

The Importance of Our Speech

by Zac Poonen

Our speech is a reflection of our heart and can either bring life or death to others, and we must allow the Holy Spirit to control our tongues and lives.

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Scripture: Psalm 12:2-4, Proverbs 10:11, Proverbs 15:4, Ephesians 5:18, James 1:26, James 3:6

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Tongue Control"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the critical importance of controlling the tongue and being filled with the Holy Spirit. It highlights how the tongue can either be a source of life or a source of destruction, showcasing the need for believers to allow the Holy Spirit to purify and control their speech. The message stresses the impact of words on one's spiritual condition, urging listeners to be vigilant in their speech and to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all communication.

Transcript

I want to turn to Proverbs in chapter 10. We have often spoken about the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit. And I believe that most if not all of us have asked God to fill us and probably have at some time in the past experienced being filled with the Holy Spirit too.

And in my observation of many people in many churches that emphasize the baptism of the Holy Spirit is that when you see them after some time, sometimes even after a year, they are not filled with the Holy Spirit, at least there is no evidence of that. Jesus said, by their fruit you shall know them. And there doesn't seem to be much fruit.

And we can imagine that once we were filled with the Holy Spirit, well that's it. And forever after, it's like a driving license I get and renew every five years. It's not like that.

You can be filled with the Holy Spirit one day and not be filled the next day. You can start backsliding the next day. It says in Hebrews 3.13 that it requires only 24 hours to become a backslider.

Encourage one another daily, otherwise you'll be hardened for the deceitfulness of sin. So hardening takes only 24 hours. So anyone who is not walking with the Lord daily, Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4.16 that the inner man is being renewed day by day.

You either allow it to be renewed or to be hardened. So since the Holy Spirit is pictured by Jesus as water, it should be gushing out of our hearts. We know that water in a vessel can leak if there's a hole in it.

And that leakage can come through sin, sin that we're conscious of. But as I've observed many, many believers and sought my own heart and searched my own life, I found that very often that leakage comes through the tongue, through a careless use of the tongue or a misuse of the tongue. So here it says in Proverbs 10.11, we have seen what the Bible says about the righteous shall live by faith.

We've seen the path of the righteous is something that is to shine more and more until the perfect day. Proverbs 4.18, here it says the mouth of the righteous is to be a fountain of life. And the only alternative to that is the mouth of the wicked, which conceals violence.

You can either have a fountain of life or, like the message Bible says, the mouth of the wicked is a dark cave full of abuse, etc. So if we don't allow the Holy Spirit to take complete control of our tongue, not just when we are going to share the word, but all the time, there's going to be leakage. Particularly when you are with your relatives, unconverted friends, maybe at home where you feel you can relax and speak as you like, that's fine.

But you can speak as you like and there can be leakage. And the next time you want to be used by the Lord, He doesn't use you because there's no power left. It's like a petrol tank that's got a hole in it and it's all leaked out, even though you filled it up yesterday, it's all leaked out.

And you wonder where all the petrol went. There was a hole in the tank and that hole is in the tongue. It's through the tongue that the leakage takes place.

You've seen Jesus said that in Matthew chapter 12. You know, this is so important that if you take just this one message seriously, I believe it can radically change your life. Anybody, young or old, brother or sister.

In Matthew 12, Jesus says, verse 33 onwards, Matthew 12, 33, the fruit is what comes out of the tongue, but he says you can't make the fruit good unless the tree is good. You can't just hang good fruit on a bad tree. You can fool people, but it's not really the fruit of the tree.

So Jesus says you need to make the tree good. Then you don't have to worry about always making sure that the good fruit is hanging on the branches. It will only produce good fruit.

And the tree is the heart. The branches, the branches, the tongue from which the fruit comes out, the words. So the tree is the heart.

The tongue is the branch. The words are our fruit. So he says you've got to make the tree good.

Then its fruit will be good. The tree is bad. Fruit is bad.

And the tree is known by its fruit. So the condition of your heart is known by the words you speak. That's basically what he's saying in verse 33.

And he turned to these Pharisees and said, you brood of vipers, how can you, when your heart is evil, produce what is good fruit? You see now where all the anger and the bitterness and the foul language and the dirty jokes and the laughing at the dirty jokes and everything comes from. It comes from a heart that we're not allowed the Holy Spirit to deal with. We can control our tongue.

It's like chopping off the bad fruit. We can say nice words. That's like hanging good fruit on a bad tree.

But Jesus said that's all deception. It's all hypocrisy. Deal with the heart and then the branches and fruit will be okay.

Because the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. The mouth is like an overflow valve. So whatever is in the heart spills out through the mouth, particularly when there's pressure.

It could be the pressure caused by somebody provoking you. It could be the pressure caused by somebody hurting you. It could be pressure due to any circumstance.

