

# The Strength to Use Your Tongue Well

*Building Core Strength*

By Steve Viars

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**Bible Text:** Luke 23:1-56

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## **Faith Church**

5526 State Road 26 E

Lafayette, IN 47905

**Website:** [www.faithlafayette.org/church](http://www.faithlafayette.org/church)

**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/faithlafayette](http://www.sermonaudio.com/faithlafayette)

Well, one of the clear emphases of the Word of God is the power of the tongue. Do you agree with me on that? Yeah, we see that as soon as we even open the Bible and read statements like Genesis 1:1.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.<sup>1</sup>

It would be wise to never question the power and the strength, the efficacy of the Word of God. When he speaks, things happen. Things happen for sure. That is why the psalmist would later say:

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host. He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deeps in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.<sup>2</sup>

The power of words. I found it fascinating as we were moving through the approval process for Faith West that some of the elected officials over on the other side of the river actually went on record criticizing our view of science and our view of counseling and our view of human sexuality and our view of women, whatever that is. Well, what ties all of that together is the source of those beliefs, the revealed Word of God. That is why it is so exciting to see that facility coming up out of the ground, because that is a place where the Scripture is going to be shared and proclaimed in a variety of ministry settings.

You understand the word faith in Faith West it wasn't so much to connect it with our church as it is to remind us, as the apostle Paul said, of the faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints, the Word of God. That is why it is also important to note in the

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 1:1-3.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm 33:6-9.

Genesis account that part of what distinguishes human beings from other aspects of creation is that we were made in the image of God and, therefore, we, too, have the ability to speak and to be spoken to in ways that are powerful.

So you find, for example, even before the fall God is walking with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day and he is doing what? He is speaking. He is teaching. He is counseling. He is giving them his powerful Word, his potentially life changing truth. So is it any surprise, then, when we get to Genesis three that the assonance of Satan's temptation involves words, an alternate form of counsel, a different way of thinking about life. And so now Adam and Eve have to decide for the first time. Who are they going to listen to? And then what are they going to say? And, regrettably, they made the bad choice. Their resulting speech was defiled.

You realize the very first words recorded in the Bible that came out of Eve's mouth were lies in the sense that she had exaggerated what God had said to her. And then Adam's first words recorded in the Bible were defensive excuses seeking to blame his sin on somebody else, namely his own wife. Not a great start in exercising the unique privilege that comes with being made in the image of God, which teaches us that our words, yeah, they are powerful. They can be powerfully good or they can be powerfully bad.

You can pick up practically any page of the Word of God, then, and see that interplay working out. So much so that Solomon would actually say, Proverbs 18:21:

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.”<sup>3</sup>

Isn't that incredible? You can speak words that either bring life, they bring edification, they bring healing to a situation. Or you can speak words that bring death and destruction and ruin. I mean, what could be more powerful than that? So it is not surprising that when we get to the public ministry of Christ that he spends time talking about the power of our words in places like Matthew 12:33.

Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.<sup>4</sup>

That is a crucial biblical principle, by the way, that should cause every one of us to be very, very careful about who we listen to and what we listen to including—hear this—what we tell ourselves, because what we allow to come into our hearts, that becomes a

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<sup>3</sup> Proverbs 18:21.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 12:33-37.

mental, a spiritual reservoir and the mouth then speaks out of that which we allow to fill the heart.

If death and life are in the power of the tongue, no wonder the apostle Paul, then, in his ministry would emphasize this as well in places like Ephesians 4:29.

“Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.”<sup>5</sup>

If you know your Bible you probably know where this is heading, because James says it even stronger. He says:

For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well. Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison.<sup>6</sup>

Well, there you have it.

Now why am I raising this issue this morning? We are going to study a passage of Scripture today that records a lot of different people talking. And part of what is interesting is how the words of Jesus are so much different than the words of everyone else. That is going to provide a natural occasion for us to ask: Whose words are yours most like?

With that in mind, please open your Bible this morning to Luke chapter 23. That is on page 67 of the back section of the Bible under the chair in front of you, if you need that this morning.

This year we have been working our way systematically through the gospel of Luke and I don't know about you, but I have thoroughly enjoyed studying the words and works of our Savior. He was and he is such a compelling person and we never tire of thinking about what the Bible records about who he was and what he did and how he interacted with the people around him.

