

OCTOBER 2012

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TODAY IN THE **Word**

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LAMB OF GOD HOLY ONE MEDIATOR
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LIGHT OF THE WORLD WONDERFUL
COUNSELOR GOOD SHEPHERD LOGOS
FATHER CREATOR YESHUA SERVANT

WORD

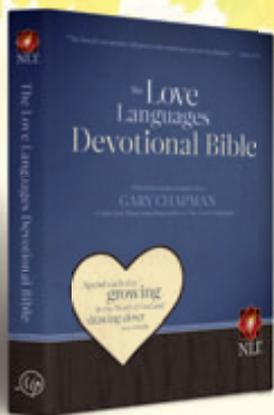
THE

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The Word
became flesh
and made
his dwelling
among us.

John 1:14

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A Practical Theology of Language



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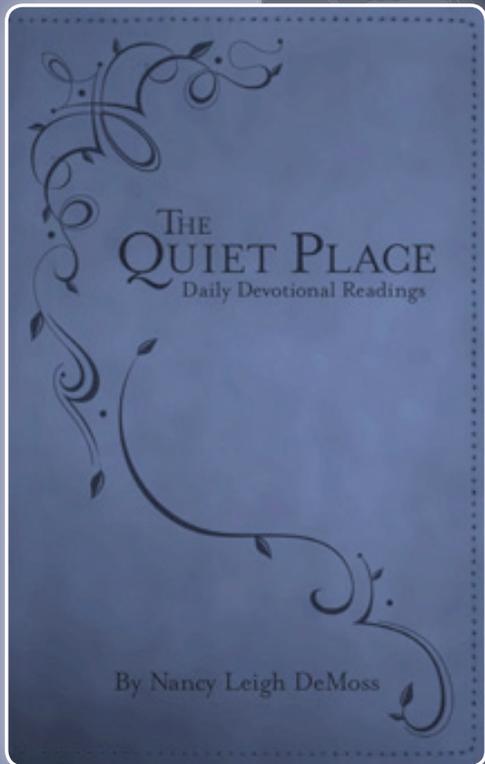


from bestselling author and host of
Revive Our Hearts radio program
Nancy Leigh DeMoss:

366

*Daily Devotional
Readings from the
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*"You who seek God, let
your hearts revive."
— Psalm 69:32*



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TODAY WITH PAUL NYQUIST

President of Moody Bible Institute

Taming the Tongue



Dr. Joe Wall, former president of Colorado Christian University, tells a story about when he was a young pastor and he went to visit an elderly, retired Baptist preacher in the hospital.

The man, in his eighties, was awaiting surgery, and doctors said there was a chance he might not recover. When Dr. Wall arrived at the hospital, the man appeared troubled. To encourage him, Dr. Wall reassured him with the good news that he would soon meet His Savior face to face.

Dr. Wall says the elderly man explained, "I'm not afraid to die. In fact, I've been looking forward to it. My problem is that I just bawled out my nurse, and I don't want to appear in the presence of Jesus with that on my conscience. Would you pray with me that I would have the opportunity not only to confess my anger to the Lord but also to see the nurse in the morning before I go to surgery, so that I can ask her forgiveness?"

This Christian ministry leader was in his eighties, yet he still battled with his tongue. In James 3, we find insight into this war we wage against our flesh. James writes, "All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison" (James 3:7-8).

Can you identify with James's description of the tongue? Indeed, it is impossible—apart from God's work in our lives—to control all of the words we speak, especially when we are tired, provoked, angry, or impatient. But since we have been raised with Christ, God commands us to take off our old self with its practices, and this involves a significant change in the pattern of our speech (Col. 3:8-9).

James continues, "With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be" (James 3:9-10).

James tells us that taming our tongue includes avoiding hypocrisy in our speech. Vicious language directed toward others is not only an offense to God, but it also harms our Christian witness. As we walk with Jesus and keep in step with the Spirit, we will—by God's grace—gain greater control over our tongue. However, we will also inevitably fail to honor God with our lips all the time.

