

Speech Therapy

(Colossians 4:2-4:6)

(preached 6/12/16; Sunday AM)

Introduction

Turn with me to Colossians 4:2-6....

If you are visiting with us today, we believe in the authority and inerrancy of the Bible here at Pine Grove..

For that reason, we believe the Bible when it says that the Word of God has the power to save souls and change lives...

Therefore, we hold the Bible in high regard....

We read it, we seek to interpret it rightly, so that we can obey it fully..

And all of that leads us to literally study every word of it...

So, we move through books of the Bible verse by verse to saturate our minds with truth which causes our hands and feet and mouths to live in obedience...

We have been in the book of Colossians since February, and we are coming to the next to last section of it this morning....

So, let's read Colossians 4:2-6 to allow God's word to begin to penetrate our hearts...

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; 3 praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; 4 that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

5 [a]Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, [b]making the most of the opportunity. 6 Let your speech always be [c]with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

Let us pray.

Selling the house, leaving your family, and driving across country seemed easy compared to having to try and fit in to Los Angeles culture.

Because everything was different when we moved there for 3 years for seminary....

I have talked about it before but no sweet tea, no grits, no yard made adjusting to life out there quite difficult...

Yet, one more aspect made it almost unbearable at times and that was having people make fun of how we talked...

Though most people loved to hear you speak, some loved to poke fun...

And though I have a much greater accent than Tonya, she often caught the worst of it...

Ill never forget one of first trips to the grocery store in Newhall California..

She walked in and asked a bag boy if he could get her a buggy....

And he just stared at her and let out... "Can I get you a what?!"

A buggy! You know a shopping cart...

Oh a shopping cart....Sure.

Now, what did you call it?

I called it a buggy and that is what it is...

It's a buggy.

Well, that wasn't the the only word that wasn't understood in LA...

We also had "fixing to..."

"Cut" out the lights.

"Bless your heart", and everyone's favorite...

"Y'all."

And my personal favorite was the time that I asked a group of 4th-6th how Abraham was kin to Lot...

And all of them said "how was he 'kin' to him?"

And I said, "Yeah, how was Abraham kin to Lot?"
Related to him?

But we survived and they survived us, and the Lord was with us....

However, we were shocked at how our speech was so different than theirs...

The same should be true for the Christian....

The world who'll be so shocked at how different we speak as believers...

We talked about this some in verses 5-11 of Colossians 3, where Paul told us how NOT to speak as new men and women in Christ...

If you think back or look back, we are to let abusive speech come out of our mouths as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ....

Angry words, slanderous words, malicious words, abusive words, and deceitful and lying words are not to be a part of the speech of the new man....

We saw that clearly in verses 8-9 of Colossians 3, but today we see the positive commands of what is to come out of the mouths of the new man and woman...

In fact, Paul is going to give us 3 ways to use our tongues for God's glory this morning...

In the book of James, listen to what God writes about our tongues, our speech and our words...

3 Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well.

4 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. 5 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! 6 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 [c]life, and is set on fire by [d]hell. 7 For every [e]species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human [f]race. 8 But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; 10 from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. 11 Does a fountain send out from the same opening both [g]fresh and bitter water? 12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce [h]fresh.

In case, you didn't already know, your tongue and the speech it produces reveal who you really are...

The words you use come from what truly lies in your heart...

And unless your heart has died and been reborn through the gospel, your speech reveals your lostness...

The reason I no longer cuss as a Christian is not because my grandma told me not to...

The reason I don't cuss as a Christian is because my heart has been changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ...

The anger that led to the filthy language no longer dominates my life and my speech....

Remember the truth that we have been learning for a few weeks now?

The new man, the saved man had died to his old way of life...

The heart that was filled with anger has been replaced by a heart that is filled with love for God and love for others...

And because the heart is new, the whole body is new...

Our minds are new.

Our thoughts are no longer consumed by the things of this world, but the things of heaven where our Lord is..

Our lives no longer follow the pattern of the world...

We put off the sexual immorality and passion and evil desires and greed that once led us....

And we have put on the knowledge of God...

We have put on eyes that don't see cultural divisions or gender divisions or social classes....

We have put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness and forbearance...

We have put on love that holds the new man together and guides his decisions...

We are filling our heart as new men and women with the word of God not the opinions of men..

We have decided to do everything for the glory of God and not to satisfy our flesh and our desires....

And because we are new men and women in Christ, the people around us are affected by that as well...

We saw last where the new man creates a new world because he to she takes Jesus everywhere they go..

So, they are new husbands and wives and parents and employees and the family and the workplace are changed because the new Christian has been changed as well...