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<sup>5</sup> Ephesians 4:29.

<sup>6</sup> James 3:2-8.

We are actually coming down to the end of this study now. We have today and then two more weeks and we plan to land the plane. And I hope that every one of us could say that we are stronger as followers of Christ as a result of the time that we have invested. Well, this morning, we, want to think about the strength to use your tongue well. Look for the contrast beginning in Luke 23 verse one.

Then the whole body of them got up and brought Him before Pilate. And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King." So Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And He answered him and said, "It is as you say." Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man." But they kept on insisting, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee even as far as this place." When Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was in Jerusalem at that time. Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him. And he questioned Him at some length; but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and the scribes were standing there, accusing Him vehemently. And Herod with his soldiers, after treating Him with contempt and mocking Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate. Now Herod and Pilate became friends with one another that very day; for before they had been enemies with each other.

Pilate summoned the chief priests and the rulers and the people, and said to them, "You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined Him before you, I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against Him. No, nor has Herod, for he sent Him back to us; and behold, nothing deserving death has been done by Him. Therefore I will punish Him and release Him." [[Now he was obliged to release to them at the feast one prisoner.]] But they cried out all together, saying, "Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas!" (He was one who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection made in the city, and for murder.) Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again, but they kept on calling out, saying, "Crucify, crucify Him!" And he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has this man done? I have found in Him no guilt demanding death; therefore I will punish Him and release Him." But they were insistent, with loud voices asking that He be crucified. And their voices began to prevail. And Pilate pronounced sentence that their demand be granted. And he released the man they were asking for who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, but he delivered Jesus to their will.

When they led Him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus. And following Him was a large crowd of the people, and of women who were mourning and lamenting Him. But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' Then they will begin TO SAY TO THE MOUNTAINS, 'FALL ON US,' AND TO THE HILLS, 'COVER US.' For if they do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

Two others also, who were criminals, were being led away to be put to death with Him. When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves. And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One." The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine, and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!" Now there was also an inscription above Him, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!" But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT." Having said this, He breathed His last. Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent." And all the crowds who came together for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened, began to return, beating their breasts. And all His acquaintances and the women who accompanied Him from Galilee were standing at a distance, seeing these things.<sup>7</sup>

We are talking this morning about the strength to use your tongue well. With the time we have remaining let's think about two categories of speech from which to choose. First of

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<sup>7</sup> Luke 23:1-49.

all, your words can reveal a heart that is hard. That was true of many of the people who spoke in this text. The words that they said dishonored God, because they had cultivated a heart that was hard. This chapter highlights some of the process that was followed in order to crucify our Savior. By any account it was a kangaroo court. Both the religious and the civil leaders violated all sorts of even their own legal and moral principles in order to bring about this result. I would encourage you to consider reading these events in a book called the harmony of the gospels. That is a kind of book that synthesizes the material in all four gospels and then presents it in chronological order. I like to use this one. There is many of them out there. This one is by Thomas and Gundry, but, as I said, there is plenty of other good ones as well. And what I am going to do this morning is stay pretty closely to what we have revealed in the gospel of Luke because I want us to see the contrast of whose said what. But just the process of rereading all that happened to Jesus at this particular phase of his life and his death and burial and his resurrection, it can be a great help and encouragement spiritually. A lot of times we do this around Easter. I would encourage you to consider doing it now since we are there in the gospel of Luke.

This is the essence of the gospel. And having a working knowledge of what occurred coupled with a deep appreciation for what Jesus did for us is crucial to being a follower of Christ.

Now think about these people in the text whose heart was hard. That was true for a variety of reasons. One was that people who were both deceived, that is what they put into their hearts and therefore deceiving, that is what they said with their tongues. Think about that matter of deception now.

Luke had made it clear that the primary reason some men and women had rejected Christ was because they did not want to admit that they couldn't save themselves by their own effort. See, to say in your heart you have sinned against a holy God and therefore you are in need of a Savior, someone to do something that you cannot do on your own, that his highly offensive to the human mind and especially in that day with those from the nation of Israel, because the law, that had become to them something that they selectively kept in order to earn salvation, in order or instead of its intended purpose, to point out their need for forgiveness from their holy God. And so over and over and over they had been looking for ways to discredit Jesus and his message. But his teaching was so powerful and gracious that many men and women were coming to him in repentance and faith.