But what fills the heart overflows. Now, occasionally something very good happens and then our hearts temporarily filled with some thankfulness to God and that overflows through our mouth. Thank you, Lord, for doing that.

Praise the Lord. But it's only temporary for a short time. Then that's squeezed out and there's the rest of the time.

Our heart is filled with all types of other thoughts about other people. Whenever you speak about other people, not when you're guarded. When you're guarded, be careful.

I'm talking about when you're not guarded. Usually when you're talking to your wife or husband at home, you're not usually guarded there. Or when you're talking with your very close friends of your own age, you're not usually guarded there.

There you know what's really in your heart. Don't examine yourself by the way you speak to the elders or older brothers because that could be put on. But if you really want to know the condition of your heart, see how you speak to those who you're closest to on earth.

There we are not guarded. There we're not clipping off the bad fruit. We're just saying everything that's in our heart.

There, if you want to discover it, you'll discover what's in your heart. And that's why I believe the way you speak to your husband or wife at home is a very accurate test of the condition of your heart. And it's not how you speak to each other on Sunday morning at the meeting.

So the mouth is the overflow valve of the heart. And the good man, because he's got good treasure in his heart, it only brings forth good. You know like Amy Carmichael said, you carry a glass of sweet water, no matter how heavily somebody shakes you, it's only sweet water that can spill out.

You can't say that man made my heart bitter. That is impossible. He only shakes you by his provocation, irritation.

What spills out is what's in the heart. That is always there. Maybe somebody shook you and you discovered it.

You've got to thank him for shaking you up, because otherwise you may not have discovered what was in your heart. I tell you, we really have to thank God for enemies, for those who provoke us, those who irritate us, those who make us angry, because they shake us and we discover what's inside our jar. And we've got to be so thankful.

Lord, I never knew it was like this in my heart. I'm fooling myself because I speak so nicely to all the believers. The good man out of his good treasure brings forth what is good, and the evil man brings out his evil treasure, what is evil.

And listen to this. These are some very serious words. I tell you that every careless word that people speak, words that are spoken to hurt, to injure, careless words, they'll give an account in the day of judgment.

My conviction is that perhaps 99% of believers don't believe that verse. You know, it's like if I was given, if I was working in an office here and they gave me 500,000 rupees in cash in a box saying, take this in the train to Delhi and give it in the office there. I wouldn't sleep during that two-day journey because I wouldn't want to lose one rupee from that box.

While I'm asleep, somebody could steal it. I'd be so careful because when I go there, I know they're going to count every rupee. Why do I take that seriously? Because I know I'm accountable for every single rupee in that box.

Now, why don't we feel like that about the words we speak? Because we don't believe that when we reach the other end, we have to give an account for every word we speak. How many of you can honestly say, you've got to answer this to yourself, that you really believe that every single word you spoke, at least from the time you were born again and understood this verse, every single word, every single thing you said in secret about other people, it's going to come up on the screen and through the loudspeakers on the Day of Judgment, and the Lord's going to ask you, why did you say that? Everybody's going to hear it. Jesus said that, what you whisper in the ears will be proclaimed from the housetops in that day.

He said that. So, if you really believed it, I know I've had a hard time believing it for many years, but I've learned to be very, very careful. Jesus said, the Bible says in Isaiah 66, I will look at the man who trembles at my word, who sees a word and says, God, I'm going to tremble at that.

Every single word I speak, I'm going to give an account in the Day of Judgment. And then, here is a tougher word than that, verse 37. You're going to be justified, not just by your faith.

You know, James says, faith without works is dead. So, he said, that's not real faith. If you really have faith, he says, it will be seen in your works.

And Jesus said that first. He said, you're going to be justified by your words. Jesus hardly ever spoke about being justified by faith.

That's Paul's great theme. It's true. But many people have misunderstood faith.

It's a faith which is just in their head, doesn't seem to change their life in any way. And, therefore, it's most probably a dead faith. So, just like James says in chapter 2, check up your faith by your works.

Jesus would say, check up your faith by the words you speak all the time. And those words will tell you whether you've got real faith or not and whether you'll be justified or not in the final day. And if those words tell you that your Christianity is a lot of rubbish, it's just an act put on on Sunday morning, and you're talking about being filled with a spirit and maybe some of you even speak in tongues.

It's just all hot air. Maybe once upon a time you did have a genuine experience and perhaps what you received at that time was a genuine gift. But Satan got some gifts before he became the devil.

In fact, all the gifts Satan has today, God gave it to him before he became the devil. And God didn't take it away. You know, just like you give a birthday gift to somebody, one day it turns around and becomes your enemy.

