

# A Spirit-Controlled Tongue

by Zac Poonen

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*The tongue is a crucial instrument for building either Babylon or Jerusalem, and its control is essential for spiritual growth and victory over sin.*

**Duration:** 1:00:33

**Scripture:** James 1:26, James 2:26 - 3:2

**Topics:** "Tongue"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of not reading the Bible in isolated chapters but rather understanding the connections between different passages. He encourages those who have the habit of reading one chapter a day to start by reading the previous three verses of the last chapter they read. The speaker emphasizes that the truth of the gospel can reveal the seriousness of one's spiritual condition, like a scan report, but also offers the hope of complete healing through accepting the treatment of the gospel. The sermon also highlights the significance of controlling one's speech, as it reflects the maturity and control of the entire body.

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## Transcript

Okay, let's turn to Acts of the Apostles in chapter 2 and verse 1 to 4. And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place, and suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting, and there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit was giving them utterance. Now we know that when people were filled with the Holy Spirit or baptized in the Holy Spirit later in the Acts of the Apostles, it wasn't exactly like this. There was no rushing wind, there were no tongues of fire, and also they did not speak in languages that were known to all the audience.

So this was unique. But I want you to see a principle here which is very important. When the whole world was united against God in Genesis chapter 10, it says God confounded their tongues, and they could not understand one another when they were going to build the Tower of Babel.

And this is the exact opposite of that, where God made them speak in a language that everybody could understand. It was the opposite of the Tower of Babel. There they built what we could say was the beginning of Babylon, where people were capable themselves to do something, to build something which they thought would reach heaven and they'd ignore God.

And the thing that got confused there was their language. When they spoke with their tongue, they couldn't understand one another. And here was the building of what the beginning, that was the beginning of the building of Babylon, and here was the beginning of the building of what the Bible calls Jerusalem, the true church.

And again, it was the tongue that was important. They spoke with their tongue and everybody understood the opposite of the Tower of Babel. Babylon and Jerusalem, which you read at the end of Revelation, are two types of Christianity, and in both of them, the tongue is important.

Keep that in mind. It says here that tongues of fire, verse 3, rested on each of them. And that is a picture of a tongue under the control of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible also speaks about a tongue that is on fire with another type of fire in James, in chapter 3. James chapter 3, it says, it begins by saying, we need to see the previous verses to understand the context. Verse 26 of chapter 2, as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead. And the next verse is, don't become many teachers, brethren, because we shall incur a stricter judgment, because we all stumble in many ways.

If anyone doesn't stumble in what he says, that is with his tongue, he's a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well. Now, we have been used in past times to look at these verses independently. Chapter 2, verse 26 is one verse.

Chapter 3, verse 1 is another verse. Chapter 3, verse 2 is another verse, and we've never seen the connection between the three verses, because James wasn't writing disconnected verses, just like when you write a letter, you won't write disconnected sentences, one sentence flows from the other. So he was saying, faith without works is dead.

So, dear brothers, don't become a teacher, if you don't have works to back up the faith you're preaching. Because if you don't have works to back up the faith you're preaching, God's going to judge you so severely for trying to teach something which you were not practicing. Do you know that millions of Christians in the world are going to be judged very severely because they started teaching? I have a feeling that some of them would have gone to heaven if they hadn't started teaching.

But when they started teaching they became hypocrites. They began to preach wonderful things which were not true in their life. Just like there are great lusts in our flesh for sex, for money, for comfort, there's also a great lust in all man's flesh to teach other people.

Look at the multitudes of people who try to go around giving advice to people who don't ask for advice. I've seen it everywhere. I don't give advice if people don't want it.

I would give you that recommendation too. Unless you have a responsibility for that person, like your son, somebody who works under you in an office, a servant who works in your home, or if you're an elder, the people in your church. Otherwise, my recommendation to you is, keep your big mouth shut.

Otherwise, the judgment will be very severe. My brethren, don't be many teachers. Because faith without works is like a body without a spirit.

You know, a dead body can have all the parts of the body, and you say you can have all your right doctrines, but if you can't control your tongue, don't teach. That's what he's saying in verse 2. We stumble

in many ways, but if a man does not stumble in what he speaks, he's a perfect man. Earlier on, he had said in James chapter 1 and verse 26, if anyone thinks he's religious, that he cannot control his tongue.

He is deceiving his own heart. His whole religion is worth zero. We have preached this for 25 years, 30 years.

I know there are tapes here we have upstairs on the control of the tongue, which are 25 years old, at least. So it's not a new message. But I find it's very necessary, because a lot of people think they are spiritual who do not control their tongues.

