

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for December 16, 2018

No Corrupting Talk
Ephesians 4:29

I. Corrupt speech

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths,

- What is corrupt talk?
 - “Corrupting” - *sapros*
 - Rotten words
 - Luke 6:43 “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit,”
 - “The image of rottenness suggests that Paul wants believers to develop a kind of ‘gag reflex’ to unhealthy ways of talking that will repulse them and cause them to clean up the way they speak to each other.”¹
 - Ephesians 5:4 “Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.”
 - This may have been news for Gentile Christians in the congregation
 - Corrupting talk is not limited to rotten speech
 - Useless words
 - Matthew 13:47-48 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. 48 When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad.”
 - “The adjective *σαπρός* is used of rotten wood, withered flowers, and rancid fish. It generally refers to things or people who are worn out or useless or that which is of little worth.”²
 - Context would confirm corrupting and unwholesome words as words we speak that are unprofitable
 - What are examples of unprofitable speech?
 - Speech that harms others
 - Lying, gossip, reckless words or slander
 - Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord (Proverbs 12:22)

¹ Clinton E. Arnold, Ephesians, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 305.

² Harold W. Hoehner, Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 628–629.

- Gossip is like feasting on delicious morsels that go into our inner being and impact the way we view people (Proverbs 18:8)
- Those who continue the chain of gossip only separate close friends (Proverbs 17:9)
- Rash and hasty words in any given situation are like the thrusts of a sword (Proverbs 12:18)
- He who is blameless does not slander with his tongue or take up a reproach against a friend (Psalm 15:3)
- Application: Ask yourself, am I guilty of any speech that has harmed others?
 - Have I lied or not been entirely truthful about another person?
 - Have I initiated, received, or passed on words of gossip about another person?
 - Have I spoken hastily and misrepresented someone?
 - Have I spoken to harm the reputation or character of another person?
- Speech that exalts self
 - Boasting, self-depreciation/false humility, flattery
 - If we desire not to understand, but only to express our own opinion, we are a fool (Proverbs 18:2)
 - We are told not to speak our own praises but to let others speak our praises (Proverbs 27:2)
 - In fact, in flattering our neighbors we only spread a net for our own feet (Proverbs 29:5)
 - Application: Ask yourself, has my speech exalted myself?
 - Have I said things in order to get attention from others?
 - Have I spoken in order to gain man's approval?
 - Has my speech been geared toward my own interests or the interests of others?
- Speech that contradicts God's truth
 - We have already been commanded to speak the truth in love to one another (Ephesians 4:15)
 - We have also been told to put away falsehood and speak the truth with one another (Ephesians 4:25)
 - Our speech is not profitable or useful when it does not agree with God's truth already revealed in His Word
 - How can this look?
 - Misrepresenting the character of God

- Misrepresenting the promises of God
- Misrepresenting the commands of God
- Application: Ask yourself, have I spoken words that conform to God's truth revealed in His Word?
 - Have I accurately spoken about God and His character?
 - Have I accurately spoken about God and His promises?
 - Have I accurately spoken about God and His commands?

II. Constructive speech

but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion,

- Ephesians 4:12 “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ”
- Ephesians 4:15-16 “Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”
- What can constructive speech look like?
 - The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life (Proverbs 10:11)
 - Words of consolation
 - Proverbs 12:25 “Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad.”
 - Words of instruction
 - Proverbs 10:21 “The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of sense.”
 - Proverbs 15:7 “The lips of the wise spread knowledge; not so the hearts of fools.”
 - Words of correction
 - Proverbs 28:23 “Whoever rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with his tongue.”
 - Proverbs 27:5-6 “Better is open rebuke than hidden love. 6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.”
 - Application: Is my speech constructive?
 - How have I aimed to console and comfort others with my words?
 - Or do you avoid such situations thinking you're not good at that or someone else will do it?
 - How have I brought truth or instruction to a given situation?
 - Or have you preferred to let someone else instruct?
 - How have I offered loving correction to that which opposes God's righteousness?

- Or have you opted to only speak the nice pleasantries to those in your life?
- “As fits the occasion”
- When is speech constructive?
 - What is the need of the moment?
 - NASB - “according to the need of the moment”
 - Proverbs 15:23 “To make an apt answer is a joy to a man, and a word in season, how good it is!”
 - Proverbs 25:11 “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.”
 - A time for silence
 - Proverbs 10:19 “When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.”
 - Proverbs 13:3 “Whoever guards his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.”
 - Proverbs 17:27-28 “Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding. 28 Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.”
 - Listening before speaking
 - Proverbs 29:20 “Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.”
 - Proverbs 18:13 “If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.”
 - Thinking before speaking
 - Proverbs 15:28 “The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.”
 - If we simply start by not speaking, then listening, then thinking, then our speech will have wisdom and a better chance at being constructive
 - We can definitely say that constructive speech is always beneficial
 - Hebrews 3:13 “But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”
 - Who does not need or want encouragement everyday?
 - Application: Ask yourself, do I give consideration to the timing of my words?
 - How do I demonstrate restraint in not speaking when my voice does not need to be heard?
 - How do I eagerly listen and learn before I speak in a given situation?
 - How do I give thought to my words before they proceed from my mouth?
 - How do I look to offer encouragement on a daily basis?

III. Considerate speech

that it may give grace to those who hear.

- Why do we speak constructive speech?
 - Seeking to impart grace to any and every listener
 - On the one hand, we will be served if we consider the content and timing of our words
 - However, on the other hand, we cannot miss the purpose behind God's gift of language to mankind
 - Our words are given for the purpose of serving one another
 - As with all of our actions, so also our words must be purposed to serve others
 - We cannot purpose to serve others with our words until we have actually considered others and their interests
 - Philippians 2:3-4 "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."
 - When we consider others, we will know who we are talking to and what they need the most
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:14 "And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all."
 - Admonish/rebuke the idle/unruly
 - Encourage/exhort the fainthearted
 - Help/comfort the weak
 - Notice our consideration of others does not just mean that we tell them what they might want to hear
 - Our consideration of others guides us to know how we can deliver constructive words that will be a gift of grace to the hearer
 - Application: Ask yourself, am I genuinely trying to minister grace to those who hear my words?
 - How can I increase my consideration of others?
 - How can I submit to Christ's Lordship over my life in the way that I use my words for others and not myself?

Conclusion:

- We have been about the task of analyzing our words this morning
- Progress in our speech must begin in our hearts
- Proverbs 4:23-24 "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. 24 Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you."

- Matthew 12:33-37 “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. 34 You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. 36 I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, 37 for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”
- The degree to which you are worshipping God determines the degree to which your words will be worthwhile