

UNIT 4.B.: THOUGHTS & WORDS: THE BATTLE FOR OUR MINDS

WORDS

Mosiah 2:49-50:

But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not **watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds**, and observe to keep the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, **even unto the end of your lives**, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not.

Luke 6:45:

A good man **out of the good treasure of his heart**, bringeth forth that which is good. And an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil; **for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.**

THE POWER OF THE TONGUE: EVIL SPEAKING

James 3:

- 1 My brethren, **strive not for the mastery**, knowing that in so doing we shall receive the greater condemnation.
- 2 For in many things we offend all. **If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man**, and able also to bridle the whole body.

In these first two verses, James seems to be talking about times of conflict where both sides perceive that there must be a winner and a loser. We must be careful not to offend.

- 3 Behold, we put **bits in the horses' mouths**, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.
- 4 Behold also the **ships**, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are **they turned about with a very small helm**, whithersoever the governor listeth.
- 5 Even so **the tongue is a little member**, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

In verses 3-5, James marvels that a little part of the body like the tongue can determine the direction a person will go and can even determine their fate.

- 6 **And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.**

In verse 6, James then says something very profound about the tongue that we do not find stated this clearly anywhere else in scripture. When someone chooses to disparage another person, to impugn their motives, to diminish their character, we call this “evil speaking.” With a strong wind a wildfire can spread as fast as one football field per minute. Using this metaphor, we must all become firefighters who seek to extinguish evil speaking before it can spread.

- 7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind;
- 8 **But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.**

Becoming a Disciple of Christ

- 9 Therewith **bless** we God, even the Father; and therewith **curse** we men, which are made after the similitude of God.
- 10 **Out of the same mouth** proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.
- 11 **Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?**
- 12 Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

We all are engaged in a great struggle to subdue our tongues and keep them from uttering conflicting messages. We need to focus on speaking words of blessing to every person around us. How can I bless them with my words today?

- 13 Who is **a wise man** and endued with knowledge among you? **let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.**
- 14 But if ye have **bitter envying and strife in your hearts**, glory not, and lie not against the truth.
- 15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.
- 16 For where envying and strife is, there is **confusion and every evil work.**
- 17 **But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.**
- 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of **them that make peace.**

In verses 13-18, we are called to display the “meekness of wisdom.” We’re told that the following are earthly, sensual and devilish and cause confusion and evil work:

- bitter envying and strife in our hearts
- seeking glory
- being deceived by lies

But God’s wisdom results in the following:

- purity
- peace
- gentleness
- being easily entreated by God
- mercy
- good fruits
- impartiality (treating everyone alike)
- an absence of hypocrisy
- peacemakers.

Titus 2:7-8:

In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, **sound speech, that cannot be condemned**; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

WHAT IS THE PROPER REACTION WHEN WE HEAR “EVIL SPEAKING”?

When we hear evil speaking from another person, the best thing to do would be to invite them to come with you and speak directly to the person they were talking about. We all need to be “firefighters.” We need to help extinguish such activity.

Becoming a Disciple of Christ

What this world needs is a mighty change in our thinking. We need to be reborn through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ and receive his image in our countenances – to be new creatures.

Alma 3:25-32:

. . . **a mighty change was also wrought in their hearts**; and they **humbled themselves**, and put their trust in the true and living God. And behold, **they were faithful until the end**; therefore they were **saved**. And now behold, I ask of you, my brethren of the church, Have ye spiritually been **born of God**? Have ye **received his image** in your countenances? Have ye **experienced this mighty change** in your hearts? Do ye **exercise faith** in the redemption of him who created you? Do you **look forward with an eye of faith**, and view this mortal body raised in immortality, and this corruption raised in incorruption, to stand before God, to be judged according to the deeds which have been done in the mortal body? I say unto you, **Can you imagine to yourselves that ye hear the voice of the Lord, saying unto you**, in that day, Come unto me ye blessed, for behold, your works have been the works of righteousness upon the face of the earth?

1 Peter 2:21-24:

For even hereunto were ye called; because **Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps**; who did no sin, **neither was guile found in his mouth**; who, when he was reviled, **reviled not again**; when he suffered, **he threatened not**; but **committed himself to him that judgeth righteously**; who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, **that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness**; by whose stripes ye were healed.

THAT IS THE END OF UNIT 4.B. THOUGHTS & WORDS: THE BATTLE FOR OUR MINDS.