Even though the Bible says your religion, your whole Christianity is worth zero, no matter how much doctrine you have, no matter how many other things you are zealous about, the ultimate test is control of the tongue. In the olden days, 100-200 years ago, when physicians went around looking at patients, the first thing they would tell the patient was, show me your tongue. Stick out your tongue, and I'll tell you whether you're sick or not.

There's a coating on the tongue when you're sick, which is not there when you're healthy. And I would say the same thing spiritually. Do you want to know whether you're spiritual or not? Show me your tongue.

How do you use it every day? How do you use it at home? With that tongue, you can build Babylon or Jerusalem. The choice is yours. But it's a very important instrument, and that's why on top of the heads of those 120 people on the Day of Pentecost, it was not a hand of fire.

We think the hand is very important, or an eye of fire. It was a tongue of fire, meaning that the most important part of the human body, which the Holy Spirit was going to use in this new age, was the tongue. Do you know that? Do you know that in all your body, the most important part which the Holy Spirit wants to use is your tongue? And if you don't allow the Holy Spirit to control that, you'll never be the effective witness that God wants you to be.

From Adam, we have all acquired an uncontrolled tongue that speaks whatever we like, whenever we like, however harsh it may be, and very often, however untrue the facts may be, we allow our tongue to let loose. And we don't realize we're not destroying anybody else. We are destroying ourselves, ultimately to the point where you can even lose your salvation.

I mean, just think of it. How can you go to heaven if your Christianity is worth zero on earth? I mean, that godless nominal Christian, his Christianity is worth zero. Some of us think that our Christianity is worth much more.

We think we'd get at least 90% from God. We say, that fellow gets zero, he's not born again. I get at least 90%, or at least 80%, or at least 60% I passed with first class.

But God says, no. You can't control your tongue, you got zero. But Lord, I did so many other things.

Lord, I cast out demons in your name. I did miracles in your name. I prophesied in your name.

He said, depart from me. I never knew you, because I saw your tongue. I witnessed to so many people, Lord.

I gave so much money for God's work. I came to so many meetings. Depart from me.

I don't know you. The Lord says, because you have a religion which you got from your own head, your own understanding of Christianity. It was not according to the teaching of my word, the Lord says, which says, if you cannot control your tongue, your Christianity is worth zero.

Now I want to tell you that, because you don't hear much about that in other places. In fact, if you come here regularly, you'll hear a lot of things from the Bible, which are not preached anywhere else. And I'll tell you why.

Because many years ago, when the Lord commissioned me to serve him, he told me to go through this land and preach what people are not preaching from the Bible. That's been my commission, and I've stuck to it through many years. There are many things which hundreds of people are preaching.

I don't usually preach it, because you already hear it. I pick out those things in the scriptures which are not being preached by other people, particularly in the New Testament. And that's why you hear something, hey, I never thought of that before, naturally, because you never heard it.

Because there are certain things in scripture, you take the matter of the love of money, it's almost not at all preached nowadays. Even repentance is gradually dying out. Yet it's all some of the major messages of the New Testament, the control of the tongue.

And it's not a question of how we speak when we meet each other in a church meeting Sunday morning. It's all the time. The way we use our tongue in the church meeting may be an act, like an actor on the stage.

It's not his real self. If we want to know our real self, ask yourself how you speak with people who are closest to you, or people who are under you. If people are above you, you speak respectfully to people whose opinion we care for, we are very careful about.

But see how you speak with your husband or your wife at home every single day. Evaluate yourself over a period of one month. If you haven't done it, start from today.

And evaluate yourself over the next four weeks. And husbands and wives, help one another. For what? Help one another to go to heaven.

That's what I mean. It's serious. Help one another to have a Christianity which has at least one mark or two marks out of a hundred, not zero.

If a man cannot control his tongue, his Christianity is worth zero. Believe it or not, it's the word of God. It's true.

And that's why he says in chapter 2 James 2 26, the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead. And he goes on in the next two verses to say what I'm talking about is the tongue. In fact the whole chapter, chapter 3, he's talking about the tongue.

But the subject is faith without works is dead. Chapter 2 verse 26. It's unfortunate that the people who divided up the Bible into chapters and verses put a division there.

James did not put a division. I don't believe it was even the next paragraph. He's just continuing to write.

And some of these chapter divisions in the Bible are very unfortunate. And if you have the habit of reading the Bible one chapter a day, you can completely miss it. So those of you who have a habit of reading one chapter a day, a very good habit, let me give you a suggestion.

