

26-0802p - Detailed Summary

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Bible Reader: Mike Mathis

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Sayings of the Mouth Matter

Scripture Readings

Bible Reader: (0:04 - 1:53), Mike Mathis

James 3:3-6 Mike begins the evening service by greeting everyone present in person as well as those listening by phone who are unable to attend. he expresses the prayer that the things said during the lesson will prove edifying to all who hear. he then states that it is his duty to read the scripture portion for the evening, taken from james chapter 3, verses 3 through 6.

He reads the passage carefully: “indeed, we put bits in horses’ mouths, that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small

Scripture Continued

rudder wherever the pilot desires. even so, the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. see how great a forest a little fire kindles! and the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. the tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.”

The reading establishes the central image of the tongue as a small but powerful instrument capable of directing large outcomes, both for good and for destructive ends, and ends with the sobering declaration that the tongue is set on fire by hell itself.

Summary of Transcript (0:04 - 33:45), Preacher: Mike Mathis

(1:58-4:44) Introduction of Method and Sermon Title

Mike explains that he is about to attempt something he has not seen others do in a sermon. He announces that he will be working in Proverbs chapter 10, focusing on verses 6 through 21, though not every verse in that range will be treated. He points out the characteristic structure of the Proverbs, in which each verse is composed of two contrasting parts. As an illustration he quotes the first verse of the chapter: “A wise son makes a glad father” (the first half), followed by “but a foolish son is the grief of his mother” (the second half).

He states that his plan is first to gather and discuss only the opening half of each selected verse, and afterward to return and examine the second half of those same verses. He then gives the title of the lesson: “The Sayings of the Mouth Matter.” With that framework in place, he turns immediately to the first half of verse 6.

(4:44-9:37) Blessings on the Righteous and the Memory of Faithful Lives

Mike begins with the opening clause of Proverbs 10:6: “Blessings are on the head of the righteous.” He observes that God actively deals with those who stand righteous before Him by pouring out

blessings upon them. The reason is straightforward: the righteous are those who obey God's voice and walk in obedience to Him.

He moves next to the first half of verse 7, which speaks of the lasting memory of the righteous. Mike asks whether we delight to remember figures such as Abraham. He recounts how Abraham's faith grew throughout his life until the climactic moment when God commanded him to offer his son Isaac. Abraham was prepared to bring the knife down, yet the angel of the Lord stopped him and declared that his willingness had been fully demonstrated. Mike recalls Abraham's earlier word to Isaac on the journey—"God will provide"—and notes that God did provide a ram caught in the thicket as a substitute. Abraham's faith was strong enough to surrender even his son.

Mike then turns to Moses. When God called him to confront Pharaoh and demand the release of the Israelites, Moses offered excuses, claiming he was not eloquent. God finally overrode the objections and appointed Aaron to serve as Moses' mouthpiece. The point is that Moses is still remembered for his obedience once he accepted the commission.

Finally, Mike points to Jesus Himself. Jesus is the only person whose life was perfect; He kept the law completely and did everything the Father commanded Him to do. These examples—Abraham, Moses, and especially Jesus—illustrate why the memory of the righteous is precious and why blessings rest upon their heads.

(9:37-11:49) The Mouth, Tongue, and Lips of the Righteous

Continuing with the first halves of the selected verses, Mike quotes Proverbs 10:11: "The mouth of the righteous is a well of life." He connects this statement to Proverbs 12:17, which declares that the one who speaks truth declares righteousness. Thus the mouth of the righteous becomes a source of life precisely because it speaks what is true and what is right.

He next cites the first half of verse 20: "The tongue of the righteous is choice silver." Immediately afterward he adds the first half of verse 21: "The lips of the righteous feed many." These three images—well of life, choice silver, and lips that feed many—explain why blessings come upon the head of the righteous. The righteous are people who do what is right, who obey God, and who, even if they begin with faltering steps, grow into mature obedience. Their speech itself becomes an instrument of blessing and nourishment to others.

(11:49-17:43) Violence Covering the Mouth of the Wicked and the Untamable Tongue

Mike now turns to the second half of Proverbs 10:6, which states that "violence covers the mouth of the wicked." He notes that the identical clause appears again in the second half of verse 11. This prompts him to return briefly to James chapter 3 and to expand on the warning given there.

