should we live in the Old Testament, when the Holy Spirit has been poured out? Why should we speak in other tongues and then get angry with somebody? Don't you believe the Holy Spirit can control your mother tongue also? According to your faith, be it unto you. My faith was, God can give me other tongues, and God can control my mother tongue. God said, according to your faith, be it unto you.

Some of you, you believe that Jesus could give you other tongues, but you say, no, the Holy Spirit cannot control my mother tongue. According to your faith, be it unto you all your life, you'll never be able to control your mother tongue, because you don't honor the Holy Spirit. You say, oh, this giant of Canaan, we cannot conquer him.

According to your faith, be it unto you, that giant will rule your life all your life. It's faith. But show me a man who says, I believe the Holy Spirit can not only give me other tongues, he can control my mother tongue.

God will say to him, according to your faith, be it unto you, you'll find your mother tongue is controlled by the Holy Spirit too. No man can tame the tongue, but the Holy Spirit can. Dear brother, sister, it's all a question of how serious you are in your Christian life to take what God's word says.

I want to show you a few more verses from the book of Proverbs. Proverbs is a great book because it gives us some practical wisdom in this matter of the use of the tongue. It says in Proverbs chapter 10 and verse 19, a very important verse, where there are many words, transgression is unavoidable.

John Wesley was one of those great men who preached holiness and sanctification in the 18th century in England. And I have heard, I haven't read it exactly in his writings, but I heard that he made a type of rule, and I think it was mostly for women, in those early churches that he planted. He said that when a woman visits another woman's home, they should not visit for more than 45 minutes, because whatever they talk will be sin after that.

45 minutes itself is a long period in which a lot of sin can be committed. If you don't believe that, you sisters ask yourself, when you go and visit other sisters, what do you talk about? Particularly sisters, because the Bible speaks about old wives' tales. You know, it's in the Bible, old wives' tales.

You don't read about old husbands' tales. So that's why I'm, not because I'm against women, I'm just scriptural. I don't read about old husbands' tales in the Bible, but I read about old wives' tales in the book of Timothy.

So where there is a, where there are many words, transgression is unavoidable. You got to be a very godly man to speak for two, three hours in conversation, and never talk about people. Talk about God's Word.

But that is very, very difficult for 95% of people. Always there'll be some conversation about some gossip about somebody else, or something like, I used to ask my wife, when we go to these conferences in different places, particularly Kerala, Kerala is a specialist in this. I asked my wife, what do the sisters talk to you about? She said they talk about, does your blouse match your sari? These are elder brothers' wives, elder brothers' wives.

How many times you go to visit your children? These are curiosity. Is it going to make them any more spiritual? Not at all. Elder brothers' wives are the biggest culprits in Kerala.

And a little bit in Tamil Nadu also, but not as much as Kerala. Kerala is an absolute specialty in this. All types of curious questions about this and that, and the other thing, and this thing, that thing.

I don't know, as you go further north, I think things get a little better in India, but down south, it's terrible. So, I don't know why it is. Maybe because Christianity came first to Kerala, and they got used to it.

And they think they're more spiritual than everybody else. Curious, it's an old, I say it's an old Syrian Christian tradition, gossiping, curiosity, finding out all types of rubbish about things which don't help you one bit to become more spiritual. What is this? And these are people who sat and heard about godliness for 20 years.

Why is it? You husbands ask your wives if what I'm saying is not true. You know, I just want to find out, because I want to know what's the type of conversation going on in our church. I don't talk much to the sisters, as you know.

So, I've got to find out from my wife, what type of conversation? What are the types of things they talk about? What do they talk to you about? It's almost never about God's word. It's all about these useless, trivial things. Where did you buy that sari from? And we've got a lot of sisters like that in CFC too, non-Malayalis.

So, it's really amazing. I can't understand. Do you think such sisters will prophesy in a thousand years? Not in one thousand years.

It'll all leak out. I have spoken about this for 20 years. It makes absolutely no difference.