And so we have been seeing this contrast week after week like the rich young ruler who asked what he could do to inherit eternal life. And when Jesus exposed his sin, instead of repenting and trusting Christ, the Bible says the man went away sorrowful. His heart was deceived with self righteousness. It wouldn't allow the power of Christ's words to penetrate his unbelief.

But right on the heels of that you have a man like Zacchaeus. Do you remember him? Everybody knew he was wicked including himself. And yet when he heard the words of Christ he repented and believed. So he changed the way he thought about life and he allowed God's truth to become his new frame of reference.

Well, not the people that we just read about in Luke 23. They were deceived. And they had allowed their heart to become hardened and now they were doing everything they could to deceive the secular rulers so that Christ would be crucified. And what do we hear them saying in this text? Things like verse two.

“We found this man misleading our nation.”<sup>8</sup>

They have no evidence of that charge, but it is the kind of accusation that might appeal to a secular leader like Pilate. And they said:

“...and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar.”<sup>9</sup>

That was not true at all. In fact, he had taught exactly the opposite. You can see how they are trying to ingratiate themselves to a secular ruler. And that is a very important point in this text. Once your heart has become deceived, you will say practically anything to convince others that you are right.

He went on to say that:

“...saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.”<sup>10</sup>

And that is true. But totally out of context. Over and over he had made it clear that his kingdom was not of this world. This message would not be a threat to any secular ruler, but notice how the accusers leave that part out, which is something else about a person whose heart is hard. The narrative becomes very selective and very skewed to that particular person’s point of view.

And what is interesting is by now these people very well may have told themselves this story so many times in the mirror at home that they actually start believing it themselves. Then to their disappointment Pilate says, “I find not guilt in this man,” which makes you want to respond with, “Then why don’t you man up and release him?”

We will get to Pilate in a moment, but when the crowd hears that, instead of checking themselves and maybe what they have been saying is false. Maybe they don’t have this all right. Maybe they need to repent. They just turn up the volume. And at this point it doesn’t even matter if what they are saying is true. They are going to find a way for the Roman government to do something their Jewish law doesn’t allow, namely to kill Jesus by crucifixion.

So they say:

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<sup>8</sup> Luke 23:2.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

"He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee even as far as this place."<sup>11</sup>

It is like what are you talking about. And when has Jesus ever stirred up the people against the government?

Have you ever been in a situation when someone is so intent on convincing others of his or her position that they say things that make absolutely no sense at all? They are just insane in their anger. Have you ever done that yourself, where you go off on one of your tirades and you conclude, you know, that even sounded dumb to me? You know, hard heart that was self deceived and deceiving.

Now where and how to Pilate and Herod fit into this discussion? Their hearts were hardened, but for a different reason. To them it was a matter of being cowardly. And Pilate had already said that he didn't find any guilt in Jesus, but then the people mentioned Galilee.

When Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was in Jerusalem at that time.<sup>12</sup>

Why? Not because he wanted to do the right thing. He saw that as an opportunity to put the problem off on somebody else, because he was a coward. He didn't want to deal with the disapproval of these people who wanted to kill Jesus.

Well, Herod was no better. In fact, the Scripture says:

“Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him.”<sup>13</sup>

How about he was glad because this gave him an opportunity to do the right thing as an elected official or to do his job or to mete out justice and righteousness, to protect an innocent man. No. He was a coward. In fact, verse 11 says:

“And Herod with his soldiers, after treating Him with contempt and mocking Him...”<sup>14</sup>

Here is a representative of the civil government using his tongue to mock the Savior, because that is what is most politically expedient at the time.

And where did this mocking words lead? John MacArthur writes of these events, “The whip used for scourging had a short wooden handle to the end of which were attached

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<sup>11</sup> Luke 23:5.

<sup>12</sup> Luke 23:6-7.

<sup>13</sup> Luke 23:8.