Next time you start reading your chapter for the day, start with the previous three verses of the last chapter, which you read yesterday. And you'll see some amazing things in the future which you have never seen before. Like the connection between Hebrews 11 and Hebrews 12.

Or between James 2 and James 3 and many, many other places. Or between John 7 and John 8. There's some amazing connections there which are completely lost because you forgot what you read yesterday and you start a new chapter today. Here's the subject of this chapter.

Like your body without breath is useless. It's mud. It's dust.

So faith without a controlled tongue is worthless. That's what he's saying. Faith without a controlled tongue is worthless.

He says, I'll explain what I mean. He doesn't stop with that verse. He says, I'll explain what I mean.

Many of you fellas get up and use your tongue to teach others this and teach others that about Christianity and about spirituality, about victory over sin, the new and living way, and 101 things. Good. But I hope you're controlling your tongue.

Otherwise, your judgment will be very, very strict. We all stumble in many ways. Okay.

But if you can stop stumbling with your tongue, then you're a perfect man. You're able to control the whole body. In other words, every other part of the body you'll be able to control if you can control your tongue.

Isn't that interesting? Jesus told us to control our eyes and to control our hands. But he said, ultimately, if you can control your tongue, you'll be able to control your eyes. Some of you who have a tremendous problem with lusting your eyes with your eyes.

Think of this verse, that if a man does not stumble in use of his tongue, he'll be able to control the whole body as well. It's God's word. So sometimes temptation with the eyes is very strong.

People who are constantly on the internet find that. Magazines, cinema posters. Shall I give you a suggestion? Why not begin to control your tongue a little bit and see what a change comes in the tremendous problem you have with lusting with your eyes? It's true.

God's word is true. Faith without works is dead. So he uses two examples.

He says, like these horses. You know, if you don't put a bit in the horse's mouth and control it with reins, that horse is no horse in the world is going to go in the direction you want it to go. No.

If you tell a horse, okay, go from here to there. You think it's going to listen? It'll wander here, there, everywhere and maybe finally reach there or never reach there at all. He says, our tongue is like that.

When we open our mouth and start speaking, we speak about this, that and every other unedifying thing except what God wants you to say. So he says, we put a bit in the horse's mouth to control it. So that that horse will obey me.

Even the racehorses. You can't get a racehorse going without a horse carriages. And then we, it says here, when you put that bit into the horse's mouth, the whole body of the horse, it says in verse three, obeys you.

The whole body of that horse moves in the direction which you have controlled with a bit in the mouth. And James says, that's how your tongue is. If you will allow God to control your tongue, your whole body, your eyes, your hands and every other part of your body, which you're having a problem with, will come under God's control.

Perhaps we have not concentrated on this area sufficiently. One of the first things I sought for my life was to have joy in my heart. Rejoice in the Lord always.

Another thing I began to seek God for very early was control of my tongue. That no matter what the provocation, I would not lose control of my tongue in any matter that concerned me. At home, in the church, anywhere.

I've slipped up sometimes. And I have repented so terribly, sometimes it's taken a whole day for me to get over my repentance. I said, Lord, why did that happen? I'm amazed that people can slip up with their tongue and just carry on as if nothing happened.

That shows they don't take God's word seriously. I've come to see that if you want victory over sin, one of the first things you've got to do is to take God's word seriously. If you read my book, *Secrets of Victory*, one of the first chapters is on taking God's word seriously.

You'll never get victory if you don't take God's word seriously. Many years ago, I took this word seriously, that if I cannot control my tongue, all my Christianity is worth zero. Not one or five or ten, but zero.

And I said, Lord, I don't care what other people say. I know there are people, I've heard them on Christian television justifying their anger. Well, they can do that and lead themselves to hell and lead other people to hell.

I don't want to listen to them. I listen to God's word. The reason why many of these television evangelists can fool so many Christians today is because we've got a generation of people watching these programs who don't know the Bible.

And so when a man gets up on television and says, God himself is angry, so I also get angry. Or somebody says, well, I lost my temper at my husband, as if that's a normal thing. Gets up in the pulpit and says that.

I think that woman should hang her head in shame that she says such a thing and dares to teach other people. Don't be many teachers. I don't care how good the teaching is.

I want to know, does that person control his or her tongue? If they don't, something is seriously wrong. They should just sit down and say, let me control my tongue before I teach anymore. Yeah, I share your testimony, but don't imagine that you can be a teacher.

The trouble with Christendom today is that I have a whole lot of teachers who haven't got victory over their tongue and who even talk about it in the pulpit. And there are dumb, thousands of dumb Christians who say, oh, well, if that spiritual man or woman who preaches God's word still loses their temper, I suppose

it's okay. Boy, what a work the devil has done.