The old has gone and the new has come, and the reason that the Christian is different is not because they try harder at being good...

But because they have been changed by God through His Spirit....

The new man is a new man because he or she is in Christ...

And that is what the first 2 chapters of Colossians was about...

The fact that Jesus is not only sufficient to save us by his life, death and resurrection, but He is also sufficient to change us from the inside out...

And His change is so evident that I can safely say...

If you call yourself a Christian, but you haven't been transformed, you aren't saved...

Because if Jesus is powerful enough to save, He is equally powerful to change....

And he does change those who are in Him...

And the Colossians needed to remember that...

The false teachers were telling them that Christ wasn't enough, but God was telling them through Paul...

Jesus is not only enough to SAVE a person, he is enough to TRANSFORM them in a new man or woman as well...

So today, we end that section of the new man, and we end it in a good place because we end it with a part of the new man that is often the toughest to transform...

And that is our speech....

So, let's dig into these 3 ways to use our speech for God's glory, and the first one is found in verse 2....

I. Speak to God (2)

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving;

The first way to use your speech for God's glory is to simply pray to Him...

Prayer is simply speaking to God....

Listen to what John MacArthur says about prayer....

Prayer is the most important speech that your mouth will ever utter. Prayer is the most important conversation that you will ever hold, the most important expression of the new life. You see, prayer is the divinely appointed weapon' against the attack of the devil. Prayer is the vehicle for confession of sin. Prayer is the means by which the grateful soul pours out praise before the throne of God. Prayer is the voice of the weeping soul calling on the the Lord in the time of need. Prayer is the intercession of the concerned Christian, who calls to God on behalf of another's trouble. Prayer is the simple conversation of the beloved child with the caring Father, as they talk of love.

In your old life, you cursed God with our mouth...

In your new life, that same mouth is able to praise God..

That is the miracle of the new man; his tongue was lost but now it found...

And it should produce words of thanksgiving and praise to God...

Notice what Paul writes here...

Devote yourselves to prayer...

I actually like the King James better here...

Continue in prayer...

We see this same truth about prayer in other passages like 1 Thessalonians 5 where we hear the command to pray without ceasing....

Now, I have heard all kinds of explanations of this, but let me tell you what this means for us....

It would be impossible to constantly walk around praying...

That would prevent you from ever carrying on a conversation with anyone...

I can't even walk and chew gum, so I have no shot of being able to talk to someone and to God....

So, the idea is not a continuous prayer because none of you can pray in your sleep...

Rather the thought of continuous prayer is this....

God is always in the front of your mind...

There's never a moment where your thoughts are not God centered in whatever you are doing...

You see something good in the world, you thank God for it...

You see something bad, you ask God to change it...

You walk always on the verge of a conversation with the Lord...

God is always on the tip of your tongue...

Sure, you interact and you live and you relate to others, but your thoughts are never far from the Lord....

And you are constantly asking the Lord to answer your prayers...

This is even the idea of a nagging child going to his parents over and over with his requests...

And I know exactly how that feels with a 3 year old, but God desires we do that...

You have a need?

Take it to the Lord in prayer and take it often...

You are not nagging God...

He does lose his patience or his temper...

Devote yourself to it...

Ride down the road and pray for that son or dad who isn't saved...

And go about your business but always be asking and begging God to answer....

You have permission to nag your heavenly father with your speech and your should...

Many of us can't go a whole day without talking to someone, but we can go weeks, months or years without talking to God...

One way the new man uses his new tongue is to talk to the God who gave him the new birth....

And don't miss the additional aspect of prayer in verse 2...

Pray continually, but pray with an attitude of thanksgiving....

Be thankful as you go to God in prayer...

Be thankful that he is there to hear you...

Be thankful that he has saved you...

Be thankful that He has the power to answer your prayers...

Be thankful for simply being in a right relationship with Him...

My daughters never had to be taught how to win over their dad...

But guess what both of them do if they need something from their daddy?

They usually come to me with thanksgiving....

"Daddy, we are so thankful that you took us to get ice cream last time. Can we go again?"

If kids know that thankfulness is effective with an earthly father, how much more should we as believers go with an attitude of thankfulness when we go to our heavenly Father with our needs?

The new man uses his speech to first of all speak to God continually and with thanksgiving...

The second way to use your speech for God's glory is to....

II. Speak about Christ (3-4)

Verse 3-4....

3 praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; 4 that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

Paul moves from a command to pray continuously to ask a request of the Colossians, and it was this...

To pray for him and his fellow workers to have the opportunity to speak forth the mystery of Christ in a clear and convincing way...