You don't go and ask for your gift back. You just let him have it. So, God also gave gifts to the angel, the archangel, and when he became the devil, God didn't ask for the gifts back.

And that's how Satan has all this power. And a person can have a genuine gift of the spirit, exercise it, and be lost eternally. It's an amazing thing.

I mean, Jesus said things like that. You will say to me, many will say to me, Lord, we cast out demons in your name. We prophesied in your name.

We did miracles in your name. And I'll say, I never knew you. Get away from me.

That's really going to be true. So, by your words, you'll be justified. By your words, you'll be condemned.

So, for a moment, let's forget about our faith and our doctrinal understanding that Christ died for us. Let's forget all that. And let's just think of the words we have spoken in past years.

Or let's say one year, if you can't remember everything. If you take the sum total of those words that you spoke in the year 2006, would you be justified in the judgment seat of Christ? It's a very important question. Jesus said it.

Faith without works is dead. I'm only trying to save people from having a counterfeit faith. A faith that doesn't change their life, that doesn't change their speech.

Now, you know, there were no words like this in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, they didn't speak much about the tongue at all. But something happened on the day of Pentecost.

Why the Old Testament didn't speak about the tongue? Because the Holy Spirit was only on the outside of people in the Old Testament. In fact, like people wearing a shirt or a sari covers you, but it's only on the outside. And you can take it off.

That's exactly how it was. Samson would put it on and take it off, just like you go home and take off your shirt or sari and put something else. Samson would put it on, and then he'd go to the prostitutes' house and take it off and wear something else.

And Gideon, it says the Spirit of God clothed Gideon. That's how it says in Judges 6.34, the margin. He clothed Gideon.

And then you'll read in the next couple of chapters, he took it off and started worshiping idols. The entire Old Testament was like this. Saul, one day, the Spirit of God upon him, and he was chained into another man, we read in 1 Samuel 10.

And then a little later, you read in Chapter 18, that an evil spirit came on him. The Spirit had left him. The Holy Spirit had left him.

So that's how it was in the Old Testament. But Jesus said, now something different is going to happen. From the innermost being, this river will start flowing, John 7.38. So the difference is, in the New Testament, what happened on the day of Pentecost, the spirit that for so many years was only on the outside, and that could never dwell inside a man because man's heart was filthy.

And the Spirit of God will never dwell inside a filthy heart. And all the blood of bulls and goats that they sacrificed. It was only a picture.

That couldn't cleanse anybody's heart. It was a picture. They were saying one day we believe the Messiah will come and die.

But then Jesus came. He was the first person who walked on the earth in whom the spirit dwelt because his heart was pure. And he told his disciples, the same spirit is going to dwell in you.

Then you'll have a power which you don't have right now. I mean they had power. Elijah had power to raise the dead.

So the external power, they split the Red Sea, pulled down the walls of Jericho, they raised the dead. Elijah raised a dead person even after he died. Have you read that? Threw somebody into Elijah's grave and the guy rose up from the dead.

There was more anointing in Elijah's dead bones than in a lot of living people today. That's how it was. But it was only on the outside for external things.

But Jesus said it's not going to be like that now. The Spirit of God is going to come inside you and he's really going to give you a power within which you just don't have up till now. Any amount of Bible study, any amount of listening to the greatest preacher on earth, that was Jesus Christ, for three and a half years, won't change you.

Imagine listening to the greatest preacher on earth for three and a half years. Walking with him, living with him. His example, his words.

You know every time Jesus spoke it says that people's hearts were warmed. Your hearts may be warmed when you hear something. It's only temporary.

After some time the stove cools off and no heat left. That's how those disciples were. In the presence of Jesus they'd have some faith in different things but once he was away they're back to normal.

But Jesus said it's going to be different after the day of Pentecost. You're going to get a power within you that's really going to change your life. And those who are hungry for that waited for that power.

1 Corinthians 15 says that Jesus appeared to 500 people after his resurrection. 500 people saw the risen Lord. But only 120 of them had a hunger to wait for this inner power.

That teaches us something that not everybody who believes has a great hunger for this power. They think it's too much botheration to wait on God for a power because they're quite happy the way they live. Yeah, well, I lost my temper 20 years ago.

I'll still lose it. I presume I'll continue losing it until the day I die. I'll keep confessing my hope.

They're not bothered. Yes, I do speak bad words now and then but the blood of Jesus cleanses me. Do you think such people will get power in 100 years? No.

Those folks got it in 10 days. But some folks won't get it in 100 years because there's no thirst. They're not desperate.

They're happy to live their Christian life, whatever God's given them. God's given them this wonderful gospel. It's like getting a Mercedes Benz car but you don't put any petrol in it.