I'm amazed how so many Christians can be blind to something written so clearly in scripture. But I'm determined that any soul I'm responsible for is going to hear the truth. I can't change them.

They may still go to hell, but at least they'll go to hell knowing that they were warned before they went there. That's all I can say. I can't stop any of you from going to hell.

But you'll know the truth, and you'll have the opportunity to be cured completely. It's like a scan report that says, this is your condition. No scan report can cure your cancer, but it can tell you the seriousness of your condition.

And the doctor can say, you can be cured a hundred percent if you will take the treatment. That's the good news of the gospel. But whether you want to take it or not, that's another thing.

You can reject it and die next week. It's up to you. So, here he says another example.

He says, look at these ships. I don't know whether you know that, all of you. I think most of you would know it, that a huge, massive ship, hundreds of feet long, weighing many tons, the whole direction of that ship is altered by a small little metal thing at the back of the ship called a rudder.

Because as the ship moves forward, you just put that rudder a little that side, the water hits the rudder and turns the whole ship. Or you put the rudder the other side, the water hits the rudder and turns the whole ship. He says, such a small piece of metal right at the back of the ship, near the propellers, is what controls the whole body of the ship.

Now this is inspired by the Holy Spirit. He says the tongue is like the rudder of the ship. The direction you are going to go in your life is determined not by all the big resolutions you make, on how serious you are about controlling your tongue.

You let loose your tongue in one direction, whether you like it or not, the ship is going to go in that direction. You use your tongue in another direction, the ship is going to go in that direction. I believe this is the reason why we have so little of the anointed word of God in many of our pulpits today.

This is the main reason why we have boring sermons everywhere, where people speak empty stuff, correct stuff, but no anointing on it. If I got up here and said two ones are two, two twos are four, two threes are six, two fours are eight, two fives are ten, and keep on going to the twelve times multiplication table or the sixteen times multiplication table, I have spoken the truth. But how much has that truth blessed you? How much anointing is there on that truth? Any atheist can get up and say that.

Don't just say, oh what that brother says is correct. What that preacher, man or woman, says is so right. Well so is the multiplication table.

That's also right. But does it lead you to victory? If I repeat the multiplication table here from one to a hundred, it won't lead anybody to victory. Truth is not enough.

There must be anointing on it. There must be conviction that comes straight home to your heart and shows you like a scanned report your true condition. That is the purpose of God's word.

But unlike other scanned reports where you can get a scanned report and get discouraged, here always the message is you can be cured completely. One hundred percent. I mean if that were not attached to the bottom of the scanned report, I'd say that's not from God.

No. The end of the scanned report is the last sentence, you can be cured completely. It's a terrible condition, but you can be cured completely, if you want to, if you're willing to pay the price.

And the price is not money. The price is you must first of all acknowledge your condition and secondly be willing to die to yourself. Acknowledgement, that's a very big step.

For example, if you are a Christian, after all that I've said so far, how many of you will honestly acknowledge that your Christianity is worth zero? You see how difficult it is? You see how difficult it is to acknowledge that all your Christianity is worth zero? That is the work of deception the devil has done. He has made you believe what your head says, even if it's against the word of God. It's amazing.

I tell you a lot of so-called believers believe the devil's lie more than they believe the scriptures. Here is one example. Your whole Christianity is worth zero if you cannot control your tongue.

Tell me, how many Christians believe that word of God and how many Christians believe what the devil says? Oh, but your doctrine is so right and you're such a good person and you've overcome this and you've overcome that. And surely you can't be an unbeliever. Your Christianity can't be worth zero.

Maybe it's not a hundred, but at least fifty or sixty. And you say to the devil, I think you're right. Maybe God is wrong.

Okay. I'll tell you something. Heaven and earth will pass away and you will pass away before this word passes away.

I have staked my life on this word for forty-five years and I've never been disappointed. What it says is the truth. The devil's master accomplishment in the Garden of Eden was to convince Eve that nothing would happen, even though she violated God's word.

It's true. And he succeeded. And he succeeded for six thousand years, not only with unbelievers, but with believers too.

And I know why the devil hates me. I know why he's got a whole lot of people ganging up against me all over. Because I'm exposing his lies and I'll keep doing it as long as I live.

But that's our commission, as light to expose the darkness and the lies of the devil. So he says further, verse five, James three five, So also the tongue is a small part of the body, but what a lot of things it boasts about. What a lot of things we say with our tongue to impress other people that we are very spiritual when we're not.

