

Truths That Will Deliver Us From Deception

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of having a heart that is aligned with God's will, focusing on the significance of controlling the tongue and producing good fruit as evidence of a transformed life. It highlights the dangers of deception, false prophets, and the need for genuine faith that produces righteous works. The speaker encourages seeking the Holy Spirit for a tongue under His control, reflecting love, encouragement, rebuke, correction, and blessings.

Scripture: Matthew 7:17, Matthew 12:33, James 2:24, Acts 2:3, 1 Corinthians 14:2, James 3:2

Topics: "Heart Alignment with God's Will", "The Power of the Tongue"

Description

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Transcript

You know, preparing a message is like cooking a meal and all of us have got different abilities. I can make a cup of coffee or fry an egg or something and that's about it, whereas other people are good chefs. I mean, in 10-15 minutes they have produced a fantastic meal and you wonder how is that? It's not that they're, maybe there's some inborn gift there, but beyond that it's experience and practice and a commitment to make good food for others.

Some people do it for money, but a good chef, for example, a wife who's a good cook at home, how quickly they can round up a meal, maybe suddenly a number of guests came and they're so good. So, it's not a particular credit and when it comes to preaching God's word, it's a gift. For years and years I've taught in India, don't try to imitate me.

God has given me a particular gift for a particular calling, it's like one part of the body and you can't be the tongue, for example, if God has made you a hand or a leg. So, never try to imitate a preacher. When I was young, I admired certain well-known speakers and I wished I could speak like them, but I couldn't.

And the Lord said, don't try to imitate anybody. So, don't feel condemned that you need to take one week or one month to prepare a message, it's perfectly okay, it depends on your calling. And in my case, not

only God's called me, He gifted me when I was 24 years old.

That's obviously not, it was obviously supernatural. And then as I was filled with the Spirit, later on when I was 35, it became more evident. And then, of course, there are all these years of experience, so I say that so that nobody feels condemned, that they can't speak for long or they take long to prepare a message.

In my early days, I used to write notes and make sure that I don't waste people's time, you know, I used to write the reference so that I don't forget the reference. But having done it so long, it's so much easier. But one of the things you've heard me speak about many times is, what is the, if you have would be the sign of His return? And if you don't remember, turn to Matthew 24.

The disciples asked Him in Matthew 24, in verse 3, what will be the sign, He asked for one sign of your coming and the end of the age? There are two things they asked, when will these things happen? And what will be the one sign of your coming? Now, if you were to ask the average believer, most believers read the Bible very carelessly, they'll say, oh, there's going to be earthquakes and wars and all that. Yeah, he said all that later on in verse 7 and so on about earthquakes, famines and wars, right. But that's not the first thing he said.

When they asked for one sign, I believe in reading the scripture carefully, because I believe it's inspired by the Holy Spirit, especially the words of Jesus. He never replied carelessly or casually like we do sometimes. He was very exact in his replies, always inspired by the Holy Spirit, always in touch with the Father.

And He gives the answer. What is the sign of your coming in the very next verse? See to it, Matthew 24, that no one deceives you. So what is going to be the one sign of the last days? Widespread deception.

What is deception? It's somebody giving you a counterfeit hundred dollar note, which looks exactly like the real one. It is not exactly the real one. And if you're a bank manager, you'll be able to identify it by looking for those specific indications of a genuine currency note.

There are some. I don't know what they are, but I believe there are in every country. But I could be deceived with a hundred dollar note, because I'm not an expert banker to know what is a real and counterfeit one.

But when it comes to God's word and the truth of Christianity and the truth of the gospel, it is very important that every one of us understand the marks of the gospel, of the truth and what deception consists of. Because that's the one sign. You see, so many people are taken up with, oh, the vaccination is the mark of the beast.

What a wonderful thing the devil has got believers occupied with that instead of deception. I believe that's one of the deceptions. I'm not here to tell people to get vaccinated or not vaccinated.

That's not my business. I'm not a doctor. But I say, whenever you get sidetracked from the main thing, whatever it is, you can be sure that's the devil.

