

20-0223p Transcript

20-0223p - *Guarding the Tongue: A Spiritual Duty, Steve Cain*

Bible Reader: sFname sLname

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The Power of Words: A Call for Spiritual Integrity and Self-Control

Transcript (0:04 - 28:21)

Scripture Reading

Bible Reading:

Not recorded

Transcript

Preacher: Steve Cain

(0:02) Good evening. Glad to see you make it back. (0:10) Looking forward to this evening, and (0:13) as one person would say, I can't wait to hear what I have to say.

(0:26) I don't know where I heard that, but I thought it was pretty neat. (0:32) Can't wait till I hear what I have to say. (0:35) This morning we were talking about the fact that (0:38) we are given the opportunity to get out of the world, to leave the flesh, and (0:45) to be able to go into the spiritual world, into the realm that of the Spirit.

(0:54) And when we talk about the realm of the Spirit, we're really talking about (0:58) Jesus' Church. We're talking about Jesus' Kingdom, (1:02) because that's where we are. We are in (1:04) the Kingdom of Christ, and it's His Church that we are a part of, and it is (1:13) Him as our High Priest interceding for us.

And of course, with Him (1:19) setting up the worship service itself, and (1:23) and (1:23) the lifestyle, it is He that (1:26) gives us that direction that we need to be living. And (1:31) Jesus tells us, He says, I want you to take on my yoke, for it is light and easy. And (1:38) we know we have to have a yoke.

There's no question about it. But we don't need the yoke of sin. (1:44) We don't need Satan's yoke.

(1:47) That is a hard one to bear, but Jesus is promising us that the (1:53) yoke He is offering is light and easy. And if you stop and think about that Galatian passage where it talks about (2:02) the difference between the yoke of the flesh (2:06) versus the yoke of the Spirit, (2:08) which one would you rather (2:10) have? And (2:12) as we look into that passage, (2:16) it definitely, in my mind, tells me that we want to have (2:23) peace. (2:24) We want to have love, joy, (2:27) patience, kindness, goodness, and faithfulness, (2:30) gentleness, and self-control.

And (2:33) as I pointed out this morning, there are no laws against those particular issues. (2:40) But when we're dealing with the flesh, (2:43) there are laws. (2:45) And (2:45) many laws trying to counteract the sin, counteract the greed, (2:51) counteract the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.

(2:56) And it's from that standpoint that we know that we have that. (3:02) James is picking up on a theme that Jesus has in (3:07) the passage that I had read in your hearing this morning or this evening. And (3:14) I'd like to take for us, before we consider what James had to say, (3:18) let's go to what Jesus had to say.

(3:23) Let's go to Matthew, Matthew the 15th chapter, and (3:28) take a look at what he is trying to point out to us. (3:32) It is what we say. It is how we conduct ourselves.

It is the manner in which we (3:39) take (3:40) care about how we talk, (3:43) what we say, (3:44) what our subjects are, whether we participate in the fleshly (3:51) world in (3:52) conversations with our fellow mankind, our workers, as (3:56) they are not in the realm of the spirit. They are in the realm of the flesh. (4:03) And so they will have (4:05) conversations, they will have topics that you and I do not and (4:09) should not even want to consider some of the (4:12) conversations that they have.

And Jesus is pointing out to us that this is something that is very, very important. (4:21) Let's pick up with the very first part. I'm reading again from the New International Version, (4:27) the 15th chapter, clean and unclean.

(4:32) Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and (4:37) asked, why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat. (4:45) Jesus replied, and why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? (4:51) For God said, honor your father and mother, and (4:55) anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death. (5:00) But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, (5:04) whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift (5:11) devoted to God.

The King James uses the word Corban. (5:17) But yet, this is what Corban means, a gift devoted to God. (5:22) He is not to honor his father with it.

(5:26) Thus you nullify the Word of God for the sake of your tradition. (5:31) You hypocrites! (5:33) Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you. (5:37) These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

(5:43) They worship me in vain, their teachings are, but rules taught by men. (5:49) Sometimes when I look at this particular passage and what Jesus is quoting from Isaiah, I (5:56) think in terms of (5:58) Christians who come to church on Sunday and are in the spiritual realm on Sunday and then (6:05) go to work on Monday through Saturday and are in the fleshly realm and (6:13) so (6:14) that would reflect to me that with their lips (6:18) they honor him, but with their actions and their

activities (6:24) they are far from them. (6:26) So then he's pointing out that their worship is vain, their teachings are, but rules (6:33) taught by men.