Then he says, See how great a forest is set aflame by a small fire, a matchstick. A matchstick is enough to set on fire a whole forest or a whole building. Sure, one matchstick is enough to set a plane on fire or a car on fire.

And so he says the tongue is like that. A fire that the tongue is a fire. Now compare this with what we read in Acts chapter two.

That was also a fire. So the Bible speaks about two types of fires, just like Babylon and Jerusalem. There are two fires.

Jesus spoke about both fires. He spoke about the fire of hell where people would burn forever. And John the Baptist said that Jesus would baptize in the Holy Spirit and fire.

The Holy Spirit is a fire. And Jesus said, I have come to set, bring fire down on earth, Luke 12, 49. How I wish that fire were already kindled.

There he was speaking about the fire of the Holy Spirit. And he also spoke, you know, about the fire which never dies in the lake of fire. So here is speaking about the opposite of what we read in Acts chapter two, about a tongue which is set on fire, a world of sin.

The world is a big place. Whoever thought that that whole world of sin could be seated on my little tongue inside my mouth. The tongue is set among our members is that which defiles the entire body.

It defiles the entire body and sets on fire the course of our life and is set on fire by hell. I want to read from the message translation. It only takes a spark, remember, to set off a forest fire, a careless word or a wrongly placed word out of your mouth can start a forest fire.

A careless word, a wrongly placed word can start a forest fire where you are. By our speech, we can ruin the world. We can turn harmony into chaos.

You can destroy a whole church with a word. You can throw mud on a person's reputation with one word. You can set the whole world, you can send the whole world up in smoke and you yourself will go up in smoke with it.

A smoke that's right from the pit of hell. All types of animals, verse 7, have been tamed by the human race, but no one's ever been able to tame the tongue. Listen to this.

No one can tame the tongue. It's a restless evil full of deadly poison. No one can control it.

Then you say, Lord, what's the answer? The Holy Spirit can. The Holy Spirit can make you speak in another tongue and by that I don't mean just the gift of speaking in tongues, but I mean a gracious speech. Another tongue which your wife will be surprised to hear, your husband will be surprised to hear a gracious speech.

A speech that encourages rather than discourages. A speech that builds up rather than destroys. No one can control it.

You can make a decision here today. Oh, I'm going to control my tongue. Okay.

You can discover after one year that you couldn't control it. You might as well recognize it right now that you cannot control your tongue. See, in the day of Pentecost, the Bible says that they spoke in an unknown language and that was a unique case where people understood it.

But in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, it says nobody understands what a person is saying when God gives us the gift of tongues today. Very often through the baptism in the Holy Spirit, sometimes some people don't have it, but those who have the gift of tongues, it's exactly like it says in Acts 2, 4. They spoke, not the Holy Spirit spoke. That's a mistake some people make.

They ask God to fill them with the Holy Spirit and expect the Holy Spirit to speak. The Holy Spirit never speaks. Demons speak.

I've heard demon-possessed people and the demon is speaking. They have no control over what they're saying. The actual demon is controlling their tongue.

I remember here in Bangalore, one lady was demon-possessed. I said, will you ask Jesus to come into your heart? And the voice from inside said, with the tongue, tell her to do that. I don't want to do that.

The demon said, I didn't want to accept Christ. The demon was controlling the tongue. And the demon was cast out.

Then the woman got control of her tongue again. But when the Holy Spirit fills us, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, we read in Galatians 5, 23, is self-control. One of the nine fruits of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5, 23, is self-control.

The exact opposite of demon possession. That's why the Bible never says the spirit possesses you. Demons possess you.

The Spirit fills you. And demons don't fill you, they possess you. They control your tongue.

There are cases of demon-possessed people who got automatic handwriting. They write what they don't want to write. That's how demons are.

But when the Holy Spirit speaks in tongues to a person, you speak. You've got full control over it. Many people who have never spoken in tongues wonder about this.

They say, how is it? You mean you can speak in tongues when you like? And stop when you like? I say, sure. I say, do you believe I can start preaching when I like, and stop when I like? That's a gift too. When the Holy Spirit gives us a gift, it's under our control.

Not under His control. Acts 2, 4 is clear. They spoke.

But it was not only them. As the Spirit gave them utterance. Take my yoke upon you.

A yoke is upon two bullocks, Jesus and me. Is the Holy Spirit plus me, always? But the point I wanted to say there is, the Holy Spirit prompted them, and they spoke it. So what the Lord was trying to say on the day of Pentecost was, not just this language that I give you, this language of prayer and worship, but even in your mother tongue, I want you to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit when you speak.