He does not want you to concentrate on the main thing. He wants you to concentrate on whether the vaccination is the mark of the beast or not. I gave one brief message on it once in a global Zoom meeting, and that's about it.

I don't spend my time talking about that. No. And that also I did in answer to a question.

But I want to concentrate on what Jesus concentrated on. If Jesus were living today, he wouldn't be giving messages on whether the vaccination is the mark of the beast or not. No.

He'd be concentrating on beware of deception. I want to ask you, how many of you, my brothers and sisters, are careful not to be deceived by the multitudes of things that are going on, and particularly with the Internet? Anybody can go to Google and listen to whomever he likes, and there are a variety of preachers on YouTube. And if you don't have discernment, the best way to waste your time is go to YouTube and listen to every Tom, Dick and Harry preaching over there.

I tell you, if you're a really wholehearted Christian, you'll be very discerning and careful about the people you listen to on YouTube, those who lead you to a godly life. What did Jesus come on earth to give us? Is it better health? Is it freedom from coronavirus? No. Many of God's people die in accidents and sickness and all that.

God could have protected them, but he doesn't. God predestined us long before we were born with a purpose. And every one of us, if you're a born-again Christian, there's a plan God has for you.

I'm not talking about the particular gift or the particular ministry he has. There's one plan that he has for everyone. And that is written very clearly in Romans 8, verse 29.

You must never forget this. Because the word predestined is used there. Predestined means, before the foundation of the world, he determined a destination for you.

You know, like when you get into a plane, you know where the plane is headed. It's written on your ticket where you're reaching. And you get into the plane that's going in that direction.

When you go to an airport for a travel, you don't look for the biggest plane or the most attractive plane or the airline that you like. You look at your ticket and say, where is the flight going to this particular place? And even if it's a small two-engine plane, you get into that. And that's what a sensible person does.

He doesn't say, oh, there's a jumbo jet there. Let me get into that. I'd like to see what that's like.

You'll go to the wrong place. That's exactly what's happening to a lot of Christians today. They look for the mega church, the jumbo jet.

But brother, is that taking you to the right place? What do you do when you go to the airport? You look at your ticket and say, what's my destination? So it's very important that you, brothers and sisters, need to know your destination. Here it is, Romans 8, 29. The destination he planned for us beforehand is that we might be conformed to the image of his son, Jesus Christ, so that Jesus would be the first, the eldest brother among many brothers.

So what is the destination of your life? It is not freedom from coronavirus. It is not whether you take a vaccination or don't take it. Don't be sidetracked by arguments and waste your time discussing all this rubbish.

It's not discussing whether you should have a Republican president or a Democratic president. I'm not interested in those discussions. It's not discussing any of these things.

It's not even discussing about whether the church will be raptured before the tribulation or after the tribulation. Well, I have my own conviction the church will go through its tribulation, but Jesus said it very clearly in Matthew 24. But that's not my main goal in life.

My main goal is to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Any of you have become completely like Christ yet? No, I raise my hand and say I have not yet become like Christ. That is why I judge myself every day.

God is my witness that I judge my own life every single day for many years now. Of what? I'm not committing adultery or theft or telling lies or any such thing. I realize that there are, even though in my conscious life, I'm seeking to be like Christ as far as possible.

There are unknown areas in my life, areas I cannot see, which I will ask God for light on. Lord, I don't want to be Christ-like only in the areas where I know. I want to be Christ-like in my total personality, and my total personality includes that which I know and that which I don't know, and that which I don't know is a much bigger area than which I know.

When we start out, what we know is only about 10%. When we say we are free from sin as a newly converted person, it's only 10%. You've grown up smoking and drinking and gambling and watching movies and things like that.

Finished. But that's only 10%, not even 10%, 1%. There's a whole area, and if you walk through the Lord, you have discovered areas in the years since you were born again.

I've discovered so many areas in my life in the last 60 years, and especially in the last 47 years since God filled me with the Holy Spirit. Areas and areas and areas where I say, oh, I didn't realize that I'm not like Christ there. For example, to expect people to thank me for something they did, do you know that's an un-Christ-like attitude? I don't know whether you ever realized, do you expect gratitude from people? God has every right to expect gratitude, but not me.