Couple things to take note of here regarding the speech of the new man...

The first is simply a reminder to use our tongue to pray for others...

The old man has one concern, and it is himself or herself...

The new man should have a concern for others, and he should especially be concerned for his brothers and sisters in Christ...

He should have a desire to see them prosper in their ministries, and he should open his mouth to pray for them...

And what Paul specifically requested here was a prayer for more open doors to share the truth of the word of God with others....

Now that sounds real nice, but I want to remind you of where Paul was as he was writing this letter to the Colossians...

He was under house arrest in Rome for preaching the name of Christ....

Now think about this...

Here is Paul chained to a Roman soldier in less than ideal living conditions and he is writing a letter to a group of believers and he gets to a prayer request...

And yet, nowhere in the request is a request for him to be released or for him to be found innocent of the charges against him...

No, Paul has one thing on the top of his list of prayer list and it is this....

Pray that we will have more opportunities to share the gospel...

And what you see here is Paul as a new man in Christ not worried about his circumstances....

Not asking for prayer for his circumstances but asking for prayer to give him more opportunities to share the gospel while in Rome....

Now remember, why is Paul in Rome?

Because he was sharing the gospel with others...

I'm in prison because I was preaching the gospel, so pray that while I am in prison that I will be able to preach the gospel even more...

It seems so backwards, but that is how the new man operates....

He is no longer consumed with his own comfort; rather, he is consumed with making sure that others hear the good news...

And since his mouth must open to share the truth of Christ, his prayer request is that he would have more opportunities to speak about Christ, even though....

Speaking about Christ has landed him in prison....

Now, there is one more thing to see here about the need to speak about Christ and it is this....

We must speak it clearly...

I have a tendency to talk too fast at times, and my words run together and end up sounding like a long mumble...

John Andrew and I were outside the other day, and I must have been talking too fast and it was all running together...

So, he obviously couldn't understand all I was saying....

But he is 3 and he didn't know how to tell me to not slur my words, so he just said.....

“Daddy, speak louder.”

But what he really meant was ... “Daddy, speak clearer.”

And there is a real need in the church today for clear speech...

When one of the supposed leading pastors in our nation goes on live TV, and is asked, “You believe that Jesus is the only way. So if a Muslim or a Jew rejects Jesus, he is going to hell isn't he?”

And he responds with.... “Well, I don’t know,” we have a real problem with clear speaking about the gospel...

When you speak about Jesus Christ to this world, -and you should be speaking about Him,- make sure you aren’t hard to understand....

Now, let me tell you something that you need to know up front before you speak about Christ in this world...

The message you take the world is best news but it is also the worst news....

Because in order to present the truth of the goodness of Jesus Christ, you first need to tell people how evil they are...

And no one wants to think of themselves as a bad person...

But you must speak the truth about them before you can speak the truth about Him...

And the truth is that the Bible calls every man a sinner who is dead in his sins and filled with evil...

And in case you were wondering, that isn’t the nicest thing to say to a stranger....

People resist thinking of themselves as bad people...

And they certainly don't want some stranger to tell them they are bad...

But if you want to be clear, you need to tell people the truth about themselves....

And you also must tell them that the Bible says that there is but one destination for all who reject Christ in this life...

So you also have to speak clearly about hell...

That the Bible calls it a real place with no escape and that there are no second chances after you die....

That is also not a very popular way to speak to people...

But you must speak it clearly to them...

Another thing that you must also be clear about is that Jesus is the only way to escape hell...

And that a person must call on Him in this life in order to avoid the punishment that awaits immediately after death...

And the final piece that you must be clear about when speak about Christ is this....

You must be clear in telling someone what the Bible says they must do in order to be saved by Christ....

So you must speak clearly about repentance, which is the turning from sin, and faith, which is trust in Christ....

And that those two acts, repenting and trusting in Christ, are the requirements of those who want to be saved...

The new man is called to speak about Christ...

And he is called to speak about him at every opportunity and with clarity...

Don't be someone who doesn't take advantage of opportunities and don't be someone who is confusing when you talk....

Look people in the eye...

Tell them they are a sinner who has offended God and headed to hell with out Christ...

Tell them to repent of their sin and trust in Christ....

And tell them that this opportunity to trust in Christ only comes in this life, and since they have no idea when this life will end, today is the day to be saved...

That doesn't require a seminary degree or even a knowledge of the entire Bible...

It simple requires you to pray for opportunities and then open your mouth and speak clearly about Christ to a world that needs the truth...

The speech of the new man is directed to God in prayer....

And it is directed to others about Christ....