Don't just speak whatever comes into your mind. Whatever comes into your mind may not be from the Holy Spirit. The vast majority of people whom I have met who speak in tongues, more than 90% of them, of those who claim to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues, they speak in other tongues, but they have no control over their mother tongue.

And then I say, that can't be the Holy Spirit. If you praise God on Sunday morning in other tongues, and Sunday afternoon you shout at your wife in the mother tongue, you mean the Holy Spirit can control the other tongue, but He cannot control English, or Tamil, or Malayalam? Which spirit is that? Certainly not the Holy Spirit. The Christian world is under a deception.

I speak in tongues. I've spoken in tongues for 30 years, and I thank God for it. But the thing that happened in my life when the Holy Spirit filled me was He began to gradually control my mother tongue.

That's how I know it was the Holy Spirit. So, I want to say to you, if you got the gift of other tongues and the Holy Spirit is not able to control the mother tongue, you better check up on that, which spirit that was. Sure, there's a tremendous amount of counterfeit.

My conviction is 90% is counterfeit. There is a 10% that's genuine. Just like the way to life is narrow and few there be that find it.

The number of genuine Christians, disciples of Jesus in the world is very small, I'll tell you that. And then among them, the number of people who are genuinely baptized in the Holy Spirit and genuinely speak in tongues is also very small. You can take it or leave it, but that's my opinion.

And I, like Paul said, I think I have the spirit of God when I say that, even though it's my opinion. Because what the Holy Spirit says. Which spirit is it that can give you some other unknown language but cannot control your mother tongue? That is the test, James says.

James must have heard in his time also a lot of fellows just babbling away in tongues and they couldn't control their mother tongue. And to such people, James is saying, what's the use of all this? If you can't control your tongue, your whole Christianity is worth zero, no matter how much you say you're baptized in the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues. How do you speak to your wife? That's the test.

Further, he says, this is scary. He says, my brethren, these things ought not to be this way. Verse 10, from the same, verse 9, with it we bless the Lord and Father and with it we curse men.

That's what I said. Sunday morning, Sunday afternoon. And those other people have been made in the likeness of God.

How many of you, when you come here to worship God on Sunday morning, think of cursing God? You wretched, good for nothing. Yeah, would you ever think of, I mean, even a godless person wouldn't say that. Even the atheist will not say it because he may think, supposing there is somebody there.

I better not say it. And then he says, you go home and you curse somebody who's made in the likeness of God. You believe your wife is made in the likeness of God? You say, oh no, not my wife.

Really? Whose likeness was she made in? Yeah, I know very well. She's made in the likeness of the devil, the way she behaves. That's probably what she thinks about you as well, by the way.

That's our arrogance. He's not talking about believers here. He's talking about human beings.

We curse not believers. We curse human beings. It's the only verse in the New Testament that teaches me that there's something of the likeness of God in every human being.

If it were not for the verse, I wouldn't have believed it. I'd have believed it was all wiped out on the Garden of Eden. But this verse teaches me that there's something of the likeness of God in a human being.

In other words, it makes him a little different from an animal. And I'll prove it to you. Do you know that even atheists have a conscience? I've met atheists who will never cheat, never steal.

Why is that? Have you met a dog that will never bark or bite? No. There's something of the likeness of God even in that atheist, the conscience. Don't despise it.

I'm not saying that your wife is Christlike or your husband is Christlike. But don't forget what the Bible says. There's something of the likeness of God in that person.

Don't talk to her or him forgetting that. In the morning, Sunday morning, you talk to God, you never say things that curse him. And you come back home and you look at somebody who is in the likeness of God and you start cursing.

Maybe your son, daughter. We must rebuke and correct. That is a Godlike thing.

Jesus rebukes and corrects those whom he loves. But he doesn't call them filthy names. Jesus will never call you a pig or a donkey or a dog or a bitch or any such thing.

No. Never. He'll never call you that.

He'll rebuke you pretty strongly. But it's always to the point. It's like a doctor says, you've got serious cancer.

He won't say, you son of a bitch, you've got cancer. I mean, that's not a good doctor. Doctors say, you've got cancer.

He won't call you a name. Okay. We are surrounded by people who are weak.

Let's say they've got cancer. But they are not sons and daughters of bitches. I'll tell you that.

They're not idiots and fools. Jesus said, if you call a person an idiot or a fool, you're in danger of hell yourself. Why did he say that in Matthew chapter 5? The same thing.

See Matthew chapter 5 and see how important the tongue is in relation to what Jesus said. Matthew's gospel chapter 5. He said here in verse 22, if you're angry with your brother, you'll be guilty before the court. But if you open your mouth and speak, now guilty before the court, okay, that's not, it's an earthly court.