Goes in through one year and comes out through the other year. It's like that cartoon I saw. I saw a cartoon of a woman talking to her husband, and the words in the cartoon are, can't you hear what I'm saying? And it's all going out like this, through one year and out through the other year.

Sometimes I like to draw a cartoon of me speaking on subjects like this, and going straight into some sister's ear and going out from the other ear. Doesn't seem to make any difference. I hope, at least now, this balance will get restored.

It's no use reading the Bible every morning, praying, coming to the conferences. If you cannot control your tongue, your whole Christianity is worth zero. I want to tell you, you are no better than, you think you're better than the Roman Catholics and Pentecostals.

Rubbish. They are better than you. You can say you're sitting in CFC, but it doesn't make a difference to God.

He's going to ask you, did you control your tongue? In the multitude of words, transgression is unavoidable. Let me show you another verse, in chapter 11, verse 13. He who goes about as a tale bearer reveals secrets.

He who is trustworthy conceals the matter. He who goes about as a tale bearer. Have you heard people say things like this? I'm only telling you this for prayer.

You know, this thing I heard about brother so-and-so and sister, don't tell anybody. So that sister who hears it goes to somebody else and says, I'm only telling you, don't tell anybody. This is only for prayer.

And that goes to, that sister goes to the next sister. I'm only telling you this. Don't tell anybody else.

This is only for prayer. The devil sits back and says, great. This is great.

I like it. These sisters think they are holy because they belong to CFC. They are worse than all those nominal Christians and they don't even know it.

And the devil and the demons say, the devil says, let's give a mighty clap for these sisters and the demons all clap. Gossipers, back biters, tale bearers. A wise man hears something, he conceals it.

Can you conceal something? Or is your heart always bursting with something you heard? You have to tell somebody. You will never prophesy, not in a thousand years. One day you will stand before God and Jesus will say to you, I gave you one tongue.

What did you do with it? I know what I'll answer to God. He gave me also one tongue, just like he gave you. And if the Lord asked me, what did you do with the tongue I gave you? I'll be able to give an answer.

I hope you'll be able to give an answer too. He's going to ask you. He's not going to ask you how many conferences you went to or which church you sat in.

He's going to ask you, what did you do with the tongue I gave you? So, let me show you another verse. Chapter 12, verse 16. A fool's anger is known at once, but a prudent man conceals dishonor.

That means if somebody insults him, a wise person, somebody insults him, ah, he says forget it, it doesn't matter. But a fool, boy, he's not going to. He's got a short fuse, like the message Bible says.

It explodes all too quickly. Suddenly it explodes. Very short fuse.

You know what a fuse wire is? They do it, they keep a fuse wire to burn explosives and they got a whole massive stack of dynamite there and they put a long fuse wire and they light it here and it takes about five minutes to reach there to blow up the dynamite by which time this fellow has escaped so that he doesn't get blown up with that. But here it says a fool has got a very short fuse wire. The dynamite is just about one centimeter from, uh, can you imagine such a fool? He lights it up and boy, somebody insults him and boy, he's exploded immediately.

He's got a short fuse. Beautiful illustration. Short fuse.

You know the wise man who's got a long fuse, he also may get a little irritated with somebody who insults him, but he comes to his senses and cuts off the fuse wire so it doesn't explode the dynamite. Takes a little time. There's a verse in Ecclesiastes in chapter seven which says in verse nine, anger is in the heart of fools.

Anger is in the heart of fools. I wish you would write that verse, hang it up in your bedroom, hang it up in your sitting room or whichever room in your house you lose your temper the most, hang it up there. Anger is in the heart of fools.

And you got to be a bigger fool to let that anger come out of your mouth. I mean, if it's in your heart, you're already a fool. Remember that.

If you've got anger in your heart, you're already a fool. And you let it come out of your mouth, you're a fool squared to the power of two. It's not multiplied by two, it's squared.

It's terrible. We got to take it seriously. The only place in the Bible where it says don't grieve the Holy Spirit is in relation to anger.

