

Prov. 15:4, "The Tongue," By Rev. Paul Hudson

What Does Proverbs Say About: Summary, Sermon Notes Handout, Daily Devotional, & Study Questions,
7/12/26

Summary

Big Idea

The tongue, when aligned with the heart transformed by Christ, holds the power of life and death.

The sermon explores what Proverbs says about the tongue, emphasizing its power as both a tool for life and death. The image of the tongue resting behind the gates of the lips and teeth illustrates the necessity for restraint. Social media amplifies the old issue of the tongue, where everyone expresses unbridled opinions, often detached from wisdom or truth. Proverbs 18:21 reminds us that the tongue's words bear fruit, either for blessing or curse. Through a journey across various proverbs, the sermon warns of lying, gossip, and flattery, showing how uncontrollable words can destroy lives and communities.

As a herald of the heart's condition, the tongue reveals inner righteousness or wickedness. The sermon ties these insights with New Testament teachings where Jesus in Matthew 12 underscores the gravity of our words, promising accountability. Transformation of the heart through Christ is essential for taming the tongue, as only through Jesus's grace can our words align with life-giving truth. The sermon calls for vigilance over the tongue, highlighting three key applications: let Jesus transform your heart to influence your speech, use wisdom in verbal restraint, and speak words that nourish and restore, reflecting the Tree of Life.

Keys and Themes

1. Two Gates and the Tongue

The tongue, a critical yet small part of the body, is guarded by two gates: the lips and the teeth. This symbolic imagery underscores the importance of restraint. Proverbs emphasize that keeping these gates closed often prevents harmful words from escaping. The sermon highlights how in today's world, especially on social media, the unguarded tongue can spread falsehood and conflict quickly. God's expectation for such restraint is mirrored in the physical design of the mouth and the call to listen and think twice as much as we speak.

2. Proverbs on Life and Death

Proverbs 18:21 presents the tongue as a bearer of life and death. The sermon explores this dual function: words can build up or destroy. This power requires a sober understanding of what we say to others and ourselves. The sermon warns of the tongue's potential to deceive and harm, whether through lies or flattery. It calls listeners to consider the eternal ramifications of words, encouraging us to recognize the tongue as a powerful instrument that must be guided by wisdom and righteousness.

3. Relationship Between Heart and Tongue

The heart's condition directly influences what the tongue will express. Proverbs and Jesus's teachings in Matthew 12 illustrate how inner righteousness or wickedness is revealed through speech. The sermon stresses that an unrighteous heart results in destructive words, while a transformed heart through Christ results in words of life. This connection impels believers to seek heart transformation by God's grace, as this is the key to righteous speech that aligns with God's truth and brings life.

4. Righteous Speech as a Blessing

Proverbs highlight that righteous speech brings healing and value. Words from a righteous person act as choice silver, bringing blessings, joy, and healing to the speakers and listeners. The sermon invites Christians to become a source of blessing through their words, impacting communities positively and reflecting the character of Christ.

Through wise, gracious speech, communities cannot only avoid destruction but be built up and sustained in unity and peace.

5. Theological and Redemptive Role of Speech

The sermon draws a distinction between human plans and divine guidance in speech, emphasizing the sovereignty of God. Jesus's words in the New Testament hold each accountable for their speech, revealing the redemptive and condemning power of our words. Confession with the mouth aligns with heart belief, reflecting Romans 10:9-10, where confessing Jesus as Lord, aligned with heart belief, brings salvation. Christ's transformative work in the heart enables life-giving speech, urging believers to lean on the Holy Spirit for guidance.

Sermon Notes Handout

Sermon Title: The Tongue | **Scripture:** Prov. 15:4

Big Idea: The tongue, when aligned with the heart transformed by Christ, holds the power of life and death.

Point 1: Two Gates of Restraint

Fill in the blank: Keep that gate closed and... it's pretty hard to _____.

Question: How can you practice restraint in your speech this week?

Notes:

Point 2: Power of Life and Death

Fill in the blank: The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its _____.

Question: What kind of 'fruit' are your words bearing?

Notes:

Point 3: Heart-Tongue Connection

Fill in the blank: The mouth speaks what the heart is _____ of.

Question: How can your words reveal your heart's true condition?

Notes:

Point 4: Righteous Speech Brings Healing

Fill in the blank: Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the _____.

Question: How can your words bring healing to your community?

Notes:

Point 5: Confession and Redemption

Fill in the blank: By your words you will be _____.

Question: What steps can you take to align your speech with God's truth?

Notes:

Reflection Question: How can the words you speak daily reflect the transformation Christ is doing in your heart?

Next Step: Consider one relationship where your words can bring intentional encouragement and healing this week.

Family Discussion Question: Discuss as a family how words can build each other up and reflect God's love.

Daily Devotional

Sunday — Two Gates of Restraint

Scripture: Proverbs 18:21

The tongue sits behind two gates, highlighting God's design for restraint in our speech. These gates—our lips and teeth—remind us that not every thought needs to be spoken, especially in the heat of the moment. These natural barriers encourage us to pause, listen, and weigh our words carefully. In today's world, with the proliferation of social media, the temptation to react instantly can result in spreading harm. Consider how often a closed gate might prevent regretful words. Restraint transforms potential conflict into quiet reflection, leading to peace.