I'm a human being, and I'll tell you how I learned it. I've said it before. A brother whom we helped very much in our church for many years, he used to stay with us and all that.

Then he got a job somewhere else and left, and for years and years, we never heard from him. And I thought, what an ungrateful. This was many years ago, going back more than 40 years or 35 years, and I said, what an ungrateful person.

He's never even written a word of thanks to us. And the Lord spoke to me. He said, the fault is with you.

I said, Lord, what's the fault with me? We helped him, served him in so many ways. He said, your fault is you're expecting gratitude from him. Haven't you read my word in Matthew 25, which says, the Lord said, in what you did to the least of these my brothers, you have done it unto me.

What did you do for this brother? Whatever you did, you did it to me, the Lord says. And if you did it to me, the Lord says, who should you expect gratitude from, from him or from me? I said, Lord, I'm sorry. I should expect gratitude from you, not from him.

So I was sinning in expecting that person to come and thank me. Have you ever committed that sin? That you've done something for someone and you're disturbed that he didn't come and thank you? I don't know

whether you realize it's a sin. That is an area of your life you're unconscious of.

Don't feel guilty. Maybe you're conscious of it from today onwards. But I was unconscious of it till God showed me that in the final day, the Lord will thank me.

Be satisfied with that. Don't go around serving people, expecting them to be grateful. Oh, thank you for this.

Thank you. Thank you for that sermon. Oh, thank you that you served me here.

No, finish with it. In as much as you did it to the least of these, my brothers, you have done it unto me, the Lord says. So I'm just giving you one example like that.

Little by little, I find areas in my life, for example, being in a bad mood. Do you believe that it's un-Christlike to be in a bad mood? Anytime. You say, what can I do? Things happen.

Okay. That's why we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. You cannot remain in a good mood all the time if you're not filled with the Holy Spirit.

If you love money, you cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit all the time. Something goes wrong and you're in a bad mood. If you love your health, I must always be perfectly healthy.

You'll never be in a good mood all the time. Something will go wrong and you'll lose your mood. But it's a wonderful thing to say, Lord, I've seen my goal.

My goal is not good health. My goal is not to make a lot of money. My goal is not even to have enough for my needs.

I know that if I seek God's kingdom first and His righteousness, everything that I need will be provided for me. He will never allow me to be like a homeless man standing on the street asking for money. Never.

Even if I have no job, God will take care of me. He'll provide for me if necessary with manna from heaven. I believe that.

Because I say, I'm seeking God's kingdom first. And that's for you too. So there are areas in our life where we are not like Christ.

He was never disturbed. You've heard me mention how in the last verse of John chapter 7, nobody invited Jesus to his home in Jerusalem. So he went out into the Mount of Olives and slept there.

And next morning, he didn't talk about it. He just came and continued speaking to the people there. What a wonderful way to live, expecting nothing from anyone.

Have you come to that place in your life where you expect nothing from anyone? That was Jesus. So I'm just giving you some examples where we are unlike Christ. My question is now, do you have a passion to become like Christ? Because that is what God predestined us for.

Long before the worlds were created, He chose you and me by name. Our name was in His mind, Ephesians 1.4, chosen before the foundation of the world. My name was in God's mind before Genesis 1.1, before He created the heaven and the earth.

My name was in God's mind. That's what Ephesians 1.4 says, if you're a child of God, it applies to you too. That's what comforts me.

God's not going to one day say, well, I'm fed up with you. I didn't know you'd behave like this. No.

He knew all about me from beginning to end, and He still chose me before the worlds were created. That's why I want to love Him and be faithful to Him. So when we see that goal, you'll never have any other goal in your life except to become like Christ.

You'll be perfectly happy, other people around you making money and getting rich and having bigger houses and all kinds of things, that's fine. That's not my goal. I'm not envious of anybody around me who's got any of these things.

I'm not even envious of anybody being able to preach better than me. Praise the Lord. If He can glorify the Lord more than me, I'm delighted because we are working on the same team.

We are kicking the ball towards the same goal. That guy's also kicking towards the goal. He's a servant of Christ.