Ephesians chapter four, it's in relation to our speech, especially anger. The only place in the Bible where it says don't grieve the Holy Spirit. You won't grieve the Holy Spirit if you come late to a meeting, though it's good to come on time for a meeting.

You'll never grieve the Holy Spirit if you can't sing in tune. Some people think they're very spiritual because they can sing in tune or they can sing very emotionally. Rubbish.

You grieve the Holy Spirit according to Ephesians four, verse 29 to 31. Read it together. In the middle of it, it says in verse 30, don't grieve the Holy Spirit.

It's like a sandwich. The middle of the sandwich is don't grieve the Holy Spirit, but see what it says on either side. Don't let any rotten word, dirty word, unhealthy word come out of your mouth.

Just like you don't put rotten food into your mouth. How many of you put rotten food into your mouth when you know it's rotten? Even if you know as soon as it touches your tongue, you throw it out. Don't let any rotten word come out of your mouth.

If it's tending to come out, spit it out and say, I'm not going to say that. And verse 31, that all wrath, anger, clamor, slander, with all malice be put away. All anger, gossip, backbiting, did all be put away.

Don't grieve the Holy Spirit. The grieving of the Holy Spirit is in mentioned in relation to the tongue. Not in relation to you're not evangelizing enough.

People come to say, hey, you're not evangelizing enough. Has anybody come to you and said, brother, you're not controlling your tongue enough. Has anybody in your life come to you with that? No.

They accuse us, why aren't you doing evangelism? I say, why aren't you controlling your tongue? What is the proof of spirituality evangelism? No, it's the control of the tongue. We've got a Christianity that's interested in activity. Activity is not spirituality.

A bird with one wing can keep on flying, flying, flying, flying. It's just going in circles. Activity is the control of the tongue that makes you move forward.

Anger is one of those big, big, big areas, which if you don't control, I tell you, leakage, leakage, leakage. What's the use praying to God to fill him with the Holy Spirit, to fill you with the Holy Spirit? I heard of one prayer meeting where somebody said, oh God, fill me with the Holy Spirit. And the other person said, Lord, don't fill him, he leaks.

Whether that was a true story or not, I don't know, but it's certainly true in the lives of many people. What's the use of God filling a vessel which is leaking? If your little child came to you with a cup, which had got a big hole in it, or a steel glass with a big hole in it, and said, Mom, give me some milk, give me some milk,

give me some milk, like some of you are praying to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Oh God, fill me with the Holy Spirit, fill me with the Holy Spirit.

And he comes to you with this vessel with a hole in it. God, Mom, give me some milk, don't you love me? Give me some milk. Nothing.

My mom doesn't love me. She loves you, all right? Bring a vessel without a hole in it. God loves you, all right? Get rid of the hole.

Plug it. God, give me control over my tongue. And I'll tell you this, some of you who are so eager to speak in unknown tongues, shall I give you a little bit of advice? Ask God to give you power to control your mother tongue first.

Yes, if you were so eager to control your mother tongue, that will do you a lot more good in eternity than speaking in unknown tongues. I'll tell you that. Some of you are so discouraged that you can't speak in unknown tongues.

Can you control your mother tongue? You're more spiritual than the person who speaks in unknown tongues. 1 Corinthians 13 says you can speak in unknown tongues and get zero. You read the first three verses of 1 Corinthians 13.

If I speak in tongues but I don't have love, zero. If you can't control your mother tongue, zero. But if you can control your mother tongue and you don't speak in unknown tongues, you may get a hundred percent.

Jesus did. He could control his mother tongue. He never spoke in unknown tongues.

He got a hundred percent. So that's, I'm going to show you another verse now and go back to Proverbs. That's a great book.

It's one of those new covenant books in the Old Testament. Let me show you chapter 12 and verse 22. Another thing we got to control in our tongue is telling lies.

Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord. That's another area where we really, really have to ask God to help us. Lord, let me never tell lies.

