

The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart – Sunday 8th June 2014

“we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.”

Acts 2:11b

Beloved in The Lord,

As Christians, one of our primary functions in life is to be living witnesses for God. Through the blood of His Son Jesus, shed on the cross, God has saved us from the kingdom of darkness and has established us in the Kingdom of Light; He has saved us from eternal death and brought us into eternal life. He has kept us here so that we would be a living testimony to His love.

As Jesus prepared His disciples for Pentecost, He said to them: ***“but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).***

Jesus said “You shall be my witnesses.” This applies to everyone who is a child of God. Our life is a witness. The question is what sort of witness does our life give? What do people find out about God, about Jesus when they meet us? Wherever we go we leave footprints. We give a witness. One of the main ways we witness is with our tongue – the words that we say.

Jesus said that ***“The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart” (Matthew 12:34).*** This means that our mouth reveals what abides in our heart. If our heart is full of bitterness, hatred, unforgiveness, anger, evil intentions, then that will flow forth from our mouth. If our heart is negative, then our words will be negative. The tongue is a small organ but it is very powerful, and very hard to keep under control. Who amongst us have not uttered words that we regret afterwards, but the damage is done.

James wrote in his Epistle: ***„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. 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. 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 3:2-12).

I quoted this rather long passage because there is nothing that can be taken out. James points out to us how hard it is to control our tongue.

This is why David prayed: ***“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer” (Psalm 19:14).***

What a great prayer to pray every day. If you were to record every single word you utter today, and then at the end of the day you were to sit down next to Jesus as He replayed the recording out loud, how would you feel? How much would you regret? How much would make you blush or feel uncomfortable? How much would you need to repent and ask forgiveness for? How many words would you be ashamed of? These are serious questions. Jesus warns us:

“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” (Matthew 12:34b-37).

Do you see how words have a very significant amount of power, and they are serious? That is why Jesus gives us this very warning. God gave us a tongue so that we could glorify Him with it. It is given for us to expound His wonder, His love, His grace, His glory; it is given for us to praise Him.

Today we celebrate Pentecost, the day the Christian Church was born. It is the day of the out pouring of The Holy Spirit.

On that Day, The Day of Pentecost, Jesus fulfilled the promise that He had given to His disciples. Jesus sent God The Holy Spirit into the world. As we considered last Sunday, Jesus had to return to The Father in Heaven, before God The Holy Spirit would come. It is through The person of The Holy Spirit, that Jesus is present and resides in the hearts of those who truly believe in Him.

On that day, there were a number of significant signs of the out pouring of The Holy Spirit: There was a sound of a rushing wind; there were tongues of fire and the believers began to speak in new tongues – in languages they had not learned. This is very significant. The Holy Spirit came, and the very first thing that He did was take control of the tongues of the believers. As they were filled with The Holy Spirit, they began to speak in languages that were foreign to them; languages that they had never learned. We read in Acts:

„And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. They were amazed and astonished, saying, “Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God” (Acts 2:4-11).

You see, God The Holy Spirit took control of their tongues and they spoke of the wonders of God in languages they did not know. This was a mighty miracle and led many to believe that day.

What does this mean for us today? I would say that if and when we surrender our tongue to God The Holy Spirit, then He can do mighty things through us. Our theme today is ***The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.*** From the day of Pentecost onwards, the disciple’s hearts were

full of The Holy Spirit, and from that day they spent the rest of their lives expounding The Word and Wonders of Almighty God.

In order for our witness to be pure and clear, in order for our mouths to speak of the wonders of God, we need to be filled with The Holy Spirit.

Last Sunday we touched upon Paul's words to the Ephesians: „be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18). We saw that this means be continually filled with The Spirit. It is continuous not a one time event. In order to better understand this text let's look at the context: ***„Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;” (Ephesians 5:15-20).***

Paul admonishes us to be careful how we walk. We need to understand what the will of The Lord is. We need to be filled with the Spirit and we need to give thanks to The Father always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If only we would heed this advice – four things – then we would be in a place where our life's witness is indeed strong.

I repeat the four things:

1. Be careful how you walk.
2. Seek to understand the will of The Lord.
3. Be filled with the Spirit.
4. Give thanks to the Father always for all things in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

I would like to emphasise the last point once more: **Give thanks to the Father always for all things in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.**

If we were to replace all our complaining with giving of thanks, then what a powerful testimony that would be! How bright our light would shine! How Jesus would be lifted up in our midst!

The more we give thanks, the more thankful our hearts become, the more thankful our hearts become, the more praise and thanksgiving flows from our mouths, because „The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart!

Today as we celebrate Pentecost, may we surrender not only our tongue, but all of ourselves anew to God The Holy Spirit and may we glorify our Lord Jesus Christ who loves us so much.

Let us ask Him to so fill our hearts with love, that He would lead us every step of the way. May our hearts be so filled with Jesus that as our mouth speaks from the fullness of the heart – Jesus would be glorified.

Amen.

Pastor Colvin S. MacPherson Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sydney.

All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.