Why should I be disturbed if he scores more goals than me? He's on my team. We can never be jealous of another person who is more accepted, more honored and more ... I say, when you're jealous, you feel that guy's on another team. Is he on the opposition team? He's not.

Sometimes you can be jealous of somebody in your own church. These are the areas, my brothers and sisters, where we are unlike Christ. You sisters, do you get disturbed that somebody else can cook meals better than you or somebody else is more popular than you? Dear me, get rid of it all.

Say, Lord, my goal is to become like Christ. And Christ was never, never jealous of anybody. And I don't want to be jealous of anyone.

Work on that. He was never in a bad mood. Work on that.

Instead of being occupied with whether the vaccination is the mark of the beast or any of this rubbish. How the devil sidetracks people into all types of discussions like this. Politics.

All types of things to take you away from your main goal. And every day and every hour of your life that you spend in these useless discussions is one hour or one day lost in becoming like Christ. You could have gone a little more ahead in your Christian life if you had been a little more careful in using that time.

Lord, what is the sign of your coming? Beware of deception. And the number one deception is to sidetrack you from your goal of becoming like Christ. Now see Romans 8, 28.

Romans 8, 28 is a well-known verse. But you cannot understand it apart from verse 29. Romans 8, 28 says, all things work together for good to those who love God, those who are called according to his purpose.

Wonderful. But what is that purpose? The purpose is mentioned in the last word of verse 28, but that purpose is explained in verse 29 because it says for. What is the first word of verse 29? For.

For means because. And that's connected to the last word of verse 28, purpose. Have you always understood verse 28 in relation to verse 29? God works all things for my good.

What does that mean? He'll give you a better job? He'll give you a better house? Rubbish. Or if you're planning to get married, he'll give you a prettier girl or a richer man? No, rubbish. He will make you a little more like Christ.

That disappointment that you didn't anticipate, that problem, that sickness, maybe that death in your family, I don't know. Purpose? To make you like Christ. For a child of God, nothing is accidental.

If you're a wholehearted disciple of Jesus, I want to say to you in Jesus' name, believe one thing today, nothing is accidental. If you believe that God watches the hairs on your head, I don't know when I lost all my hair, but I'll tell you one day, but I can ask God and he'll tell me every single moment, exact time when I lost every hair on my head. I'm not going to waste eternity asking God that question.

But I'm saying he knows. That's what I'm trying to say, because he said that. The very hairs on your head are numbered.

So that is the smallness to which God cares for us. He cares for the sparrow that falls to the ground. He cares for the birds to feed them.

And Jesus said, aren't you more valuable than them? What is your answer? Yes or no? If it is yes, how can you ever be anxious? If you believe there's a father in heaven who's counting the hairs on your head and who tells you that you're more watched over more than every bird that dies somewhere in the world. And I've got a number of millions and billions of sparrows in the world, and the Lord knows where each one fell and provides each one of them. You see, the Lord says these birds don't have storehouses where they store up their food.

Where do they get that food from? How many people feed the birds? One in a billion. Do you think the birds are dependent on that? No. Somewhere or the other, God has allowed them to find something on the ground.

That's how much he cares. And he said, aren't you of much more value than them? Are you worried about insecurity in your job? The birds are not. Have you heard this little poem? I often say, I mean, I've repeated it so much that it comes to me, about a robin and a sparrow.

These are two little birds, a robin and a sparrow speaking to each other. Said the robin to the sparrow, I would really like to know why these anxious human beings rush about and worry so. Said the sparrow to the robin, friend, I think it must be that they have no heavenly father such as cares for you and me.

That's what the birds are saying. Why is this guy in RLCF so worried about something? Why is this sister in RLCF so anxious? And the bird, one bird says to the other, perhaps they don't have a heavenly father like we have. We're so happy.

We sing in the morning and, you know, these birds that sing early in the morning. But these people in RLCF don't do that. They get up in the morning and they grumble and complain and fight with each other.

They don't have a heavenly father like us. Dear brothers and sisters, don't let the birds put you to shame. Take that as a challenge.

Lord, I want to be a testimony to the birds, to the angels and to demons, deception. So I want you to see another verse in this connection, deception. There are many areas of deception, let me quote one of them.

