

Sermon Notes

2/27/11

REFLECTIONS

Would
You
Sell
Your
Parrot
to the
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I heard a preacher many years ago ask a question of his audience when preaching on the tongue. His text was James chapter 3. The question was: *Would you feel completely safe if you sold your very talented parrot to the town gossip?* His point had to do with the idea that in our homes we may not be as pious and saintly as we appear in the public realm. James reminds us that... *no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. (James 3:8 NKJ)* When we think of how we speak and the words we use at home, his point begins to make sense. James goes on to explain the hypocrisy that can be illustrated by how we communicate. *With it (our tongue) we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. (James 3:9-10 NKJ)* When we imagine a parrot with a propensity to repeat what he hears, being sold to someone with a reputation for gossip, we can also imagine how his mimicry might change how we are viewed by others.

As humorous as the illustration used by the preacher is, it does remind us of a greater understanding spoken of by the Psalmist. *Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? ⁸ If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. ⁹ If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, ¹⁰ Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. (Psalm 139:7-10 NKJ)* His writings remind me of a little chorus that we used to sing in Sunday School with the little kids. It goes, in part, like this.. *Be careful little eyes what you see...There's a Savior up above looking down in tender love...so be careful...* It goes on to include the ears and mouth indicating that there is One who is ever present, seeing and hearing all that we see and say. David wrote of this very thing in this excerpt from Psalm 139. God is indeed ever present. In the lives of His children, He has placed His Holy Spirit to remind us continually that we are to walk in righteousness before Him. Why then do we seem to struggle so mightily with taming the tongue?

Jesus explains the relationship between the heart and the tongue when He tells us...*For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. (Matthew 12:34 NKJ)* He speaks this way to the religious leaders who had

followed Him to try to undermine His ministry, and in so doing, leaves us with a profound understanding that what is filling our heart often escapes from our mouth. Have you ever watched a child speak in terms best described as rebellious? From where does this verbiage come, if not from a rebellious heart? But, let's look a little deeper. Do we not have to admit that our children are mimics who become little parrots of what they hear at home? A comic strip in the daily paper is called "Dennis the Menace". Dennis is frequently caught sharing the views of his parents regarding his dad's boss, his mother's friends, or others who will undoubtedly be offended by his candor when they are enlightened by his "parroting" of what he has heard them say. One wonders how many relationships a boy like Dennis might destroy with what he has heard mom and dad say at home.

Confronted by the nature of our speech when we are "safely" at home, should make us grateful for the Holy Spirit's ministry in our hearts and lives. Paul tells the Galatians that their lives should be filled with the Spirit and that the fruit of such a life should be evidence of the Spirit indwelling their hearts. He tells them that...*the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23 NKJ)* Would that it be so in all our lives. Remember, our lives are observed by many and, by the way grandparents, we are being observed by little mimics called grandchildren so, even though we have raised our kids, we must continue to walk in Christ because little eyes and ears are watching and listening to some very important and influential people in their lives and that would definitely include us! Look at these precious little ones and remember Dennis who's mouth is not managed by a mature mind. Even our own near-perfect grandkids do not have an adequately developed filter system to protect grandparents who don't watch their tongues.

Turning again to the Psalms we read... *My tongue shall speak of Your word, For all Your commandments are righteousness. (Psalm 119:172 NKJ)* Let's make certain that all the little "parrots" in our lives hear words that lift up the name of the Lord. May our prayer be always... *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer. (Psalm 19:14 NKJ)* If our speech is righteous, anyone could buy our parrot. **Pastor Doug**