What I love about Dr. Wall's story is this elderly man's keen awareness of his sin, his lack of excuses for his unkind words, and his humble, repentant heart. May God give us the grace to follow his example, knowing that some day we will give an account to the Lord for every word we have spoken (Matt. 12:36).

THEOLOGY MATTERS

by John Koessler

God's Words and Ours



We exercise a kind of dominion with our words. Language is a realm where God has assigned us what some have called “a measure of independent power.” This is true of all speech, but it is especially true when it comes to the gospel. Like those who inscribed the words of holy Scripture, the language we use when we share God’s Word is our own language. Those who proclaim the message of God have been granted the liberty to choose our own words.

Yet this freedom to frame the message in our own words is also a responsibility. Dominion implies stewardship. The most familiar dimension of this stewardship has to do with the content of our message. We have been granted freedom to choose our words—but not our gospel. Not even angels exercise that freedom (Gal. 1:8). To preach is to be bound to the gospel and the truths that arise from it. The preacher cannot say just anything. The church is obliged to teach certain doctrines (Titus 2:1).

This stewardship is vividly pictured by Paul when he describes the church as “the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). The church is under the authority of Scripture and bound by what it commands. Yet there is a kind of reciprocal relationship be-

tween the church and the Word. The same church that is built upon the foundation of the Word and is answerable to the Word is also responsible for the Word. The Word of God is living and active (Heb. 4:12). But it is also passive and vulnerable. The same Word that has power to give life to those who are spiritually dead can languish by the wayside and be trampled underfoot by the profane (Luke 8:5). It can be diluted and sold for profit (2 Cor. 2:17).

The church also exercises a stewardship over the kind of language it uses to convey this message. The freedom we have to choose our words is not absolute freedom. One limiting factor is the particularity of the ideas contained in the text. The biblical writers meant to express specific ideas to a specific audience. One of our aims when we share God’s Word is to put these ideas on display. If we are to accomplish this, we must be as certain as possible that the words we use are fit words. The language we use must be suited to the ideas we are trying to express. This is true any time we speak. Whatever the subject: “Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone” (Col. 4:6).

For Further Study

To learn more about the importance of language in preaching, read *Folly, Grace & Power: The Mysterious Act of Preaching* by John Koessler (Zondervan).

FROM THE EDITORS

by Elena Maffei

re|Focus: Pastors' Conference at Moody

Band of brothers, books, breakout sessions, biblical teaching—you'll find all this at our Pastors' Conference. And that's just the stuff that begins with "b." There's also prayer and preaching, dialogue and debate, counseling and challenge. To define Pastors' Conference, which happens at Moody's Chicago campus every May, we'd have to use every letter of the alphabet. In short, these four days at Moody is a wonderful time for pastors to hear God's Word, to be refreshed and renewed, and to enjoy the company of fellow-shepherds.

For all of us at *Today in the Word*, Pastors' Conference at Moody is a special time. It's a blessing to see all these leaders of God's people come together for a time in God's Word and fellowship. And it's also a way for Moody Bible Institute to say thank you to the nation's pastors. Since October is Pastor Appreciation Month, we would like to suggest to our readers a way to show appreciation to your pastor. As a congregation, you could sponsor his trip to Chicago to Pastors' Conference 2013. Leading and feeding God's people is rewarding and challenging at the same time. Your pastor teaches and preaches and counsels and ministers. There are times when he needs to hear God's Word and to receive counsel. He needs time away from the demands of his congregation. He needs to re|Focus.

With powerful worship, some of the most gifted speakers and teachers of God's Word, and interesting workshops, this conference may just transform your pastor's

ministry. Your whole congregation will benefit from it. To learn more about re|Focus 2013, visit www.moodyconferences.com.



At this year's Pastors' Conference in Chicago, Moody Bible Institute welcomed 950 participants from across the U.S. (41 states) and from 15 foreign countries.

What pastors say about re|Focus

"All of the messages were amazing, Spirit-filled, God-anointed messages that refueled and challenged my heart."