In Matthew chapter 7, Matthew 5, 6 and 7 is the Sermon on the Mount. And Jesus always started a sermon well and ended a sermon well. He was the perfect preacher.

He didn't always preach with three points or give stirring emotional messages. And no, he wasn't here to excite people. He was here to challenge people and encourage them.

Challenge and encouragement. Those are the two things Jesus always did. Challenge and courage.

Challenge and courage. And so he started the Sermon on the Mount by saying he must be poor in spirit. You're blessed.

That's the first verse. That means you must always have a sense of your need. You know, like a poor homeless man always standing on the street saying, who will help me? I'm in need.

That is how a true Christian is. Always poor in spirit. Father, he doesn't go to men.

He goes to his father and says, Lord, I'm in need today. Always. Such a man is blessed.

That means extremely happy. You've got to envy such a man. As I think Amplified Bible says, you've got to envy a man who is poor in spirit because he's the most blessed man of all.

He'll never lack anything. He's coming before God and saying, God, I'm needy. Okay, that's how it begins.

And when it comes to the Sermon on the Mount, it ends, you know, after giving all this wonderful exhortations in chapter 5, chapter 6, and chapter 7. And he says, this is a narrow gate, verse 13, you've got to enter through it because the gate is small, Matthew 7, 14, and the way to life is narrow. So very few find it. So be wholehearted.

I don't think everybody's going to go in. And then his conclusion, his conclusion is three pictures. One of them he's mentioned about two gates, and then he mentions in verse 15 to 19 about two trees, and then in later on about two foundations.

But I want to look at verse 15 to 20. One of the pictures he uses is the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount. Two ways, verse 13 and 14, two trees, verse 15 to 20, and two types of foundation, verse 21 onwards to the end.

The two trees. What are these two trees? It says in verse 17, Matthew 7, 17, every good tree bears good fruit, bad tree bears bad fruit. We understand that.

A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot produce good fruit. And if a tree produces, does not produce good fruit, it must be cut down. So you can identify a tree by its fruit.

You don't have to go to the roots. You can't go to the roots. Look at the fruit, and we know whether the tree is good or not.

We have enough sense to understand that. Okay. What are these trees indicating? Verse 15, false prophets.

Again we come to deception. Lord, what is the sign of your coming? Deception. Watch the trees.

Don't swallow anybody who comes along and says he's a disciple of Jesus, and don't swallow any teaching that you hear from some powerful preacher. See what type of fruit comes from their life. Not their gifts.

He did not say by their gifts you shall know them. By their fruit, verse 20, you should know them. Do you know the difference between the fruit of the spirit and the gift of the spirit? Gifts are many.

Preaching is a gift. Teaching is a gift. Being an apostle is a gift.

Being a prophet is a gift. Healing is a gift. Never, never, I try to identify a tree by its gifts.

That means don't look at the number of leaves, how big it is, how many branches there are. No, no, no, no, no, no. By their fruit.

Taste the apple. If the apple is good, it doesn't matter if the tree is small. It doesn't matter if there are not so many branches.

But if the apple is sour and bitter, I don't care if the tree is huge and it's got many branches and looks very attractive. By their fruit, you shall know them. I wish I could tell every single believer in the whole world, brothers and sisters, please remember this.

By their fruit, you will know a man, not by his gift. You are not supposed to identify a godly man by his gift. Unfortunately, most Christians identify a godly man by how well can he preach? How famous is he? How many sermons of his on YouTube? I could not care less.

I'll tell you what I want to know. How does he live with his wife at home? Does he ever get angry with her? 365 days of the year? I'd like to know, is he in a bad mood at any time? I'd like to know, how has he brought up his children? All of them, not majority of them, all of them. How does he treat people who are younger than him? How does he talk to little children? Jesus loved little children.

Does this man love little children or only like the Pharisees, he speaks only to the older people? These are the things I look for. Fruit, not gift. I don't care how well he can preach.

He may also be able to preach well. Jesus was the finest preacher that ever lived. But it is his life that I see.

Now a man who's got a good life may also be a good preacher. But some people who are good preachers have got a very bad life. Their children are wayward.