But after that, you allow that thing in your heart to come up to your mouth and you speak something. You say, you good for nothing. Oh, then you'll be guilty before the Supreme Court.

And then after some time you go to him and say, you fool. You tell that person made in the image of God, you fool. It's like telling God, fool, you'll be guilty enough to go to hell.

You can take it or leave it. But Jesus said, heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. My brothers and sisters, we have been fooled long enough by preachers who have tickled your ears and made you feel everything is okay when you got serious cancer of the tongue.

Get treated. The good news is there is a complete cure possible. If you're willing to let the Holy Spirit grip your life, yield your whole life to Jesus and say, Lord, I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

The whole secret of the Christian life is the power of the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, we can never live. I would drop dead here spiritually if I didn't have the power of the Holy Spirit.

And yet, supposing one day God took away the Holy Spirit from the world, from every believer, do you know that lots of churches would still continue having their praise and worship meetings? Because a lot of praise and worship meetings, you don't need the Holy Spirit. You just need a good song leader. All the musicians are there.

Song leader is there. Music book is there. Holy Spirit is not there.

It doesn't matter. We're going to have praise and worship. And it'll sound just as good as on other Sundays to people who are only listening to the music.

But to a sensitive godly man standing there Sunday morning, he'll say, hey, music is good today, but something is missing. Holy Spirit is missing. But lots and lots of Christians wouldn't have a clue that the Holy Spirit is left.

It's true. Let me show you another verse in Proverbs in chapter 18. Proverbs chapter 18 and verse 21.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue. Those who love it will eat its fruit. Or like the Message Bible says, words kill and words can give life.

Words are either poison or good fruit. The choice is yours. The choice is yours.

It's a poison that'll kill you and can kill other people. It's fruit or it can be fruit that blesses you and blesses other people. The choice is yours.

Death and life are in the power of this tongue. It's with the tongue that the devil does his work and it's with the tongue that the Holy Spirit does his work. And that's why it's so important to make sure that our tongue belongs to God 100%.

You can't rent out this tongue to the devil part of the day or part of the week and then expect God to use it the rest of the time. No. God says, if you give it to me, it's mine forever.

You can't give it partly to God. I said the other day how Jesus said in John 8, 44, the devil is the father of lies and all our lies come out of the mouth of the devil. And no child can be born without a mother.

And that lie comes out of our tongue because I have yielded my womb. The womb is my heart. Like the womb in a woman's body, spiritually, the heart is the womb.

And like a woman's womb receives a seed, good or bad, I can receive in my heart a seed, good or bad. And the type of child that is born through my tongue will depend on the seed I received. So I have to say, I'm not going to receive the seed of the devil.

These thoughts that he puts into my heart, negative thoughts about other people, angry thoughts, critical thoughts, proud thoughts, untruthful thoughts, exaggerations, which is just another decent word for lying, unbelieving thoughts, which come out of my word, mouth. Oh, what to do, brother? There's no hope. If you feel like that, at least keep your mouth shut.

Don't spread that poison to other people. That fellow had a little hope till he heard you say, brother, no hope. Why not keep it to yourself? Why not just die yourself? Why kill other people? You never see God's word saying there's no hope.

There's always hope. I'd say that about a person who's in the coffin after it's been buried. I'd say, well, now there's no hope for him.

Because it's appointed unto men amongst to die, but after this, to judgment. But otherwise, I hold out hope for everybody in the world. The worst criminal in the world, there's hope for him.

The thief on the cross who was saved is the proof of that. Flattering words come from the heart. If I flatter this fellow, I can get something out of him.

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If I flatter this fellow, I can get something out of him. If I flatter this fellow, I can get something out of him. It's cunning.

The serpent was more subtle than all the other animals, it says in Genesis 3.1. And the devil said, that's the animal I want. And the devil looks around at all the believers sitting somewhere and says, that fellow, or that woman, he's really shrewd, she's really shrewd and cunning. That's the one I want.

The smart one. Some of these other fellas look smart, but they're pretty dumb. I know that.

I'm not going to catch them. But this other guy, he's clever. This other woman, she's clever.

She thinks, how can I destroy that person's reputation? How can I ruin that person's scheme? The devil says, that's the one I want. The serpent was more subtle than all the other animals, and the devil said, I'll use that serpent's tongue to speak. Dear brother, are you subtle? Are you clever? Are you cunning? Are you sharp? Are you somebody who can grasp things like that? Just watch out.

That's the type of person the devil's looking for. If you don't give your tongue, but the Holy Spirit doesn't look out only for such people. The Holy Spirit's glad to accept anybody.