James describes the tongue as a little member that boasts of great things. Mike observes how readily people boast about their accomplishments—"I did this, I did that." The same small member is also capable of kindling destructive fires. He illustrates the point by referring to the wildfires then raging in Spokane, Washington, which had already destroyed more than six hundred structures, including homes. James declares that the tongue itself is a fire, a world of iniquity, set among the members so that it defiles the whole body and sets on fire the course of nature—and that this fire is itself kindled by hell.

Mike continues through James's further statements: every kind of beast can be tamed by mankind, yet no one can tame the tongue; it is an unruly evil full of deadly poison. With the same tongue people bless God the Father and then curse human beings made in God's image—an inconsistency that ought never to occur. James concludes by asking whether a spring can send forth both fresh and bitter water, or whether a fig tree can bear olives or a grapevine figs. The answer is no; likewise the mouth of a believer should not produce both blessing and cursing.

Mike applies the teaching directly to the congregation: the sayings of the mouth matter. Although James is addressing Christians, the warning remains urgent. Believers can allow their words to tear apart the unity that should characterize the body of Christ, or they can deliberately use their mouths to build and maintain that unity.

(17:53-22:47) The Name of the Wicked Will Rot

Mike continues by turning to the second half of Proverbs 10:7: "But the name of the wicked will rot." He contrasts this with the blessed memory of the righteous and asks who would want to remember wicked people. He illustrates the point with two notorious cases from Cleveland. One man allegedly killed multiple women and buried them in his yard; the other kidnapped three women, held them captive in his basement for years, raped them, and fathered a child with one of them. Mike recalls how the public long wondered what had become of the missing women, and how his late wife had speculated they might have been taken as sex slaves—only to learn they had been imprisoned right in Cleveland until they escaped.

No one wished to preserve the memory of these men. Their houses were deliberately torn down. Mike describes watching heavy machinery demolish the second man's house in roughly half an hour—structures that had taken years to build reduced to rubble so quickly that nothing of value or macabre interest could be salvaged by the curious. The second offender later died by his own hand while incarcerated; the first remains imprisoned. The names of the wicked are allowed to rot because people prefer to forget them rather than keep their memory alive.

(22:47-24:18) The Heart of the Wicked and the Folly of Fools

Mike next examines the second half of Proverbs 10:20: "The heart of the wicked is of little worth." He sets this against the earlier statement that the tongue of the righteous is choice silver. He then quotes the second half of verse 21: "But fools die for lack of wisdom."

These contrasts underscore the difference between the righteous and the wicked, especially in what proceeds from the mouth. Mike stresses that believers must be careful about the words they speak. He poses pointed questions for self-examination: Do we speak the truth? Do we speak the right things? These are matters every Christian ought to consider seriously.

(24:18-29:48) Conclusion from Matthew 7: The Wise and Foolish Builders

Mike brings the lesson to a close by reading Matthew 7:21–27, the final section of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus declares that not everyone who says "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of the Father. Many will claim on that day to have prophesied, cast out demons, and performed wonders in His name, yet He will answer, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness."

Jesus then compares two builders. The one who hears His sayings and does them is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. When the rain fell, the floods came, and the winds beat against the house, it stood firm because it was founded on the rock. The one who hears but does not obey is like a foolish man who built on the sand; the same storms caused his house to collapse, and great was its fall. Mike notes that “these sayings of mine” encompass the entire Sermon on the Mount from Matthew 5 through 7.

(29:48-33:45) Application: Building on the Rock and Guarding the Mouth

Mike applies the parable directly: How are we building our spiritual house—firmly on the rock or on shallow, sandy ground that lacks a solid foundation? On the Day of Judgment, would we rather hear “Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness,” or “Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of your Lord”? The latter is the welcome every believer desires.

He reminds the congregation that Jesus Himself was righteous and lived a perfect life. He did not die because of any evil He had committed; He died so that sinners might have their sins blotted out through His shed blood. The blood and water that flowed from His pierced side cleanse from all sin.

Mike returns to the central theme: Will the sayings of our mouths help others know the truth and draw them to Christ? The old saying “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me” is false. Words can cut to the heart and wound deeply, or they can build up and encourage. The righteous will speak truth and words that are right and uplifting. Therefore believers must take care that the sayings of their mouths build people up rather than tear them down.

He closes with the gospel invitation: if anyone is subject to the invitation in any way, let them respond while the congregation stands and sings.