(6:35) Jesus called the crown to him and said, listen, (6:39) understand, and (6:41) this is the point that I (6:44) picked up on when I was reading this and this is Jesus and and this is where I think James is also coming from. (6:51) Jesus called the crown to him and said, (6:54) listen and understand, (6:56) what goes into a man's mouth does not make him unclean, (7:02) but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him (7:07) unclean. (7:09) Now do you remember what James said? (7:12) Cursings come, cursings and blessings come out of the same mouth and we're cursing and blessing (7:20) what ought not to be.

(7:23) So Jesus is saying it does, (7:26) what goes into a man's mouth does not make him unclean, but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him (7:34) unclean. Then the disciples came to him and asked, do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this? (7:43) He replied, (7:44) every plant that my heavenly father has (7:47) not planted will be pulled up by the roots. Leave them, (7:53) they are blind guides.

If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall in a pit. (7:59) Peter said, explain the parable to us. (8:02) Are you still so dull? Jesus asked them, don't you see that whatever (8:07) enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? (8:13) But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart.

(8:17) And these make a man (8:22) unclean. For out of the heart comes evil thoughts, (8:26) murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, (8:30) false testimony, (8:32) slander. These are what makes a man unclean.

But eating with unwashed hands, (8:39) it does not make him (8:41) unclean. (8:43) So as we reflect upon the (8:49) teachings of Jesus, (8:52) he's pointing out to us that it is the heart. It is (8:59) how we think.

The proverb writer says, as a man thinketh, so is he. (9:07) And so it is within the heart. It is as we say.

So we have individuals who (9:15) need to (9:16) can (9:18) constrain their conversation. (9:21) Let's go back to James now and see what James had to say about this also. In the third chapter, (9:34) he's talking about taming the tongue.

(9:39) Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know (9:43) that we who teach will be judged more strictly. (9:48) We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault, (9:52) in what he says, (9:53) he is a perfect man, (9:56) able to keep his whole body in check.

What is James telling us there? (10:04) Can you control everything you say? Is everything that you talk about (10:11) appropriate? And do you spread (10:14) rumors? Do you (10:16) include yourself in some of the conversations that are going on? (10:20) What are the things that (10:22) goes? Because we know that sometimes we're pressured by our peers to say some of the things or do some of the things (10:30) that (10:31) we should not be doing and saying some things that we should not be doing. So (10:37) James is saying, and of course Jesus we know was able to continue to (10:44) control his tongue. How would you like to have been in Jesus's position? (10:49) Facing all of the various temptations that the people were bringing to him, knowing full (10:54) well that they were testing him, (10:56) tempting him, trying to get his goat, (10:59) trying to get him to blow his

top, trying to get him to say things that he shouldn't be saying, (11:04) trying to get him to do the things, and how many of us would have been able to contain ourselves? I (11:11) know I wouldn't.

I think about the things that are going on right now as far as the presidential (11:18) debates and so on. I (11:20) wouldn't want to be up there on that stage listening to those things. (11:23) I wouldn't want them talking to me about the things that they're talking about.

I (11:28) wouldn't want those things. Would I be able to contain myself? Would I be able to say the things I should be saying and not? (11:36) Boy, the test. (11:38) That's the type of thing that Jesus had to go through every time he turned around.

(11:46) 32 years. (11:47) 32 years of that. (11:50) We figure he was roughly about 32 years old when he was put on the cross.

(11:56) 32 years of that. (12:00) So if you're able, if you're able to (12:06) say and keep and never be at fault in whatever you say, (12:11) what is it? You're a perfect (12:14) man (12:16) able to keep his whole body in check. (12:24) In other words, (12:26) you wouldn't get mad enough to (12:28) scratch your eyes out.

You wouldn't get mad enough to try to beat him up. You wouldn't get mad. (12:37) What? (12:39) Controlling yourself.

(12:41) So obviously James is pointing out the fact that we as human beings (12:47) are going to be tested (12:51) about how we conduct ourselves and what it is that we say (12:55) and what we think. As a man thinketh in his heart, (12:59) so is he, says the proverb writer. And so as we reflect upon these things.

(13:05) So if anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man able to keep his whole body in check. (13:14) So he goes on and he talks about what we do in order to control other things. (13:20) But he points out to the fact that (13:23) even though we strive to keep our tongue from saying what we shouldn't say, (13:30) we're not able to.