— Rob, Kamloops, Canada

"I got far more than I expected. A spirit of genuine fellowship and generosity permeated the conference. The networking of ministers was amazing!"

— Calvin, Tortola, British Virgin Islands

"This conference was a blessing and much needed time of reflection and renewal." — Terren, Texas

"I enjoyed the main and breakout sessions. The morning prayer was inspiring and the music was uplifting."

— George, Nassau, Bahamas

VOLUME 25 ISSUE 10

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Paul B. Currie

MANAGING EDITOR

Heather Moffitt

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Elena Maffei

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

John Koessler

Kim Pickett

WRITER

Brad Baurain

1-800-DL MOODY

(356-6639)

www.moodyministries.net



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TODAY IN THE **Word**

A MINISTRY OF MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE

God's Words, Your Words: A Practical Theology of Language

Researchers at the University of Arizona have determined that a typical American speaks over 15,000 words per day. As Christians, do we think about the words coming out of our mouths? How do we discover God's perspective on what we say? Scripture—the Word of God—has a great deal to say about our own words, how we can both grieve and glorify God with our speech.

This month in *Today in the Word*, we'll examine God's gift of language. We'll see the connection between faith and speech, and we'll explore Scripture's instructions about how to use the gift of words in a way that pleases God. We'll also see how the gift of the ability to use words is also connected to God's gift of the Word, Jesus Himself. Through the gift of Scripture (God's written word) we can know Jesus (the living Word) and have our own words transformed.

We hope that our study this month will encourage you in your journey of faith. All of us at *Today in the Word* appreciate your partnership to make the study of the Word of God available to people across the nation and around the world. Your support of this ministry is a blessing! Throughout this month, may you be blessed as the Lord guides the words of your mouth and the meditation of your heart.

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Foundations: The Power and Creativity of God's Words

"Language, it seems from Scripture, is integral to the act of creation, and integral to who God is," wrote Michael Pasquale and Nathan L.K. Bierma in *Every Tribe and Tongue: A Biblical Vision for Language in Society*. "God speaks, God acts, and creation bursts forth. God's word, and words, goes out into all creation, and creation becomes a beautiful echo of his good words."

In Genesis 1, Scripture opens by highlighting the power and creativity of God's words. That God created is the very first truth the Bible tells us about Him (v. 1). He could have done it with a thought, but He chose to do it with language. Genesis 1 reveals that He spoke the universe into being. He spoke a word and there were stars, another word and there were sparrows. His words made and formed the physical world and all living creatures. As He created things and pronounced

them good, He also named them, part of the process of ordering the world and showing the value of all He had made. After blessing the animals (v. 22), He announced His plan to create a qualitatively different creature, one made in His image (vv. 26–27). Human beings would be responsible to rule as stewards over the rest of creation (vv. 28–30).

God said,
"Let there be
light," and there
was light.

Genesis 1:3

The language of our daily lives is used within this rich theological context. As we communicate, are we aware of the power

and beauty of God's gift of language? A practical theology of language, especially speaking and listening, and the role it plays in the life of faith can help us better follow and glorify the Lord. For this reason, our devotional topic this month is "God's Word, Our Words." Our goal is to seek firm biblical foundations for the words that fill our lives.

Apply the Word

Genesis 1 closes with the "creation mandate" (vv. 28–30), when God blessed and charged Adam and Eve with stewardship over the rest of creation. The fact that this is the longest speech in the story is a clue to the importance of this responsibility. As we interact with the natural world, all we do should be for God's praise and glory.

Pray with Us

Pray for faculty in the Bible department at Moody's undergraduate school campus in Chicago. Thank God for these professors committed to helping students know and love Scripture: Trevor Burke, John Hart, William Marty, and Gerald Peterman.

Foundations: Christ the Logos

The New Testament claim that God became a man is, as Mark Noll said in his book *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind*, “audacious in the extreme: the one God of Israel—who had created the world, who had initiated a covenant with a distinct people through their father Abraham, who had then protected that people for the sake of his own name, but who also existed as a perfectly holy being in unapproachable glory—that God had entered human history in the person of Jesus Christ.”