You keep pushing it all your life. A lot of Christians, I really believe, they go to Mercedes Benz car, the most fantastic gospel in the whole world and you see them pushing it and sweating and struggling and hardly moving at all. People under the law who didn't have the car, they walk faster.

These Christians are walking slower because they're pushing the car. They're not meant to be like that. They're supposed to have a power in that car that drives it to fantastic speed.

They can go 50 times faster than those people who walk, than the people under the law. But it's not like that because they don't have this terrific hunger for power. So, in Acts chapter 2 you read that when this power came upon these people, in Acts chapter 2, it says there was this violent, Acts 2 verse 2, there was this violent rushing wind, you know, symbolizing the Holy Spirit, coming upon just like a gale or a tornado that swept into that room where these 120 people were praying and it filled the whole house and then immediately after that, the very first thing you read is before they spoke in tongues, tongues of fire, you know, the shape of a tongue, a fire in the shape of a human tongue rested on all the 120 people's heads.

What was that message? You know, I wish the Pentecostals and Charismatics had spoken more about Acts 2-3 than about Acts 2-4. Acts 2-3 is a tongue on fire of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2-4, after that, is speaking in tongues.

So what I see from that is that what the Lord was saying is that once a spirit comes inside you and gives you this power that I told you you'll get, one of the first things he's going to do is to control your tongue. Your whole tongue will be under the control of the fire of the Holy Spirit. That's what John the Baptist said.

When Jesus comes, he'll baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire. He's going to purify every part of our body. He's going to purify the way we look.

We'll overcome lust. It's going to purify the way we do things with our hands. It's going to purify especially our tongues.

That's the meaning. I mean, the Lord could have put a hand of fire or an eye of fire or a leg of fire, all these instruments God uses in the body, but it was a tongue. Please remember this.

It was a tongue set on fire. And then, after that, they were filled with the Holy Spirit all simultaneously, and they began to speak in other languages as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance. So that was a gift.

In the day of Pentecost, it was used to preach the gospel to so many people who were of different languages over there because they all heard in their own tongue. Peter didn't speak all those languages, but they all heard in their own tongue, it says. But all the disciples spoke in unknown languages.

It's one of the gifts the Holy Spirit gives and 1 Corinthians 14 says it's primarily today for communication with God, to relieve the pressure from our hearts, to help us to overcome discouragement, to help us to

overcome the pressures we face from the world around. We can release our heart in speaking in unknown languages to God. It's not primarily for public use.

1 Corinthians 14 makes that clear. But before that I said this tongue is of fire. In other words, the Holy Spirit first wants to control our mother tongue and then give us other tongues.

So if you only got the Holy Spirit giving you other tongues, but he can't control your mother tongue, you missed the main thing. You missed the tongues of fire and you just got the unknown tongues. That's sad.

It's happened to lots and lots of people. It's the tongue of fire that came first, and that's what I want. And 1 Corinthians 12 says God doesn't give tongues, unknown languages to everyone.

But the tongue of fire, that's for everyone. You think God wants even one child of his not to have his tongue controlled by the Holy Spirit? Not even one. So I want to encourage you.

You may never, God may never, for I don't know the reasons, but God may not give the gift of speaking in tongues or interpreting tongues to everybody. In fact, 1 Corinthians 12 says do all speak in tongues? The answer is no. Are all apostles? The answer is no.

Same type of answer. So just like you all can't be apostles, all will not speak in tongues, but all can have a tongue controlled by the Holy Spirit, the tongue set on fire by the Spirit of God. And you must not rest until that is real in your life because all leakage is through the tongue.

You can get the greatest man of God to lay hands on you and pray for you and you're filled with the Holy Spirit and in one day it's all gone because the vessel is leaking. And before the day is out, it's gone. We wouldn't go and collect milk in a vessel that's got a hole in it, not even one hole.

We'd plug every hole before we even collect water, which is so cheap. Why are we careless when it comes to the river, the living water flowing through us? I want you to turn with me please to Ephesians 5. This is the only place in all the episodes where we have a direct command to be filled with the Holy Spirit. There's no other command like that anywhere from Romans to Jude.

I mean there are examples of it in Acts of the Apostles, but as a command, you must be filled with the Holy Spirit. It's only one place in the episodes, Ephesians 5 verse 18. And I don't know Greek, but I read from those who have studied it that the actual word is continuous tense.

You know, like you say walked, that happened. Walking means you're still doing it. So here, the meaning is continuous.

Be being filled with the Holy Spirit all the time. That's the meaning of that verse. That's how you got to read it.

Be being filled all the time. I can't fill myself. It doesn't say fill yourself with the Spirit.

No, because how can I do it? I have to ask the Lord to fill me with the Holy Spirit. And he will do that continuously if I keep the poles plugged. If I confess sin immediately, as soon as I'm aware of the sin, if I confess it, if I always humble myself because water always flows to the lowest place.