They fight and many of them divorce their wives. How can you listen to such a man? You've got to be crazy. And yet there are so many pastors today running churches who are divorced.

Do you think these people have read this verse? No. They say, ah, those are things I don't care for. They don't care for the Bible.

They don't care for the words of Jesus. Well, they deserve to be deceived. I say if a man does not care for the words of Jesus and take it seriously, he deserves to be deceived.

A man who respects the words of Jesus Christ, the words of the Holy Spirit, that man will not be deceived. So he said, what are these good tree and bad tree? False prophets and true prophets. And don't go to verse 16, don't go to thorn bushes to get grapes.

No. On thorn bushes, you may get a rose, but you don't get food to eat. You can't eat a rose.

It's just attractive. If you want food, grapes, you don't go to thorn bushes. And so, something that's poky, hurting you, people are always, you know what thorn bush is? A person who always knows how to hurt you, to say something to hurt you.

I don't mean prophetic words like Jesus spoke to rebuke and hurt people. I'm not saying that about that. But some people have got this amazing ability to always say something to put you down.

They are so evil, they never say anything good about anybody. You go to them and say something nice about someone and they'll say, but, but he's got this bad quality. They always got an eye for what is bad.

That's how the devil is. He looks at the best people in the world and try to find something bad in them. And he's given that ability to some people, even some believers have it.

Get rid of it. Don't be like a thorn bush. God doesn't, Jesus wasn't a thorn bush.

He was very strong in speaking the truth, but he was not a thorn bush. He cared for the thorn bush. A bad tree will only produce bad fruit.

So we need to think a little more about this deception, false prophets, the sign of the last days. Okay, let's move on. Bad tree and the good tree.

Let's turn to Matthew chapter 12, Matthew chapter 12 and verse 33, again, bad tree and good tree. It's always good to compare scripture with scripture. If you're a careful student of scripture, if you want to study the Bible, in addition to reading and meditating on scripture, I would advise you to use a concordance.

I mean, in your phone, you probably have it. If you have a Bible on your phone, it's very easy to find other places where the same word comes. That's what a concordance is.

And I used to use it a lot in my younger days. I didn't have a phone, but I had a book called a concordance. And a concordance, which would even tell me the Greek and Hebrew words where the same word occurred.

It was very helpful for me to study. I discovered some amazing things in the Bible like that. So here is, you know, if you look up concordance, you'll see good tree and bad tree.

And here's one place, Matthew 12, 33. Make the tree good, and then the fruit will be good. Make the tree bad, the fruit will be bad.

The tree is known by its fruit. Why does Jesus repeat this? Because it's so important. Last days, deception, false prophets.

Then he says, you brood of vipers. If you are evil, that means that the tree is bad. How in the world can you produce good fruit, even if you're great preachers, you Pharisees? There's something wrong in your

heart.

The root is bad. And the mouth, listen to this very important word, which you must never forget in all your life. One sentence.

The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. The important thing is not to control your tongue. It is to cleanse your heart.

That's what that verse teaches. Controlling your tongue means you can do yoga or you're a good Buddhist. But to be a good Christian, you've got to cleanse your heart.

There are many people who control their tongue and don't get angry. I say good yoga, good Buddhist, a Christian is one who gets rid of anger in his heart. That's where it begins.

Make the tree good. That's down there, the roots. Then the fruit will be okay.

But if you only take care of the fruit, it's like a man who's got a bad apple tree. So because he wants a good testimony, he cuts off all the bad apples and goes to the market and buys some first-class apples and ties it up very carefully. And everybody goes by his house and says, oh, what a lovely tree he's got.

What a lovely apple tree he's got. What sort of seed is that, brother? And he'll try and deceive you. He goes to the market and buys apples and hangs it up on the tree, cuts off the bad ones.

The tree is bad. There are many Christians like that who put on a show of compassion and care and talking spiritual things and talking a lot of religious things. It's not in their heart.

What are they thinking about most of the time? When they're at home, what are they thinking about? They're not thinking about godliness. They're thinking about how to make more money. Or they're sitting and gossiping about other people in their homes with their wives.