The Word became
flesh and made
his dwelling
among us.

John 1:14

It is indeed a jaw-dropping truth: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (vv. 1, 14). The Word is God is Jesus Christ. The title “Word” or “Logos” evoked Scripture to the Jewish mind and reason to the Greek mind, but this is even more than a con-

textualized affirmation of Christ’s deity. The title “Word” or “Logos” possesses an elemental simplicity and power that echoes God’s act of creation (v. 3). Just as all language must refer back to God’s creative activity in Genesis 1, so also do all words begin and end in Jesus Christ, the Word incarnate.

Given these truths, it comes as a shock that the Logos was not recognized (v. 10). More than that, He was rejected (v. 11)! How is this possible? Verse 14 answers this question.

Jesus didn’t arrive in obvious power and glory. He became one of us, not (yet) to rule but simply to dwell among us. Though it was hidden or veiled, His glory was revealed in His human life, and the disciples bore witness to it. All who have received Jesus Christ and believe in His name can claim the right to be called children of God (vv. 12–13).

Apply the Word

Verse 14 tells us that Jesus “came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” The closing phrase corresponds with and parallels the Hebrew word *hesed*, meaning God’s “unfailing love” or covenant faithfulness. With the psalmist, let us exult: “How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings” (Ps. 36:7).

Pray with Us

Continuing our prayers for Bible department faculty, please remember Ronald Sauer, Andrew Schmutzer, Timothy Sigler, Michael Vanlaningham, and Michael Wechsler. Ask God to use them to give students a foundation for a life of effective ministry.

Foundations: Adam Names the Created World

We commonly call creative people “right-brained.” But recent scientific research actually reveals that creativity does not belong only to the right or left hemispheres of the brain, but rather to intense interaction between the two sides. That is, when the two sides of the brain can be stimulated to exchange information or work together, creativity is enhanced.

Given the Genesis account of God as creator, and given that human beings were made in His image, it’s no surprise to find human creativity at work in today’s reading. And this first recorded human creative activity is done with language—Adam named the animals. God had already given Adam a job—to tend the Garden of Eden (v. 15), and a rule—not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (v. 17). Then God brought to Adam all the animals “to see what he would name them”

(v. 19). This surprising phrase suggests that God delights in linguistic creativity. Though we do not know what language he used, when Adam named the beasts and the birds, he was following his Maker’s example from Genesis 1. It was perhaps his first official act in obedience to the “creation mandate.”

Whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.

Genesis 2:19

Naming the animals was also part of a search for a “suitable helper” (v. 20). The word “suitable” has also been translated “fit” (ESV) or “comparable” (NJKV). In all the world, however,

no such partner could be found. This led to God’s special creation of the first woman, Eve, from one of Adam’s ribs. Humanity is set apart from the rest of nature because we are made in God’s image (Gen. 1:27). Adam called her “woman,” the climax to this naming narrative and indicating the establishment of the sacred institution of marriage (vv. 23–24).

Apply the Word

Bible names often have significant or contextualized meanings. “Isaiah,” for example, means “the Lord saves.” After her husband and two sons died, Naomi (“pleasant”) changed her name to Mara (“bitter”) upon returning home. What does your name mean? Does it connect with Scripture and spiritual themes? If you’re not sure, do some research to find the answer.

Pray with Us

Your prayers will be an encouragement to Greg Thornton, Senior Vice President of Media. Request that God give Greg discernment as he leads Moody Radio and Moody Publishers in sharing the truth of God’s Word with millions of people around the world.

Foundations: Language, Pride, and the Tower of Babel

The tallest building in the world today is in the city of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. Called the Burj Khalifa, it is 2,717 feet tall and boasts such “high-ests” as the world’s highest swimming pool and highest observation deck. This amazing skyscraper, completed two years ago, took five years to build, has more than 160 floors, and cost about \$1.5 billion.