Remember that. Water always flows to the lowest place first. So the more you humble yourself, chances are that you'll be filled with the Spirit sooner than other people who think too much of themselves and

especially the tongue.

Now the only way to plug the hole is by immediately, as soon as you're aware that you've told a lie perhaps, that you confess it to God and to the person to whom you told the lie. And I'll tell you this. It's easier to confess to God than to confess to the person to whom you told the lie because the first requires no humility.

The second requires humility which many people don't have. You ask yourself, when you've told somebody a lie, isn't it easy to go to God and say, Lord, I'm sorry I told a lie there? That doesn't require any humility at all. But try going to that person two minutes later and saying, Brother, I'm sorry I told you a lie two minutes ago.

There's where we see. Many of us who think we are very humble can discover in that moment your humility is pretty close to zero. You know, these are moments of revelation.

I've gone the same way myself. When I've hesitated to go and apologize, the Lord says, Dad, you discover that your humility is pretty close to zero. I'm not preaching to you what the Lord has not shown me myself.

But when I've seen it, I've said, Lord, thank you for showing me. I'm not going to fool myself. Imagine if you fool yourself all your earthly life thinking you're a very humble brother, very humble sister, and you stand before the Lord on the final day and the Lord exposes you as the proudest of all people.

How will you feel? And you discover that He couldn't give you grace because you kept up this impression of humility. And when the Lord gave you a revelation, here is a situation where you're not willing to go and apologize to that person. You've tossed it around your mind and after, I'll tell you what happens.

After two, three days, you forget it. And you say, oh, it's okay. It's not okay.

The wound is now festering inside. The outside is all sealed up. But now it's festering inside and one day it'll kill you.

So the best thing is face up to what God is saying. And if you spoke a rude word to somebody, confess it to God, go to that person and say, I'm sorry I spoke rudely to you. As soon as you're aware of it, doesn't matter who it is, I tell you, believe me, if you follow my prescription, you will plug all the holes in your life pretty quickly.

I know you agree with me. I don't know whether you'll do it. You know that verse where Jesus said, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

And we think in terms of money, oh, well, I don't have money, so I'm okay. No, hang on. Riches are not just money.

You can be rich intellectually and look down on others who are not so smart and clever as you. It's difficult for you to go through that needle's eye. You can be rich with a sense of your own importance.

Very difficult for you to go through the needle's eye. You may be very poor financially, but very rich with a sense of how important a person you are. You won't stoop to ask forgiveness.

Very difficult to go through the needle's eye. When Jesus said, the way to life is narrow. How narrow is it? Six inches? One inch? One centimeter? One millimeter? I think it's pretty close to one millimeter.

A little less than that, actually. It's because Jesus defined it. The narrow way is the width of the hole of the needle's eye.

How wide is that? It's less than a millimeter, by the way. It's the thickness of a thin thread. That's the size of the gate and that's the size of the way.

Anybody can find it. Anybody can walk that way. Anybody can understand.

And if they want to, humble themselves. That's all that's required. This big man has to become small and he'll go through.

A camel finds it difficult. Even a mouse will find it difficult. But there are little creatures in the world called amoebas.

Amoebas is almost the smallest living being. It's so small, you've got to see it through a microscope. And you tell this amoeba, do you find it difficult to go through the needle's eye? Oh, he says, not at all.

It's so broad, I can just walk through it. I can run through it, he says. Because it's so small.

It finds the needle's eye so big it just runs through it. It's all a question of smallness. Small people go through the needle's eye very quickly.

Those that are rich with a sense of their own importance find it very difficult. So in the use of the tongue, if you want to plug the hole, if you're serious about plugging the hole, Jesus said, the way to life is narrow and few there be that find it. Now there's a difference between understanding it and finding it.

Many understand it. I think what I'm saying today is simple enough for all of you who understand a little bit of English to understand what I'm saying. But it doesn't mean you've found it.

That will be tested in this week. Whether you've found this way or not. You understood it? Oh yeah, sure.

You probably can understand it so well that you can even explain it to somebody else. But to find it, Jesus didn't say, few there be that understand it. Many there be that understand it, but few there be that find it.

So Ephesians 5.18 says, Be filled with the Holy Spirit. In contrast, don't get drunk with wine. See, one negative, one positive.

Negatively, don't get drunk with alcohol, but be filled with the Spirit. It's like a coin with two sides. Now what would you think of a brother who came here to Sunday morning, drunk and tottering into his seat? I'm sure you'd all be talking about him after you go home.

Did you see that brother? What would you think of a brother who came here without being filled with the Holy Spirit? Nobody would talk about him. Well, that's okay. Do you see how we think one is such a terrible sin to be drunk with wine? And the other, oh, it's a sort of a suggestion.