They're not godly, but they put these nice apples to show everybody, talk about spiritual things and holy things. Deceivers, false prophets. Beware of such false prophets.

Brood of vipers. How strong Jesus was because he was concerned that his children should not be deceived. A good man, Matthew 12, 35, from the good treasure in his heart brings forth what is good.

An evil man from the evil treasure in his heart brings forth what is evil. Now listen to a sentence which I tell you, verse 36, which I've hardly found any Christian take seriously. I don't know whether they even believe it.

I tell you, Jesus is saying, every single careless word that a man speaks or a person speaks, he has to give an account for it in the day of judgment. Do you know that you have to give an account for every word that you speak, particularly the motive with which you speak it? In other words, if a wrong word comes out of your mouth, you must apologize, withdraw it. Then it is gone.

But if you don't apologize for an angry word that you spoke to somebody, it remains there, waiting to be judged in the final day. You can get rid of it by asking forgiveness from that person, from your wife and saying, I'm sorry I spoke like that to you or to a brother, but then it's gone. Otherwise, you're going to answer for it in the day of judgment.

I don't want a single word that I have to answer for in the day of judgment, because that's a mark of false prophets. Remember the context? The tree. What did we see in Matthew 7? The tree is a picture of false prophets.

And what is the number one characteristic of the last days? One sign of His coming? False prophets. Deception. Let me start at the beginning again, Matthew 24.

What is the sign of your coming? Deception. Matthew 7. Deception is false prophets. Those are bad trees.

What is the mark of bad trees? First, here in Matthew 12, we have seen a bad heart and speaking careless words, which they will have to give an account in the day of judgment. Many people are careless with the way they speak. Then he says, you say, how is justification? You say, justification is by faith.

I believe that. Romans chapter 4, chapter 5, I firmly believe justification is not by our words, but by our faith. But James chapter 2 says, it is a faith which produces works.

Not a faith which is just in my mouth. And here it says in verse 12, 37, James believed this, Matthew 12, 37, you will be justified by your words. Okay.

Let me ask you all a question. In the final day, the Lord says, I want to know, I want to determine now how many of you are justified means declared righteous by God to be fit to enter my kingdom. How shall we test everyone? And most people say, Lord, did they believe in Jesus? If they believe in Jesus, they are justified.

Lord says, by your words. Let me play a video of all the words that you spoke. The words that you apologized for are blotted out of the video.

All the other words that you never repented of, that you never said right. Let me play that video of all the words you spoke. And then you yourself tell me whether you are declared righteous or not.

You say, no, no, no, Lord. You said if you believe in Jesus, that's enough. That's what James says.

Faith without works is dead. And if you read James chapter 2, I don't have time to go there now, but take it and read it sometime. Faith without works is dead.

And you know what James devotes the whole of the next chapter to? The tongue. Faith without works is dead. And then he says the tongue.

Here also, Jesus says about false prophets and he speaks about the tongue. How important is the tongue? Maybe I should turn back. So you see, James chapter 2, James chapter 2 and verse 24.

You see, then James 2, 24, a man is justified by works, not by faith alone. In other words, a faith that produces works. Faith that produces works, not a dead faith, a living faith.

So verse 26, as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead. In other words, you look at a body, examine a person's doctrine. Does he believe Jesus is the Son of God? Yes.

Does he believe in the Trinity? Yes. Does he believe that Jesus died for the sins of the world, rose again and is coming back? Yes. That's like examining a man's body.

Has he got 10 fingers? Yes. Has he got 2 eyes? Yes. Has he got 2 ears? Yes.

Has he got a mouth? Has he got 10 toes? Everything is there. But he's dead. Have you seen a dead man with 10 fingers, 2 eyes, 2 ears? Nothing is missing.

All the doctrines are right. But the man is dead. The breadth of the Holy Spirit is missing.

So he said, just as the body without the spirit is dead. So faith that doesn't produce works is dead. And then what does he talk about? Next.

A whole chapter on the tongue. Faith without works is dead. And James says, I'll tell you what type of works I'm talking about.

I'm talking about the tongue. Verse chapter 3, verse 2. We all stumble in many ways. Agreed.