(13:37) So he points out when we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, (13:43) we can turn the whole animal. (13:46) We can control that animal. We can make it do what we want it to do.

And boy, what (13:54) I've seen people do with horses and how they're trained and (13:59) how they can jump over obstacles, (14:02) how they can dance, how they can back up and so on. And you're doing that all with just the bit in (14:09) that animal's mouth. You have complete control of that animal once you've trained him.

(14:16) And then he goes on and he points out, (14:19) we can turn the whole animal or take ships as an example. (14:24) Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small (14:31) rudder (14:33) wherever the pilot wants to go. (14:35) Just consider that.

(14:38) You see these big cruise ships that are out there, the ones that have been making the news lately with (14:44) thousands of people on it. And (14:47) really, it's just a small rudder compared to the size of that ship that brings that ship around to do what it (14:53) that the captain wants it to do. It takes very little and yet (15:00) he's comparing the fact that we are, as human beings, have a problem with the tongue.

(15:08) So he's telling us about the ships. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, (15:14) they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. (15:19) Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body.

(15:23) And it is compared to (15:27) the tongue. But he's talking about our mind, isn't he? He's talking about our conversation. (15:34) He's talking about the various things.

And if you can cut the tongue out, you won't have anything to say then, will you? (15:41) You can control yourself that way. (15:44) Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boast. (15:51) And it does.

(15:54) And then he goes on and he says, (15:57) it makes great boast. (16:01) Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. (16:07) And not too long ago, that's what was happening in California, wasn't it? (16:11) Some campers were out there and they just let one little spark (16:16) ignite the tender that is all around it.

And the next thing you know, (16:20) thousands of acres of trees have all been burned down. (16:26) People's homes are (16:28) completely consumed (16:30) with a small spark. (16:33) Can you imagine? He's going to compare our tongue (16:38) with that small spark.

(16:41) We can set this whole church on fire with just a little phrase. (16:47) We could make enemies (16:49) with just one little phrase. (16:54) We've seen it happen, haven't we? (16:59) The tongue also is a fire, a (17:04) world of evil among the parts of the body.

It corrupts the whole person, (17:11) sets the whole course of his life on fire, and (17:16) is itself set on fire (17:19) by hell. (17:22) And what is he telling us? (17:25) It's the fleshly. It's the worldly.

(17:28) It is that which is in the world. It's hell. It's Satan.

It is the influence of the world. It is (17:37) that which (17:39) influences us to say some of the things that we say. And it's itself is set on fire (17:47) by hell.

(17:50) Then he goes on and talks. (17:52) All kinds of animals, (17:54) birds, reptiles, and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man. (18:02) But no man can tame the tongue.

(18:05) It is a restless evil full of deadly poison. (18:10) And it is. (18:12) With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men who have been made in God's likeness.

(18:20) Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. (18:28) Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? (18:33) My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives or a grapevine bear figs? (18:39) Neither can a salt spring produce (18:42) fresh water.

(18:46) So what is he wanting us to consider? (18:50) What we say (18:53) and how we say it. (18:56) He's wanting us to make sure that we are being led by the Spirit and not by the (19:04) the flesh. (19:06) He wants us to be sure that we're being influenced by the Spirit and (19:11) the Spirit is going to control what we think in our hearts and how we think in our hearts.

(19:17) Many years ago, I was in industry. Many years ago, (19:21) I was in positions where I would be able to go to parties and so on and (19:29) booze was being served there. (19:33) Never once thought about why the booze was being served, the beer, the alcohol.

(19:39) Never once really was I thinking in those terms. (19:42) I just felt like there was a cheap way of entertaining. (19:46) It was given what the people wanted and so they provided it for what the people wanted.

(19:54) But I also know that the bosses were sitting there never having drunk a drop. (20:01) Why were they not drinking? (20:04) Because they wanted to hear what their employees had to say. (20:13) Loose lips think ships.

And so as we reflect upon this, (20:21) he's telling us (20:23) Jesus says it's not what goes into (20:27) the body that (20:29) defiles the body. (20:31) Because whatever it is that we eat or whatever it is that we consume it goes into the stomach and then it passes right on (20:37) out. (20:38) Now we know that alcohol has a way of (20:42) getting into the bloodstream and so on and we know that that's part of it too.

(20:48) But yet we're supposed to be able to have (20:51) control (20:53) over what we say and what we do. And that's why one of the reasons why I don't drink. (21:05) I don't want to lose control over what I have to say.