A dumb guy like Peter, or a clever chap like Paul, both are equally acceptable to the Holy Spirit. But when the devil uses, he particularly looks for those who are cunning, sharp, very intelligent, who top the class, and who are brilliant, clever. He says, I've got to work and get that fellow's tongue, get that sister's tongue.

I can do such a lot of work through that person. And if the person claims to be a believer, boy, there's no end to what I can do with such a person. Has the devil made a fool of you for so many years? Have you fooled yourself that you're filled with the Holy Spirit? Maybe you speak in other tongues, but the Holy Spirit's still not been able to control your mother tongue.

I'll tell you what, seek God to be filled with the Holy Spirit and say to God, Lord, I won't believe it till you've given me another tongue in my mother tongue. Then I'll believe it. And when my wife testifies that my speech has changed, when my co-workers testify, hey, what's happened, man? Then I'll believe God's done a work.

Till then, just humble yourself. I remember when I asked God to fill me with the Holy Spirit, I said, Lord, I don't care if it takes 10 years. I want the genuine thing that Peter, James, and John got on the day of

Pentecost.

I don't want anything less than that. I want that mighty power that was manifested on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon people and Peter's tongue, the Holy Spirit took over that tongue. This was the tongue which six weeks ago had denied Jesus saying, I don't know who you're talking about.

This is wicked tongue. What a work the Holy Spirit did. Took that tongue which six weeks ago had denied the Lord three times.

Took that same tongue and brought 3,000 Jews to Christ ready for baptism and baptized in the Holy Spirit. God can do it. You humble yourself and weep bitterly like Peter.

That was the secret. You know how Peter prepared himself for Pentecost? It says in Luke 22, and Jesus looked at him. It's a lovely verse.

Just after he denied the Lord three times and the cock had crowed twice, it says the Lord turned. The Lord was standing in the court with all his fellows accusing him, but his mind was on Peter and he knew Peter was there and he turned around and looked at Peter. And I think his look said, I remember seeing a painting of this in a Bible storybook like this.

The Lord looked at Peter. I don't think he looked at Peter in that stern way. That artist didn't have a clue.

He didn't know God. I think the Lord looked at Peter with tremendous compassion. A look which said, it's all right Peter, you're forgiven.

I told you this would happen, but you remember what the other thing I told you? I'm praying for you right now that even though you slipped up with your tongue, your faith that God can change you will not be lost. But it took a long time for Peter. He couldn't believe it.

Then he never saw the Lord again. So the Lord sent another messenger to him. It says in Mark chapter 16, after his resurrection on the first day of the week, he was risen and this angel was sitting there.

We read in verse four, there was this verse five, this young man, an angel sitting there in a white robe. And he said, don't be amazed. Verse six, Mark 16, six, Jesus has risen.

He's not here. Here's the place where they laid him. Go and tell his disciples and Peter that he's going ahead of you.

Why and Peter? Supposing I say, go and tell all the men sitting in this room and so-and-so. But he's also a man, isn't he included in that? Supposing that word phrase and Peter was not there. The messengers would have come, gone and said, you know, Jesus said, go and tell all his disciples that Jesus is going ahead of you in Galilee.

Peter would have sat there in the corner and said, that can't include me. I was his disciple, not one of his now. And the Lord had a special concern.

He knew that Peter felt like that. And some of you feel like that to this morning. Lord, I can't be the one.

I'll never control my tongue. And so the Lord says, go and tell his disciples and so-and-so. Today, I am the angel telling you.

The Lord says, go and tell his disciples and you. The Lord's going ahead of you. That uncontrolled tongue can become a spiritual tongue.

Don't give up hope. Let's pray. That includes you, brother, sister.

Nobody is left out. Go and tell his disciples and you. The Lord wants to fill you with his Holy Spirit.

Cry out to him. Your life will be changed. Your home life will be changed.

Your home will be like a little heaven on earth. I know I've tasted a little bit of it, and I can say that. It's your choice whether you want your home to be a heaven or a hell.

It doesn't matter how much you have failed in the past. Are you willing to change today? Say, Lord, I don't care if it takes 10 years. I'm going to get there by the grace of God.

I'm going to be a perfect man, a perfect woman with my tongue under the control of the Holy Spirit. Peter wept bitterly. Perhaps you need to go somewhere and weep bitterly sometime.

That was how he was prepared for the day of Pentecost. And that's how you and I can be prepared too. Heavenly Father, help us that no one goes away from here discouraged.

There's hope for everyone. Thank you, Lord. We praise you for the tremendous possibilities there are ever since the day of Pentecost.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

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