The Tower of Babel in today’s reading was also an impressive construction project. Tragically, it was motivated by human pride and idolatry. Everything went wrong after the Fall, including language. Instead of using humanity’s common tongue to worship and obey the Lord, people used it to disobey Him and glorify themselves (v. 4). After the Flood, God had again commanded human beings to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth (Gen. 9:7), but in this text we see that they preferred to congregate in cities and

worship idols. The Tower of Babel was likely a Mesopotamian temple called a “ziggurat,” a kind of pyramid with steps up the side, reaching symbolically toward heaven.

God pulled the plug on this project by confusing their language (vv. 6–7). This was a pragmatic move, and does not imply that many languages are a bad thing (see Oct. 28). If people no longer shared a common tongue, then this project—motivated by disobedience to build towers to

false gods—would fail. As in Eden, God acted to keep human sinfulness and its consequences in check, saving us from the worst of ourselves. In this case, construction halted and the dispersion of people throughout the earth resumed (v. 9). The name “Babel” in fact means “confused,” and its descendant city Babylon has remained a biblical and historical symbol of pride.

There the LORD
confused the
language of the
whole world.

Genesis 11:9

Apply the Word

The builders of Babel chose to use the gift of language to disobey God and glorify themselves. Are we using it to honor and glorify the Lord? We must consider everything from casual conversations to Facebook posts to text messages. Our desire should be that of Psalm 35:28: “My tongue will proclaim your righteousness, your praises all day long.”

Pray with Us

Moody Publishers produces trustworthy Christian books to encourage readers in their walk with God. Ask God to bless Publishers Marketing team—John Matsuoka and Janis Backing—as they communicate their current products to the marketplace.

Foundations: God Enables Our Words

Paul David Tripp wrote in *The Power of Words and the Wonder of God*: “You have never spoken a word that belongs to you, because words belong to the Lord. We think that words are not that important because we think of words as little utilitarian tools for making our life easier and more efficient, when they are actually a powerful gift given by a communicating God for his divine purpose.”

Moses learned this lesson in today’s reading. God encountered him in the burning bush and called him to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt.

Moses, however, was reluctant. What if they don’t believe me?, he asked. God gave him miraculous signs. Moses next tried to excuse himself by saying he was no good at public speaking: “I have never been eloquent . . . I am slow of speech and tongue” (v. 10). Who do you think created your tongue?,

God responded. Surely the One who created the tongue and Moses and indeed language itself is able to overcome this small weakness. The Lord assured him, “I will help you speak and will teach you what to say” (v. 12).

I will help you
speak and will
teach you what
to say.

Exodus 4:12

Moses, lacking faith, then tried to beg off directly, “Please send someone else” (v. 13). God rebuked him but also provided assistance in the form of his brother, Aaron. Since Moses didn’t want to do the talking, Aaron would be the spokesperson, but it would be God’s words

and God’s power that would liberate the people. He said, “I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do” (v. 15). To use our tongues in ways that are righteous and obedient, we must step out with faith in the God who enables all words.

Apply the Word

What was true for Moses remains true for us today—the Lord provides the words we need. Paul prayed confidently that God would give him the words to share the gospel (Eph. 6:19). Jesus promised His followers that words would be given them for responding to persecution (Mark 13:11). Our words should come not from human wisdom but from the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:13).

Pray with Us

Continuing our prayers for Moody Publishers Marketing team, express gratitude to the Lord for Rhonda Elfstrand and John Hinkley. Thank the Lord for their commitment to helping Moody Publishers spread the gospel in creative and powerful ways.

Foundations: The Sweetness and Holiness of God’s Words

Many people consider learning to write with a fountain pen a valuable skill. In fact, a private school in Edinburgh, Scotland, requires its 1,200 students to use fountain pens for all class work and homework, starting in fifth grade. Handwriting lessons are part of the school’s curriculum. The principal believes that using fountain pens promotes academic achievement and self-esteem.

Good handwriting can add beauty to our written words, but we also need to focus on the quality of those words. God’s words are beautiful and true in any and every form, font, and language. God’s Word has been inspired by the Holy Spirit, communicated in human languages, and preserved through history (see Isa. 40:8; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; Heb. 4:12). The author of Psalm 119 understood clearly the centrality of Scripture in the life of faith: “Oh, how

I love your law! I meditate on it all day long” (v. 97).