Reflect Questions:

1. *When have you seen restraint lead to a better outcome?*
 2. *How can you practice thoughtful speech this week?*
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Monday — Power of Life and Death

Scripture: Proverbs 18:21

Proverbs states that the tongue's power extends to both life and death. This reminds us of the weight our words carry—capable of healing or harming, blessing or cursing. Words spoken from anger, fear, or pride can devastate relationships, while words rooted in love, truth, and grace can heal and uplift. Daily, we encounter choices that require us to speak life into situations. Let us aim to bring light and life, aligning our words with God's desires, understanding their profound impact.

Reflect Questions:

1. *How can your words bring life to someone today?*
 2. *What situations require intentional words of blessing from you?*
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Tuesday — Heart-Tongue Connection

Scripture: Proverbs 15:28

The tongue is a messenger of the heart. The Proverbs and Christ's teachings affirm that what we say is a reflection of our inner life. When our hearts are filled with Christ's love and wisdom, our speech reflects that transformation. Conversely, when bitterness or fear resides within, it spills out through words. Let us invite Christ to mold our hearts, ensuring that our speech echoes the righteousness and love He embodies. This transformation allows our words to align with the tree of life, symbolizing healing and restoration.

Reflect Questions:

1. *What does your recent speech reveal about your heart?*
 2. *How can you invite Christ's transformation into your heart today?*
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Wednesday — Righteous Speech as a Blessing

Scripture: Proverbs 10:20

Righteous speech holds tremendous potential for blessing, acting like choice silver—valuable and enduring. The Proverbs illustrate that words of the righteous build up and bless others, contributing to community health and unity. In a world often overflowing with negative communication, choosing to speak blessings is a powerful counteraction. Our words can affirm, support, and encourage those around us. As we determine daily to speak words of life, we follow Christ's example in choosing speech that uplifts and restores.

Reflect Questions:

- 1. How can you be a source of blessing through your words today?*
 - 2. Who needs to hear a word of encouragement from you?*
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Thursday — Theological and Redemptive Role of Speech

Scripture: Romans 10:9-10

The profound theological role of speech in the story of redemption cannot be understated. By confessing Jesus as Lord, our words align us with God's salvific plans. This confession isn't just a verbal act but a heart's declaration, underlining the heart-tongue alignment. God's sovereignty ensures that words aligned with His will hold transformative power, influencing both personal faith journeys and communal witness. Let this remind us of the immense responsibility and privilege found in speaking truthfully about our faith.

Reflect Questions:

- 1. What does it mean for you to confess Jesus as Lord with both heart and mouth?*
 - 2. In what ways can your speech reflect God's transformative power?*
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Friday — Speech Guided by Divine Wisdom

Scripture: Proverbs 16:1

While we make plans in our hearts, the right words come from the Lord. This proverb states that ultimate wisdom in speech derives from aligning our hearts with God's will. As we submit to His guidance through prayer and meditation, our tongues can become instruments for His peace and truth. By yielding our voices to His direction, we become conduits of divine wisdom, speaking not just our thoughts but His purpose. There's a transformative power in aligning our speech with His eternal wisdom.

Reflect Questions:

- 1. How do you seek God's guidance in your plans and speech?*
 - 2. What steps can you take to ensure your speech reflects His wisdom?*
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Saturday — The Cost of Idle Words

Scripture: Matthew 12:36-37

Jesus warns that we will be accountable for every idle word, emphasizing the gravity of our speech. Idle words may seem harmless, but they bear the potential for misunderstanding, harm, and decay in relationships.

Understanding our accountability before God encourages us to fill our speech with kindness, truth, and intention. Let us strive to replace idle chatter with meaningful conversations that reflect His grace, recognizing the eternal implications of every word we speak.

Reflect Questions:

- 1. What are some idle words you've spoken recently that need repentance?*
- 2. How can you cultivate meaningful speech in your everyday interactions?*

Study Questions

Read Prov. 15:4 and listen to the Sermon "The Tongue," 7/12/26

Observation

- 1) What does Proverbs 18:21 say about the tongue?
- 2) How does James describe the tongue in his epistle?
- 3) What are three things about the tongue that the Lord detests according to Proverbs 6:16-19?
- 4) How are flattery and a lying tongue related according to Proverbs?

Interpretation

- 1) Why might God have placed the tongue behind two gates (lips and teeth)?
- 2) What is meant by 'the power of life and death' in Proverbs 18:21?
- 3) How does the heart influence the tongue according to Jesus and Proverbs?
- 4) Why is it important for the tongue and heart to be in alignment according to the sermon?

Application

- 1) In what ways can you use your tongue as a tool for righteousness this week?
- 2) What practical steps can you take when you feel the urge to speak recklessly?
- 3) How can you let Christ transform your heart to align your words with His will?
- 4) What changes can you make in your communication style to promote healing and encouragement?