<sup>14</sup> Luke 23:11.



several leather thongs. Each thong was tipped with very sharp pieces of metal or bone. The man to be scourged was tied to a post by his wrists high over his head with his feet dangling and his body taugt. Often there were two scourgers, one on either side of the victim who took turns lashing him across the back. Muscles were lacerated. Veins and arteries were torn open. It was not uncommon for the kidney, spleen or other organs to be exposed and slashed. As would be expected, many men died of scourging before they could be taken up for execution. We don't know the full extent of Jesus' wounds, but he was so weakened by them that he was not able to carry his own cross."

So now we are back to Pilate who tells the people that neither Herod nor he has found any guilt in Jesus, but then he goes on to say:

"Therefore I will punish Him and release Him."<sup>15</sup>

And what kind of statement is that to use your God given tongue, made in the image of God like that? Coward.

Then the people increased their pressure so he says:

"Why, what evil has this man done? I have found in Him no guilt demanding death; therefore I will punish Him and release Him."<sup>16</sup>

And when the crowd kept arguing, Pilate pronounced sentence that their demand be granted. What a couple of cowards. What is amazing is how their hard heartedness actually brought them together. Did you notice that? Verse 12 says:

"Now Herod and Pilate became friends with one another that very day; for before they had been enemies with each other."<sup>17</sup>

And it is amazing how when you get a group of people whose hearts are hard together, that wickedness will actually bring former enemies together because of their wicked speech. Are we seeing the truth of Proverbs 18:21 that death and life are in the power of the tongue? Was James right when he said that the tongue was a fire, a world of iniquity? What about the crowd? They had hard hearts because it was murderous. They kept calling out saying, "Crucify him." And when Pilate hesitated they were insistent with loud voices asking that he be crucified and their voices began to prevail.

Mark it down. Often the voice that prevails is connected to a heart that is hard. Sometimes I wonder if we realize how horrible it was for them not just to cry out for Jesus' death, but to insist that it be done through the process of crucifixion.

MacArthur reminds us of some of that, as well. A death by crucifixion included all that pain and death can have of the horrible and ghastly: dizziness, cramps, thirst, starvation,

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<sup>15</sup> Luke 23:16.

<sup>16</sup> Luke 23:22.

<sup>17</sup> Luke 23:12.

sleeplessness, traumatic fever, shame, public spectacle, torment, horror of anticipation, mortification of intended wounds, all intensified just up to the point at which they can be endured at all, but stopping just short of the point which would give the sufferer the relief of unconsciousness. The natural position made every movement painful, the lacerated veins and crushed tendons throbbed with incessant anguish. The arteries, especially at the head and stomach became swollen and oppressed with surcharged blood while each variety of misery went on gradually increasing there was added to them the intolerable pang of a burning and raging thirst. And all of these physical complications caused an eternal anxiety which made the prospect of doubt the unknown enemy at whose approach man usually shuts most the aspect of a delicious and exquisite release. One thing is clearer the first century executions were not like the modern ones, for they did not seek a quick painless death, nor the preservation of any measure of dignity for the criminal. On the contrary they sought an agonizing torture which completely humiliated him.

It is important that we understand this, for it helps us realize the agony of Christ's death. Think about it. They knew exactly what method of execution they were requesting and yet they demanded it anyway. That is a heart that is incredibly hard.

Now I think we have plenty on the table to begin asking some questions of ourselves, don't we? What do your words reveal about the condition of your heart? And you might say, "Well, certainly my heart is not deceived."

Really? Do you have some people in your life who can tell you the truth even if it contradicts what you have already believed? Proverbs 12:15:

"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel."<sup>18</sup>

When is the last time you listened to anybody's counsel? That is why, by the way, we have point man groups around here and why we have lady's Bible studies and why we have biblical counseling resources available, to allow you to surround yourself with people who might dare to tell you that they believe that you just said is incorrect and needs to be changed. Are you open to that? Or are you self deceived?

You might say, "Well, I don't have a cowardly heart."

Really? You know, wanting the approval of people can be a powerful idol, huh? Proverbs 29:25:

"The fear of man brings a snare, But he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted."<sup>19</sup>

And I would just ask you this morning. Do your words reveal a fear of man? Or do they reveal the fear of God?

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<sup>18</sup> Proverbs 12:15.

