



Words of Grace

As the Apostle Paul nears the close of what we know as [Ephesians chapter 4](#), he wrote several important and powerful statements about how believers must behave. From the command to speak truth ([Eph 4:25](#)), to not sinning in our anger ([4:26](#)), to not stealing and instead laboring for the benefit of the Kingdom ([4:27](#)), he then touches on a subject that really starts to cut into an area many of us may struggle with.

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. [Eph 4:29](#)

In our world, unwholesome speech is so commonplace that it is almost imperceptible. Whether it's profanity thrown around in conversation, gossip, slander, a judgmental comment, or off-color jokes, it is so easy to get caught up using our tongue in ways that dishonor the Lord that we may not even realize we're doing it. And when we do realize it, we likely don't take it with the seriousness Scripture instructs us to.

The Greek word for 'unwholesome' ([sapos](#)) can also be rendered rotten, putrefied, and worthless. Yet, Paul's instruction seems mild when you compare it to how the Apostle James, Jesus's half-brother, put it in his epistle: ***"If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless."*** ([James 1:26](#)). He also wrote quite a bit more on this subject in [chapter 3](#), summarized with: ***"But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way."*** ([James 3:8-10](#)).

Jesus also talked about how our words expose the condition of our spirit in [Matthew 15:18](#): ***"But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man."***

As we read this, it begs us to ask ourselves a very serious personal question: do we intentionally use our tongue to be pleasing, edifying, and helpful? Or instead do we spew out what is rotten, worthless, and hurtful? And if we choose to do both, how can we dare justify it? For ***does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.*** ([James 3:11-12](#))

Brothers and sisters, let's challenge ourselves to watch our words carefully. Our words are shockingly powerful; our tongue can be a salve for the soul or a weapon of great



destruction. I am wounded and convicted by the hard truth revealed in this passage as I consider what comes forth from my mouth each day. The Lord hears each and every word that is uttered, and it behooves us to pay close attention to the things that come from within. We need to pray for our words to be like fresh water to everyone around us, and that the bitter would be drained away completely. This is no easy task, as I can personally attest to, yet it should be our aim and goal to continue to work on it, moment by moment, as we strive to be more like Christ our glorious Savior.

Lord, help us to always use our tongues for good and the building up of Your Church, so that every word we speak ***gives grace to those who hear.***

~Associate Pastor Jeremy Preece