I spoke a whole message on it last Sunday and maybe at the end of the conference you could get a copy of that tape if you want to listen to it. But that's a whole big area. Then I want to show you another verse in chapter 15 verse 1. A gentle answer turns away anger in another person, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

You know, when somebody is angry with you, it's easy to keep quiet. It's more difficult to speak a gentle word in reply. It's a higher level of spirituality.

I mean keeping quiet is good. That's level number one. But if you want to go to college and not just finish with fourth standard, then learn not just to keep your mouth shut, but to give a gentle reply.

Because when a man is keeping his mouth shut, he may be boiling inside. It's like I heard of a lady who somebody provoked her tremendously and she kept her mouth shut and a brother went up to her and said, sister, that was amazing how you kept your mouth shut. When that other person was yelling and screaming at you, she said, yes, but you didn't see the boiling inside my heart all the time.

Have you experienced that where you keep your mouth shut every boiling inside and you dare not open your mouth? Because if you open your mouth, the volcano will come out. That's good that you control your tongue and keep that volcano pressed down. But even better is where the Holy Spirit has so controlled your heart that there's no boiling inside.

How do you know you can open your mouth and speak a gentle word in reply? We must learn to do this. And when we have lost our temper, we must repent. When we punish our children, we must punish them, but we must not lose our temper.

The times when I have punished my children and I've lost my temper, after punishing them, I've gone alone before God and repented and wept, not for punishing them, but for losing my temper. And I said, Lord, help me. I've got to get rid of the anger.

I don't have to get rid of the discipline. That's necessary. But the anger part must be filled up, filtered out of the discipline.

Just like why do we boil our water? Why do we filter our water before we drink it? Why don't you drink it straight from the tap? You can get jaundice. You filter out the rubbish and then you drink filtered water. It's the same way.

I want to filter out the anger and then do the discipline. And it takes time. It didn't happen to me overnight.

I had to fight it, battle it and confess it every time. That's how I got victory. I believe we must get victory.

Filter out the anger and speak gentle words. Further, chapter 29, Proverbs 29, verse 20. You know, chapter 29, by the way, is the last chapter of Proverbs written by Solomon.

Chapter 30 and 31 were written by somebody else. And in chapter 29, this is almost the last verse, verse 20. Do you see a man who is hasty with his words? There's more hope for a fool than for him.

What Solomon is saying is, in 29 chapters, I have written about various types of fools. This fellow is a fool. That fellow is a fool.

This is a person who does this is a fool person who does that is a fool. But he says, now I will tell you the biggest fool of the lot. The fellow who gets first prize.

The man or the woman who is hasty in speaking doesn't think before he speaks. There are verses in Proverbs like that. I don't have time to show it to you.

Where it says, a wise man thinks before he speaks. A fool just utters whatever comes to his mind. Are you a fool or a wise person? The biggest fool of the lot is the one who speaks without thinking.

So how shall we control the tongue? Jesus said in Matthew chapter 12, it's a very useful passage to study. Verse 34 to 38, out of the fullness of the heart, the mouth overflows. When angry words come out of your mouth, it's because there were always angry words in your heart.

When bitter words come out of your mouth, it's all because there were bitter words always in your heart. I think it is Amy Carmichael who said, a cup of sweet water can never spill bitter water no matter how heavily it is shaken. If you don't believe it, try it.

Go home and fill a glass with orange juice and shake it hard and see if bitter water comes out. Never. So when bitter things come out of your mouth, what does it prove? What was in your heart? Bitterness.

But nobody shook it hard enough so you never knew it. Thank God this rough fellow came and shook you all up so that you discovered what was in your heart. You got to thank him.

Oh, I thought I was a sweet saint till this fellow came and roughed me up and I discovered that what I had all along was bitterness. Thank you brother for showing that to me. I'm going to change.

The Holy Spirit can change you. Get rid of your gossiping, get rid of your curiosity, get rid of your anger, get rid of your uncontrolled speech and your multitudes of words and make you a really sweet saint of God who can prophesy and bless people. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, help us in this vital area where we all fail so much. Help us, Lord, to be overcomers so that your name will be glorified through us. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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