<sup>19</sup> Proverbs 29:25.

And you might say, “Well, at least I don’t have a murderous heart.”

You want to go next? Really? Before you move away from that one too quickly remember what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount.

You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.<sup>20</sup>

And some people regularly murder others by what they say about their actions and character, generally behind their back. That is why the sin of gossip is such a terrible thing, especially when it occurs among people who call themselves followers of Christ. You can be sure that people who enjoy gossip are murderers.

No. What is the alternative? You say, “Is there any hope in this?”

I am sure there is. Isn’t it interesting how much of a contrast there is between the words of man and the words of Christ? That is the other option. Jesus’ words reveal the heart of wisdom and compassion. What did he say? Well, note this. He said very little. That is clearly an emphasis in this passage. And for some folks that is the one of the biggest problems when it comes to the use of their tongue. They won’t shut up.

And you say, “Well, that wasn’t very nice.”

You should hear the way I want to say it. But I have to listen to my own sermon four times. He said very little. Proverbs 10:19.

“When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, But he who restrains his lips is wise.”<sup>21</sup>

James 1:19.

This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.<sup>22</sup>

And some of God’s people observe that verse in reverse, being slow to hear, quick, to speak and quick to anger and that is why they are unlike Jesus, because they are talking a blue streak.

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<sup>20</sup> Matthew 5:21-22.

<sup>21</sup> Proverbs 10:19.

<sup>22</sup> James 1:19-20.

Here is a little advice from the original Greek of this text. Some of God's people could use a vacation from Facebook. Ok, it is not in the Greek text. I just said it. But for some folks the more they post the worse it gets. They just can't shut up.

He also spoke words of forgiveness. Remember, they had been crying out, "Crucify him," and he on the cross said:

"Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."<sup>23</sup>

My speech is going to be focused on healing, not hurting. He spoke words of hope.

"And He said to [the thief who repented], Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."<sup>24</sup>

Words of hope.

By the way, I hope you will plan to be back with us tonight for our church family night. We are going to have a lot of enjoyable things to do together including breaking ground for the new safe haven home that is going to be built right next door to vision of hope. I assume you are aware that the good folks at SIA are providing funding completely for a home on our property for victims, victims of domestic violence, victims of fire and victims of flood. And they have made it clear to us that they want to build that home on our site along with a whole group of contractors who are giving all sorts of resources in order to make this possible. And they have made it clear. We want to hand you the keys and walk away and we know you all will handle it well.

Just think about this. Many times that will happen in the middle of the night that people who are burned out of their homes can come here, people who are removed because of domestic violence, generally women and children, who is going to meet them over there, by the way? The staff, the interns and residents of vision of hope. And what are they going to be speaking in that moment? It will be just like Jesus. It will be words just like Jesus, words of hope.

And don't you love the fact that God is powerful enough that he could direct a Japanese automotive company to provide that for us? I mean, if God is not like way powerful, I don't know what is. Words of hope. I hope you will be with us tonight to celebrate that. And words of trust.

"'Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT.' Having said this, He breathed His last."<sup>25</sup>

I realize you might say, "Pastor Viars, I have been trying to control this tongue for a long time and I just can't."

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<sup>23</sup> Luke 23:34.

<sup>24</sup> Luke 23:43.

<sup>25</sup> Luke 23:46.

Do you realize that might reveal that you don't yet know Christ as Savior and Lord?

You say, "Well, I have done too many evil things. There is no way I could be reconciled to God."

Did you hear what we have been reading about? Friend, Jesus went through what we have been studying for you and for me. And I would encourage you if you have never trusted Christ as Savior and Lord, I would encourage you to make that choice, to make that decision and to make it today.

Christian friend, we have been singing a lot this morning about the importance of surrender. And Paul uses a very fascinating metaphor in Romans chapter 12 when he says:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice..."<sup>26</sup>

There are two words that don't go together normally. Normally sacrifices are dead. But we, even after we have come to know Christ, we have an opportunity every day to surrender our bodies to him including that little thing we carry around in our mouths.

I hope we will decide that we are not going to speak words that are murderous. We are not going to speak words that are filled with cowardice. We are not going to speak words that displease God. We are going to speak words like our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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<sup>26</sup> Romans 12:1.