Is it a suggestion? Don't get drunk? It's in the same verse. Don't get drunk with wine, but be filled with the Holy Spirit. Now I apply this to the parable that Jesus spoke about a man who had a demon.

Let's say the demon is the demon of drunkenness. He's a slave to drunkenness. His demon is controlling drunk, drunk, drunk, drunk, drunk.

And one day, Jesus casts out that demon. Now what did Jesus say? He leaves his heart empty. The demon of drink is gone.

What should he do with his heart? According to this verse, be filled with the Holy Spirit. He doesn't do that. No, that's not important.

I got rid of the demon. You know what will happen? What did Jesus say? Eight of them will come. That one plus seven more.

A guy will get more drunk. Now it may not be drunkenness. It may be something else.

Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Holy Spirit. And when you're filled with the Holy Spirit, you know what's going to happen? The three things mentioned here, all three have got to do with the tongue. That's very interesting.

When you're filled with the Spirit, you'll start speaking. And you won't be speaking like you used to speak in the old days. You'll start speaking in things that glorify God.

That's the main point. Speaking to one another, songs and hymns, spiritual songs, singing, and making melody with your heart. And I told you what's in your heart will overflow through your mouth.

There'll be a song in your heart. There'll be joy. There'll be love.

And that's what's going to come out of your mouth. Speaking, singing, and the third thing, giving thanks. That's also with the tongue.

Speaking, singing, giving thanks for everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. So there again we see the connection between being filled with the Holy Spirit and the tongue. It's consistent there throughout Scripture.

The day of Pentecost, the only place in the Epistles where it says be filled with the Holy Spirit, again the tongue. I want to show you one more thing. A couple more verses.

You turn back to chapter 4 of Ephesians. The opposite of being filled with the Holy Spirit in relation to the Holy Spirit himself is verse 30, Ephesians 4.30. Don't grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Here it is positively be filled with the Holy Spirit but before that in Ephesians 4.30 it says don't grieve, don't make the Holy Spirit sad.

Don't break his heart. And how do you grieve the Holy Spirit? There again it's through the tongue. See verse 29.

Don't watch the way you talk. Don't let anything dirty come out of your mouth. Say only that which will help others.

According to the need of the moment, each word should be like a gift that you give to others. And then speaking about the use of the tongue, he says don't grieve the Holy Spirit. Do you see how being filled with the Holy Spirit relates to the tongue? Grieving the Holy Spirit also relates to the tongue.

And therefore he says if you want to control this tongue, verse 31, make sure that there's no bitterness in your heart. Make sure there's no anger in your heart. Make sure there's no slander in your heart.

If there's no slander in your heart, how can slander come from your tongue? Watch the heart. Proverbs 4:23 I think says watch your heart with all diligence because from it are all the issues of life. So to me it's been very interesting to see these things because I have a tremendous respect for Scripture as the inspired word of God.

And when I see this consistently the connection of the Holy Spirit with the tongue I realize that a lot of people who think they are filled with the Holy Spirit are not filled with the Spirit at all. See 1 Thessalonians in chapter 5. We're really taking a Bible study through the New Testament on the use of the tongue and the Holy Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 5 we read here.

Again this word. Verse 19. Don't quench the Holy Spirit.

See earlier we saw don't grieve the Holy Spirit. That means the Holy Spirit is like such a close friend of yours and don't make Him sad by the things you speak. Now the Holy Spirit is pictured like a fire.

Don't quench it. That means don't pour water on that fire and quench the whole thing. That tongue of fire, don't quench it.

And again He is speaking about speech. In verse 16 16. Rejoice always.

Pray without ceasing. That's our speech. In everything give thanks.

That's our speech. Don't quench the Holy Spirit. Don't despise prophetic utterances.

That's our speech. You see how the Holy Spirit and our speech are so closely connected almost everywhere. He talks about grieving the Spirit or quenching the Spirit or being filled with the Spirit.

And on the day of Pentecost. I hope these verses will convince you that this is the primary source of leakage. And any amount of praying God fill me with the Holy Spirit fill me with the Holy Spirit doesn't solve the problem.

I also believe that not all physical sicknesses but certainly some physical sicknesses come because we don't allow the Holy Spirit to take care of His temple. We don't allow the Holy Spirit to fill our body as His temple. Can you imagine what would happen if you say Lord this body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

You know after we renovated this hall we keep emphasizing make sure nobody no children going spoil the walls the curtains don't touch the curtains with dirty hands. And this expensive equipment here don't go and touch it. But do you know that this is not the temple of God? Not at all.

It's only a building. The real temple is your body. And I wish we'd be as careful with that.