(21:10) I don't want to lose that. (21:12) And I don't know how much it's going to take for me to lose that. (21:16) It might take one drink, might take two drinks.

I have no idea because I've never done it and I'm not going to do any (21:24) experimenting. I don't want to know. I really don't.

(21:31) But (21:32) it is the way that many people pay attention to (21:38) what their employees think about, how they talk, what they have in mind. (21:45) We have to pay attention to those things. (21:49) I have a little story.

I used to work for International Harvester. (21:53) And (21:57) back in that day (21:59) CB's were very prominent and (22:03) almost everybody had a CB in their cars. (22:06) And so they would get great (22:08) thrills out of talking to (22:10) truckers and they get great thrills out of seeing how far they could reach out and talk to individuals and to get (22:18) conversation going.

And (22:20) you'd be surprised what they would want to talk about. (22:23) Oh, yes, there was sexual innuendos and so on and that type of conversation was going on. (22:30) But that's not what I wanted to talk about or want to bring out to you.

(22:35) One of my fellow employees was on the highway one day and as he was going down the road (22:42) he had a CB and he was talking to a trucker and the trucker was driving an International Harvester. (22:51) And (22:51) as he was talking to the International Harvester driver, the trucker, (22:56) he, they got on to, how do you like your truck? And (23:01) the (23:03) trucker would (23:04) give a comment. Well, I don't like this particular thing.

I wish this would work this way or so on. And (23:11) my fellow employee (23:13) started down, (23:16) talking down our company. And boy, he was talking it down big-time.

(23:22) So his boss was listening. (23:27) And the next day the boss called him in his office. (23:32) And the boss says, do you really believe about our company like that? (23:39) You're fired.

(23:42) Fired him right on the spot. (23:45) Because he couldn't control what he had to say. You don't run your employer down.

(23:51) You don't say bad things about your employer. (23:54) You don't say bad things about anybody, really, do you? You're not supposed to. (24:05) We're not supposed to run anybody down.

And so we have to watch our tongue. (24:11) And we have to say the right things and pay attention to the right things. (24:16) What does James say? (24:20) He who can control his tongue is perfect.

(24:28) I have a hard time controlling my tongue. (24:36) Jesus wants us to pay attention to what we have to say. (24:41) It's not what goes into the (24:45) body that defiles the person.

As Jesus says, it just goes right through the body and right on out. (24:53) But it's what is in the heart. (24:57) Do you contain in the heart the right things? (25:03) Do you contain in the heart and harbor in the heart things that are ugly? (25:11) We have two sides of our body, of our personality, don't we? (25:15) But we are to let the bright part of our body (25:20) be consistent all the time.

(25:25) And that's how we allow ourselves to be in the spirit. (25:30) And (25:31) try our level best to keep out of (25:35) the flesh realm. We cannot allow both to be in there. Listen to what James says. (25:44) With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men who have been made in God's likeness. (25:53) Out of the same mouth comes praise and cursings.

He says, my brothers, this should not be. (26:02) Don't harbor the bad thoughts. (26:05) With all your possibilities, with all your power, let the Holy Spirit guide you with what you put in your heart.

(26:12) Let the Holy Spirit guide you in how you think about something. (26:18) Let the Holy Spirit be there to give you the assurance that (26:24) what comes out of your mouth (26:27) will not be a double tongue. (26:30) Like the Indians would say, the man speaks with forked tongue.

(26:36) We don't want to speak with a forked tongue. (26:41) So, he says, out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.

(26:48) Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? So obviously we're talking about (26:55) sin. We're talking about holiness and sin. Can we allow (27:00) cursing and praising God coming out of the same mouth? (27:05) And then he gives us the illustration about (27:08) the trees.

(27:13) My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives or a grapevine bear figs? (27:22) Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water. (27:29) And that's what we have this evening and I wanted to share with you. That's what (27:37) came to my mind as I was studying what Jesus had to say.

(27:42) You know, James picked up on it and James amplified it for us, too. (27:48) It's a good commentary, isn't it? (27:51) There is anyone here this evening that needs to (27:57) ask for the prayers of the congregation for whatever the reason is. (28:02) If there's anyone here that (28:03) needs to respond to the gospel, we'd like to extend to you the opportunity to do so.

(28:10) Everything is ready. We're willing to assist you in whatever it is that you need to respond to. (28:18) Won't you come? (28:19) While together we stand and sing the song of encouragement.