But if a man does not stumble in what he speaks, that is the perfect man who can control his body. The test of your self-control is not in anything. It's not that you do exercise every day or walk one mile every day.

No, no, no. That's good. But it is the tongue.

The tongue is the test of the perfect man. And he compares it to the bit in a horse's mouth by which you direct the horse and that rudder in a ship that determines which direction a ship goes. You know, a rudder can turn just slightly this way, and the ship goes in a completely different direction.

And he says, your tongue is like that. This is so important. In conclusion, the Pentecostals emphasize if you're filled with the spirit, you will speak in tongues.

And they say, I don't agree with it. I believe in 1 Corinthians 12, where it says at the end of that chapter, all do not speak in tongues. 1 Corinthians 12, verse 30.

All do not speak in tongues, just like all do not have the gift of healing, just like all do not have the gift of teaching. All do not speak in tongues. That is our position.

But at the same time, we also believe in 1 Corinthians 14 and verse 39, that we should not forbid anyone to speak in tongues. That's the balance. All do not speak in tongues.

1 Corinthians 12, 30. But we don't forbid the gift. 1 Corinthians 14, 39.

I don't believe speaking in tongues is the mark of the fullness of the Holy Spirit. But I do speak in tongues, but only to God. And that's another thing very clearly in 1 Corinthians 14 and verse 2. Anyone who speaks in a tongue is speaking to God and not to men.

I believe that. When I speak in tongues, I speak to God. I don't speak to men.

That's where I disagree 100% with the Pentecostals who speak in tongues to men. Even though 1 Corinthians 14, 2 says it's not to men, it is to God. It's amazing how people don't read the scriptures and just swallow what happens outside.

They're impressed by show and noise and all that. Okay, now Acts chapter 2. The Pentecostals say, when they were filled with the Holy Spirit, what was the first external mark? They say speaking in tongues. I say, no, that was the second.

Have you read it? They say Acts 2, 4. I say, no, no, no, no. Before you go to Acts 2, 4, go to Acts 2, 3. Acts 2, 3 says there was a tongue of fire on top of everybody's head. Then next verse, it says they spoke in tongues.

So when I sought the Lord for the power of the Holy Spirit as a backseat Christian in my 30s, my 20s and when I was 30, I said, Lord, I'm preaching, but I don't have a godly life. I don't want the gift of tongues. No, I specifically said that.

But I want to control my mother tongue. I want to come to a life where I never get angry with somebody. If I do, I'll immediately apologize and set it right, immediately.

I'm sorry. Till I come to the place where I can control my tongue. I don't want to speak in tongues.

I want the tongue of fire. Acts 2, 3. I don't want Acts 2, 4. I want Acts 2, 3. A tongue under the control of the fire of the Holy Spirit that's always under the control of the Spirit. Not just when I'm in the pulpit.

Not only when I'm preaching 24 hours of the day. You wake me up in the middle of the night and I will not be in a bad mood. You disturb me when I'm doing something important.

I may say, please excuse me. I'm not ready to talk to you now. But I will not be upset with you.

A tongue under the control of the Holy Spirit. Do you believe such a life is possible? If you don't believe it. If you don't believe that the Holy Spirit can control your tongue, then forget it.

I believe the Holy Spirit can control my mother tongue. And I tell you, I sought God for that 48 years ago. And I want to tell you my testimony.

God answered my prayer. Because I sought for it. Seek and you will find.

It depends what you're seeking for. Those of you who are immigrants, you sought to get a job in America to get a better job, fine. You moved from one place to another job to get a higher salary.

You sought for something and you got it. Some of you seek for something and you get it. Why not seek the Holy Spirit for a tongue of fire? A tongue under the control of the Holy Spirit.

He'll always speak in love. He will encourage in love. He will rebuke in love.

He will correct in love. He will bless people and lead them higher in love. And you will challenge in love.

A tongue under the control of the Holy Spirit. Why is this important? Because the greatest mark of the last days is deception, false prophets. And the primary mark by which you find a false prophet is the way he uses his tongue.

Well, I don't need to keep on speaking because I think the Holy Spirit would like to continue that message in your heart. And may as you meditate on it, may God help you. God bless you.

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