Don't touch it with soiled hands. This is the temple of God. Don't dirty the walls.

Don't spoil the tongue. Imagine if we were careful like that. Like we'd care you'd be careful if you had painted your house and put new curtains there and your children don't soil it.

But this is the temple of God. You know we care more for buildings than for this body. And that's why even eating and drinking we eat and drink a lot of stuff that destroys this body.

We'd never do that. We're so careful about the type of paint we use for walls there's one type of paint for the exterior and another type of paint for the interior and oh how careful we are. We need to be careful

with our bodies too especially our tongue.

So Romans chapter 3 when he describes the sin of humanity Romans 3 you know it's a great chapter describing how it concludes with all have sinned in Romans 3 23. All have sinned. But see how he describes this the sin of man in verse 10 onwards.

As it is written there is no one righteous not even one no one who understands no one who seeks after God all have turned aside there's no one who does good there's not even one and shall I tell you why? Because of their speech their throat is like a grave their tongues they use to deceive it's all tongue. The poison of asps is under their lips their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Four sentences all got to do with the tongue.

Their throat their tongues their lips and their mouth. What is this show? Verse 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes. So when the Holy Spirit wants to describe the sin of humanity he says look at the way they talk that shows what rotten sinners they are.

What would the Holy Spirit say about the way you speak in private? Snakes look very beautiful I tell you extremely beautiful such multicolored snakes there's poison underneath. So also a lot of believers poison of asps is under their lips. Every word they speak is tinged with poison.

They open their mouths and pollute the air. Do you believe that? That you pollute the air by the words you speak. You know some of these things if we take seriously I really believe it will change our whole life.

In James chapter 1 James is a very practical man. This is one of the first letters of the New Testament written by the way. One of the very first.

In order it comes there but in terms of time it's one of the first letters written. And James was watching Christianity develop for about 20 years before he wrote. There were no books of the New Testament written for about 20 years after the day of Pentecost.

And then as James watched the development of Christianity over 20 years and he was writing one of the first books of the New Testament he speaks about the tongue. He said that's what I've seen among all these so called believers who say they are filled with the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues. And so he says in James 1.26 If anybody thinks he is very spiritual he can't brighten his tongue.

He is deceiving himself. I want to say that to all of you in the name of Jesus. If you think you are very spiritual and you can't control your tongue in your office in your home anywhere you can't bridle it I'm not saying there is no hope for you but right now you are deceiving yourself.

You are deceiving yourself that you are a spiritual person. You are just fooling everybody in the church but you are not fooling God and you are certainly not fooling the devil. He sees through the whole thing.

And why is James saying that? He says you've got to do something about it. He deceives himself and his religion is worth zero. That's the Bible.

You present your Christianity to God. Lord, I went to a thousand meetings. I know the Bible.

I preached. I've done this. I've done this.

I've done that. I've done the other thing and I've helped the poor and I've given money for God's work and I even gave money for the renovation of the building. Great.

But I couldn't control my tongue. How much do I get, Lord? Zero out of hundred. Zero? You mean no marks for all the other? No.

Everything got cancelled out because of the way you used your tongue. I am convinced that most believers don't believe that. If they did, they would really take it seriously.

The condition of our tongue is our spiritual condition. In the olden days before doctors had stethoscopes and other gadgets, 1700s and all, if the physician came to your house and said you were sick, he'd say, show me your tongue. Let me have a look at it.

Even today doctors say that. Oh, you're sick. That's what James is saying.

Let me see your tongue. Not how you use it in the meeting, how you use it at home, how you use it in the office, how you use it in the bus when somebody stamps on your leg or something. Bad.

Sick. How do you use it when only unbelievers are around you? My brothers and sisters, let's take this seriously. In James chapter 3, remember this, one of the first letters written in the New Testament and James had this tremendous burden seeing the condition of Christians around him for 20 years.

He writes a whole chapter on the tongue and he says it's not just the tongue of fire set on fire by the Holy Spirit. Here he says in verse 6, there's another type of fire that can set your heart on, that can set your tongue alight. James 3, 6, it's a tongue which is set on fire by the fire of hell.

See the last part of that verse. There are two fires that can set our tongue alight. One is the fire of the Holy Spirit and here it says the fire of hell and you have the choice whom you're going to give your tongue to.

You can give it to God, sure, or you can give it to the devil. That's your choice. God won't force you.

And don't think that you can give it part of the time to the devil and part of the time to God. No. You can't rent your house six days of the week to the devil and one day say, Lord, please come and live here today.

No. If it's God's, it's his completely. If it's the devil's, you may put a whitewash of religion on it on Sunday morning but it's only a whitewash.

Underneath the house belongs to the devil. It's serious but tongue is a world of sin. We think of the world outside, the world of sin.