The psalmist presented five benefits of God’s Word in his life. In general, these benefits move from ideas to practice—the Word is present, then he meditates on it, then he obeys it—though it is also true that right understanding and right actions reinforce each other (vv. 100, 104). In addition, the “wow factor” increases with each item. First, the Word makes the psalmist wiser than his enemies. Second,

it also gives him more insight than his teachers. Third, it even gives him more understanding than the elders, that is, people who would be considered the pinnacle of human wisdom. Fourth, it helps him avoid evil. And fifth, it helps him pursue righteousness. This is all possible because God’s Word means we have God Himself as a teacher (v. 102)!

How sweet are
your words to my
taste, sweeter
than honey to
my mouth!

Psalm 119:103

Apply the Word

Praying back Scripture can be a good way to digest its truths into our lives. Do we love God’s law? Are its words as sweet as honey to our taste? Praying these words of the psalmist might be seen as a kind of intention or desire—that is, we wish we felt this way about God’s words. This is the kind of prayer request He faithfully delights to answer!

Pray with Us

Today pray for Moody Publishers Acquisitions team: Roslyn Jordan, Michele Forrider, Rene Hanebutt, James Hathaway, and Deborah Keiser. Pray for wisdom as they seek to find resources that will help their readers know, love, and serve Jesus Christ.

Foundations: The Wisdom and Steadfastness of God’s Words

In 1974, the Lausanne Covenant proclaimed: “We affirm the divine inspiration, truthfulness and authority of both Old and New Testament Scriptures in their entirety as the only written Word of God, without error in all that it affirms, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice. We also affirm the power of God’s Word to accomplish his purpose of salvation.”

This states core Christian beliefs about the Bible. God’s Word is perfect (Ps. 19:7). Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible, is a poetic exercise in praising God and His Word. Today’s section of that poem affirms Scripture’s righteousness, wisdom, and trustworthiness (v. 138). Anything less than God’s holiness is not to be relied upon, meaning that trustworthiness is actually a result of righteousness. In other words, the Bible’s righteousness and trustworthiness are a consequence of God’s

righteousness and trustworthiness. We can stand steadfast on the Word because God Himself is steadfast.

This is also why the psalmist wrote as if he had a personal relationship with Scripture. The Bible is not just a book—these are the words of God, and He stands behind them. To love the Word is to love its Giver. The poet meditates on it, heeds it, and delights in it. He’s also zealous for it, including feeling righteous anger at those who ignore it (v. 139). He knows the Word is trustworthy because he has

“tested” God’s promises (v. 140), in the sense of depending or relying upon them thoroughly. The idea is that the Word is entirely perfect or “pure” (NAS).

Biblical wisdom is always more than just knowledge—it’s life! That’s why today’s passage closes with a prayer, “Give me understanding that I may live” (v. 144).

My zeal wears me out, for my enemies ignore your words.

Psalm 119:139

Apply the Word

Some Christians are uncomfortable with the prominence given to Scripture. They speak of “bibliolatry,” that is, elevating the book above the Lord and making the Bible into a kind of idol. This can be avoided when we understand, as the writer of Psalm 119 did, that Scripture’s good qualities are in fact God’s good qualities. He is the Author!

Pray with Us

In prayers for Moody Publishers, ask God to connect the Acquisitions team—Holly Kisly, Randall Payleitner, Barnabas Piper, Christopher Reese, Paul Santhouse, Duane Sherman, and Jeremy Williamson—with authors to serve their readers.

Speaking & Faith: Wise Words and Foolish Words

Many women feel bare or unattractive without make-up. The \$7 billion cosmetics industry has convinced them that they need it to be attractive. The editor of *Cosmopolitan* magazine commented: "Make-up is almost a religion in itself. You don't even think about why you do it. You just do it . . . You make up your face, you're more dramatic, you're more interesting, people pay attention to you." In order to turn a hefty profit, the beauty industry perpetuates a false ideal focused on surface attractiveness and physical desire. This false ideal is not new, as we see in today's passage, and both women and men have fallen victim to it.

