

SERMON SERIES: Words Matter

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DATE: February 23, 2025

Sermon Title

“Slow to Speak”

Introduction

This week, we finished our series called **Words Matter**. We spend so much of our lives communicating. We talk, text, email, post, comment, etc. And it is easy to focus on the quantity of our words and miss out on the importance of the quality of our words. The words that we choose to use communicate more than just their definition, but are a reflection of our heart and our faith. This week, we focused on listening well and being slow to speak. Too often, we prioritize being the first to speak or being right, and in doing so cause damage to relationships that is hard to repair. When we strive to be slow to speak, and choose when and how we use our words, we can actually build relationships and develop life in the people we speak to. To get started this week, answer this icebreaker question with your group:

- When was a time that you “won” an argument, but ended up causing some damage in a relationship?.

Seek the Word

Read Jame 1:19-20 aloud, then answer the questions below:

- What does it mean to be “quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry”?
- Why do you think we are often quick to speak when we become angry, and not when other emotions are in play?

Read James 3:2 aloud, then answer the questions below:

- Why do you think James emphasizes the importance of controlling our tongue, especially in relation to our spiritual maturity?
- James sets a high bar of perfection in this verse. How are we to live out this teaching when we ourselves cannot be perfect?

Read Matthew 22:34-40 aloud, then answer the questions below:

- How does loving God and loving our neighbor relate to the way we use our words?
- Is it harder for you to find loving words for God or for the people around you? Why is that?

Go Deeper

Oftentimes our desire to be “right” trumps our desire to love the people we are speaking to. We push past respect and care to go straight for “winning” and in doing so cause damage. Talk as a group about some different reasons that we strive so hard to be right, sometimes even without thinking about it, yet struggle to be loving with the words that we use. Then come up with ways to invite God in to transform our hearts and words to be more loving, reflecting His love for us.

Talk About It

- Are there certain areas or relationships where you find it most challenging to be quick to listen and slow to speak? What is it about those environments or people that cause this reaction?
- What is a conversation that you know/think is coming up this week that you need to practice patience and humility in? How can the group be praying for you and supporting you to do that well?
- What steps can you take to manage your anger and other emotions in ways that align with the righteousness that God desires?

Wrap Up

Reminder: Our **Words Matter**. For the past four weeks we have been drilling down into the significance of those two words. Hopefully, you have seen transformation and renewal in your relationships with God and others as you take this truth to heart. **Words Matter** when trying to build others up or tear them down. **Words Matter** when we are speaking to the people who trust us and look up to us. **Words Matter** in speaking truth over lies, and bringing God's truth to the world. And **Words Matter** when we choose to speak lovingly and patiently, instead of out of anger and frustration. We have a call to be people who use our words to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ, and His love for us, to all we come in contact with. It is not easy to do on our own, but surrendering our words to God can bring about amazing change for the Kingdom.

Challenge: Participate in our Daily *Watch Your Mouth Challenge*. Each day, find 3 people to encourage and speak life into, 2 moments where you can express gratitude to/for someone, and each day read, reflect, and pray Psalm 19:14 "May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer."

Prayer: Ask God to help each of you become more like Jesus in their words and actions. Pray for strength to listen actively, speak wisely, and manage anger in a way that honors God. Ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance in putting on humility in all interactions. Thank God for the ways in which His words speak life into our lives, and for His Spirit which allows us to speak lives into others.