No, it says it's inside your mouth. See that verse 6. The very world of sin is right inside your mouth. And then he says, you can go to the zoo and find the animals, the leopards and the lion and everybody tame but nobody's been able to tame the tongue.

Verse 8. It's a restless evil full of deadly poison. He's writing the believers. He's writing in verse 1 my brothers.

He's not talking about those ungodly people out there. My dear brothers, do you know what's inside your mouth my dear brothers? A world of iniquity. Something full of deadly poison, a restless evil.

With it we bless the Lord and praise the Lord on Sunday mornings and then go home and curse men who've been made in the likeness of God. Oh my brothers. He's talking about the believers.

My dear brothers. It should not be like this. Can a fountain give fresh water and then bitter water and fresh water and bitter water? Something is wrong.

The problem is with the tree. A fig tree cannot produce some other fruit. It produces figs.

A wine will produce grapes and so on. So he says, if you're a wise person show that by the control of your tongue. I want you to turn now to Psalm 12.

The Old Testament has also got a psalm, a chapter on the tongue just like James 3 is a chapter on the tongue of the New Testament. It's good to know these chapters. James 3. Take time to read it.

And Psalm 12. What does he say in Psalm 12? Lord, godly people are not there nowadays. Faithful people are disappearing.

He's talking about godly men and women. Faithful men and women. Why are they not to be found? And he talks about the tongue.

They tell lies. They flatter. They speak with a double heart.

Their tongue, verse 3, speaks great things. They say, verse 4, with the tongue we will prevail. Our lips are our own.

And they devastate people with their tongue. That's why there are no godly people. We think godly people is somebody who looks very holy, comes to the meeting regularly.

No. Even in the Old Testament the psalmist said, I've seen godly, rarely seen a godly man because I hardly find a person who can control his tongue. This is Old Testament.

And he says, the words, basically, it's because of this last part of verse 4. People say, my lips are my own. Who in the world is going to control my tongue? Not Jesus, nobody. Not the Holy Spirit, it's me.

My tongue is my own. My lips are my own. I open it when I feel like it.

I shut it when I feel like it. Who's going to be lord over my tongue? Nobody. Aha.

Okay. Well, then you'll be like that. But in contrast, he says, look at this.

The words of the Lord, verse 6, are pure words. A silver tried in a furnace, refined seven times. You, Lord, can keep them.

You can preserve them from this generation. The wicked may strut about on every side, but the Lord can keep us. And, I have taken that word seriously, verse 6. The words of the Lord are pure words, means, you know, many thoughts come into our mind.

Some of those thoughts are temptation. Don't think that every thought that comes into your mind is sin. A lot of it is temptation.

If you accept it, it's sin. That means even if you relish it in your mind, it's sin. But temptation comes into the mind, and you'll be tempted until the end of your life.

Temptation came to Jesus' mind. When the devil said to Jesus, turn the stones into bread, it's a thought in his mind. He rejected it.

So temptation is not sin. But there are all types of thoughts come into our mind to say this and say this. And, you've got to be careful.

What is filtered and comes through the mouth, and what should be thrown out. You know, like this Aquaguard water filter. When they demonstrate it, they'll put some dirty water in here, and clean water comes out here.

Isn't that wonderful? God can do something like that through the Holy Spirit. All these dirty thoughts coming into our mind, and it's all filtered, and what comes out of my mouth is pure. Because, when I think of saying a word, I say, hey, that's not the right word to say.

I throw it back into the furnace, purify it once. Then I think of another word, no, not even that. Throw it back into the furnace.

Maybe seven times. That's what it says in verse six. Then it comes out as pure.

Sometimes you write a letter, and say, I can't write it like that. I've written some letters 20 times before I ever sent it out. Throw it back, throw it back, throw it back.

Do you do that? Do you think about what you say? Or do you speak without thinking? In Proverbs it says that a wise person thinks about what he says. You can think about that another day. Let me just say this in closing.

If you turn to the book of Proverbs, it says in chapter 15, and verse four, chapter 15 and verse four, a soothing tongue is a tree of life. You know that that tree of life in the Garden of Eden? The other tree was a tree of knowledge. You can dish out all the knowledge of the Bible you have, good and evil, good and evil.

You can teach people about it, and your tongue can be a tongue of death, like that tree of knowledge brought death to Adam. The other thing it says is your tongue can be a tree of life. Your tongue can bring life to other people.

A soothing tongue, a healing tongue, can be a tree of life. I don't want a world of iniquity inside my mouth. I want a tree of life.

I hope you want it too, and I hope you will not understand, just understand what I said, but you'll find this way. Say, Lord, whatever the cost, I want the Holy Spirit to control my tongue. Amen.

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