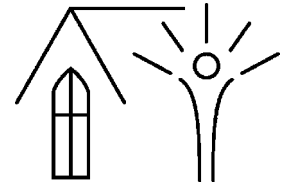




ROSELLE
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Our Mission Statement:
*“To Know Christ,
To Grow in Christ,
To Show Others Christ”*

September 3, 2006

Sermon: “Words of Hope In Your Mouth”

Mark 7:14-23

Reverend Thomas Kim

Every time when spring or fall begins I feel so miserable because of my allergies. Then Gail used to say to me, “Don’t make a great fuss about trifles. It’s just allergies. You are a big man. Take your medications and don’t complain!” However, since the last spring Gail does not say that to me any more. She has allergies too, and now she says “If there is any horrible thing, it is allergies.” I am so grateful not for her allergies, but for the fact that she understands my problems and my words now. Language is one of the most important tools for your communication. Spoken or written languages both are equally crucial for your communication. Language is also a crucial key for your spirituality.

The Gospel of John says, “The Word became flesh.” We know God has power. When God says, there is creation, life, healing, and redemption and more. Since we are created in God’s image, I believe that we have some of God’s power in our word to heal, forgive, encourage, comfort, bless and more. Our words have power, more power than you think.

The three themes for the 21 century are Vision, Language and Choice. If you attend any leadership seminar, you will hear about them. They say, “Have vision. Use positive language. Make a right choice.” And the three are related to each other.

Using a positive language is important for your spirituality because the language you are using now reveals your spirituality today, and determines your future.

An ancient Chinese Emperor ordered his servants to find the most valuable thing in the world within a month. When the day came, each servant brought all kinds of wonderful things: a beautiful picture of mountains at which all were speechless, a fine medicine to heal every disease, a sharp and strong sword which could break any thing, a strong horse which could run one thousand miles a day, a great book of wisdom which gave an answer to every question and so on, and so on. However, no thing impressed the Emperor much. Finally an old poor servant brought the tongue of a cow.

“What is this?” asked the Emperor. “A tongue of a cow, your majesty,” replied the poor servant. Do you think this is the most valuable thing in the world? The Emperor angrily asked him. “Yes, Your majesty. A tongue is shorter than a foot, cheaper than a bottle of wine. Yet a tongue can give words of comfort, forgiveness, love, and wisdom. And on top of those, a tongue could even save a person’s life.” The Emperor became interested, and asked “Why is that so?” “Your majesty, if any of your servants is accused of treason, you may order to kill him, but if a faithful servant defends him with his tongue, you may rethink, and order to release him. So a tongue is the most valuable thing in the world.”

The Emperor was very pleased with him, and gave him a reward and had him sit by the Emperor.

Next year the Emperor ordered his servants to find the worst thing in the world within a month. When the day came, each servant brought all kinds of awful things: a disgusting and fearful picture at which everybody would be disgusted in a second, a dangerous poison to make everyone in the palace sick with only a drop of it, a music of which the sound made everyone shudder in a second, and so on, and so on. Yet no single thing impressed the Emperor. Finally the old servant brought a tongue of a cow again. “What is this?” asked the Emperor. “A tongue of a cow, your majesty,” replied the old servant. “Now do you tell me the tongue of a cow is the worst thing in the world?” the Emperor angrily asked him. “Yes, Your majesty. A tongue is shorter than a foot, cheaper than a bottle of wine. However, a tongue can break everyone’s heart with words of revenge, words of curses, words of hatred, and words of discouragement. And on top of those, a tongue could even kill an innocent person’s life.”

Your tongue can be the best tool for you and the worst. The tongue can be an instrument to deliver God’s blessing and life to you and others, AND it can bring hatred and death to you and others as well. That is your choice to make. Your mouth

is the barometer of your spirituality. If you have more negative thoughts in your mind, and if negative language comes from your mouth, check your relationship with God. Do your words, spoken or written words deliver the words of grace of God?

The December 1998 issue of *LIFE* magazine carried a full page picture of a group of about a dozen protestors. These people with twisted and angry faces were not protesting at the White House or in front of a military base. They were protesting at a funeral. One of them holds a sign which reads in big letters: "**FREEDOM OF CHOICE IS THE RIGHT TO HATE.**" They were protesting at the October 16, 1998 funeral of Matthew Shephard, the 21 year old gay student beaten to death and hanged cross-like on a fence in Laramie, Wyoming. After such a terrible crime, could they not at least allow Matthew's family and friends to mourn in peace? I wonder if the people protesting at Matthew Shephard's funeral consider themselves Christians. If so, I wonder how they justify their hatred--regardless of how they might have felt about Shephard's lifestyle. Even on the cross, Jesus forgave his enemies not only in his heart but also with his words. How could they possibly justify hatred in his name? People use religion to mask a heart filled with evil. People use religion as a weapon against those whom you despise. And their tools are usually words: spoken or written. Do you know any friend who received a nasty letter full of quoted Bible passages?

Apostle James says in his letter, "*My beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless.*" (James 1: 19, 20 & 26)

I believe the language you are using shapes you. Sales people often put it this way: Fake it until you make it. In other words, act successful and eventually you will be successful. If you think that is not a very spiritual principle, remember that John Wesley told his followers to **act as if they had faith until they really did**--not as an attempt at deception, but as a commitment of the will with the knowledge that the heart would soon follow after. You commit your will. You pray, "Lord, I know I am not all I should be, but I know you can help me bring my lips and my mouth delivers the words of grace and hope." That is one prayer Christ is sure to answer.

The year was 1970. A young hippie couple showed up on the steps of a small country church and asked the pastor to marry them. The pastor, hoping to put the young couple off, insisted that they attend church that Sunday. That Sunday, the young couple showed up. When the members of the congregation realized what was happening, they organized a wedding luncheon for the young couple. Everyone had a wonderful time.

Fast forward twenty-five years. The first decade of their marriage had been rocky. They were searching for some meaning in their lives. Then they remembered the love and acceptance they found in that little country church. So they began attending a church. Not long afterwards, they cleaned up their lives. Now they wanted to return to the small country church to thank the folks who had made a difference in their lives. (Josh McDowell and Norm Geisler. Love Is Always Right, pp. 9-11)

This story could have had a radically different ending had these church people used their religion to shut this young couple out. Without a doubt, there were probably some members who had to grit their teeth and show this young couple more love and acceptance than they really felt, but what a pay-off. Two young people were won to Christ. Are you delivering the words of grace and hope? There are the words of hope in your mouth. The Apostle James says, "*If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless.*"

One day Dr. Funk was asked to select the ten most expressive words in the English language. Here is the list:

the most bitter word:	alone
the most tragic:	death
the most reverend:	mother
the most beautiful:	love
the most cruel:	revenge
the most peaceful:	tranquil
the saddest :	forgotten
the warmest:	friendship
the coldest:	no
the most comforting:	faith

Our tongue can create the most beautiful word, warmest word, and the most comforting word. How do you use your tongue today? What kind of words are you using? The Bible says, "*If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless.*" Remember that there are the words of hope in your mouth.