But one final thing to see about the speech of the new man and it is this....

The new man must.....

III. Speak with Grace and Truth (5-6)

Verse 5 and 6....

5 [a]Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, [b]making the most of the opportunity. 6 Let your speech always be [c]with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

When I first got saved, the preacher who disciplined me and taught me had me read a few books....

In one of those books as a brand new Christian, I remember reading the following line...

“Your life speaks so loud that I can’t hear a word you are saying.”

I liked it so much that I wrote it down, cut it out and hung it on my wall...

As a reminder that my behavior would effect everything that I said to others...

If my behavior was sinful, it would discredit the truth that I wanted to share with others...

On the other hand, if my behavior was righteous, it may give me a foot in the door to speak the truth to others...

As we come to this last section and the final way to speak for God's glory as a new man, Paul opens up with this simple command....

Conduct yourself with wisdom to those who are outsiders...

And the simple teaching is this....

Be on your best behavior around unbelievers....

And why is that and what does that have to do with the speech of the new man?

Well, it is real simple....

If you want an audience for what you have say about Christ, first make sure your behavior is good....

Because your actions speak a lot louder than your words...

A man living in sin telling others to live in righteousness is drowned about by his own poor behavior....

No one wants to be told what to do by a man or woman who isn't practicing what they preach...

On the other hand, live a life that honors the Lord and the Lord may use that good conduct to get you into a conversation with someone who is lost...

And then the that happens, Paul reminds us of how we are to speak as Christians...

Speak with grace, which simply means to speak with kindness to others....

To speak with wisdom in what you say...

To know the person you are speaking to and to speak to them in the manner that they will best receive it...

Some people can be talked to very directly and they will respond....

Some people are easily offended and quite sensitive...

The gracious speaker knows how to speak to both....

And though he speaks offensive words, the person is never offended by someone who is gracious...

It is a great blessing to be a gracious speaker....

Most Christians are not gracious in their speech...

They are loud and offensive and do more talking than listening and then they wonder why nobody will listen to them....

Gracious speakers are gracious listeners and they are fun to talk to even when they have to say very hard things to you....

Let your speech of the new man be filled with grace....

But the balance to that is to also let your speech be filled with salt...

Salt was a preservative in Paul's day...

It would be put on meat to keep it from spoiling.

It was also an antiseptic that you would place on cuts to keep them from getting infected....

Let your speech be salty is a reminder to not be so gracious that you lose the truth in what you have to say....

Think of speech as a bomb being covered in beautiful wrapping paper....

People should enjoy opening it up but in the middle of all the fancy paper is a bomb of truth that needs to explode in their lives....

Look, you can lovingly and kindly tell somebody that they are a sinner headed to hell unless they repent and trust Christ....

That is what it means for the new man's speech to be seasoned with grace and salt....

And that is the final truth about the speech of the new man...

HE must speak kindly but truthfully to all..

Now let me offer a final word on the speech of the new man....

Conclusion

Our tongues and our words and our speech must all be born again as well....

It is not acceptable to call yourself a Christian but have the mouth of an unbeliever....

The true believer is a new man from head to toe and all parts in between....

His heart is new, his mind is new, and his tongue is new...

In short, his whole lifestyle is new....

And if it is not, I would examine myself to see if I am truly saved...

Let me end with this....

Study after study has shown that the average person speaks 15,000 words a day...

I would ask you....

How many of those 15000 words that come out of your mouth are spoken to God....

Spoken about Christ and have been spoken with grace and truth?

There are only so many words that you will be able to speak in a lifetime....

Yet, the promise of Jesus Christ is that every word that we have spoken will undergo his judgment...

And listen to the chilling words of Proverbs 18:20-21 to end our time together this morning...

20

With the [k]fruit of a man's mouth his stomach will be satisfied;

He will be satisfied with the product of his lips.

21

Death and life are in the [l]power of the tongue,

And those who love it will eat its fruit.

Let me give you the quick explanation of that...

If you fill your mouth with curses of God, you will enjoy the fruit of being cursed by God...

If you fill your mouth with gossip and slander of others, you will enjoy the fruit of being gossiped about and slandered by others..

If you fill your mouth with lies and deception, you will enjoy the fruit of being lied to...

On the other hand, if you fill your mouth with praise to the Lord, you will enjoy the fruit of being blessed by God..

IF you fill your mouth with speech about Christ, you will enjoy the fruit of being named by Christ as His own...

If you fill your mouth with gracious and salty speech, you will enjoy the fruit of hearing the grace of God poured out in your life...

The new man has a new tongue and it should produce new words that are a blessing to God and to others...