Having considered the foundations of a biblical view of language and words, we turn next to speaking and listening. Proverbs 7 is mainly an extended picture of an adulteress's seductive words and how they lead to foolishness and sin. Her dress, habits, and actions are

Say to wisdom,
"You are my
sister," and to
insight, "You are
my relative."

Proverbs 7:4

a suitable frame for her words, which are loud, brazen, and defiant. She lies in wait for a young man, kisses him, and invites him home for a nice dinner (implied in the mention of fellowship offerings) and a night of lovemaking (v. 18). She knows exactly what she's doing but has no fear of God, promising the man they won't get caught. "With persuasive words she led him astray . . . he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping into a noose" (vv. 21-22). She's done this so many times

that "her house is a highway to the grave" (vv. 26-27).

To resist words of temptation and wickedness, we need to store up words of wisdom and righteousness. As Proverbs advises, "Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye" (v. 2). Treasuring God's words and wisdom means pursuing and obeying them.

Apply the Word

The call of wisdom in Proverbs 8 contrasts with the adulteress's seduction in Proverbs 7. The adulteress invites a young man to sensual pleasures and wanton indulgences. Wisdom invites listeners to humility, holiness, and the fear of the Lord. The value of wisdom cannot be overstated! "Those who find me find life and receive favor from the Lord" (Prov. 8:35).

Pray with Us

Would you join us in praying for Nga Tran and Brenda McLemore who serve in Mail Service Bulk Mail? Ask the Father to help them operate as efficiently as possible and maintain a servant's heart each day.

Speaking & Faith: Fresh and Salt Water from the Tongue

Anyone visiting the doctor can expect a few standard procedures. Pulse and blood pressure are checked. The doctor listens to your heartbeat with a stethoscope. He often strikes your knee with a small rubber hammer to test reflexes. And inevitably there's the command to "stick out your tongue, please." Examining the throat and tongue can tell a doctor a lot about our physical health.

The same is true in the Christian life. The tongue can tell a lot about our spiritual condition! The background for today's passage is the responsibility of being a teacher and the impossibility of never stumbling (vv. 1–2). As a test case, wrote James, consider the tongue. It is like a bit in a horse's mouth, or the rudder of a ship, or a single spark—it's enormous impact belied by its small size (vv. 3–5). A small bit controls and guides

a large horse. A small rudder steers a huge ship. The last picture is a small spark that can set an entire forest on fire. Fire is powerful but destructive; a forest fire is out of control. In the same way, a small tongue can be "set on fire by hell" and corrupt the entire person (v. 6). No one can tame it, for "it is a restless evil, full of deadly poison" (v. 8).

Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?

James 3:11

If we are known by the fruit our lives bear, what are we to make of the fact that the same tongue that praises God curses people (vv. 9–12)? This is like a spring that gushes both fresh and salt water—there is something incongruous or wrong here. "My brothers and sisters, this should not be." Self-control in our spoken words is only possible with God's help and, when we inevitably stumble, forgiveness.

Apply the Word

James emphasizes the truth about the tongue because we all struggle to have godly self-control over our speech. If we perceived our tongues as sources of moral poison and spiritual corruption, we would use language with far more fear and trembling. Understanding our own challenges to control our tongue can be a step forward in faith and holiness.

Pray with Us

It is our privilege to pray for Dr. Paul Nyquist, Moody's President. Please request that the Lord encourage and guide Dr. Nyquist as he leads Moody's education and media ministries in reaching people across the globe, cultures, and generations.

Speaking & Faith: Pronunciation, Hate, and Revenge

The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is a system for marking pronunciation in any language. It was first published in 1888 by a group of French language teachers and is used by singers, dictionaries, and language-learning textbooks to transcribe sounds from any language into a consistent, universal system. Anyone using it properly should be able to pronounce sounds correctly even if they don't know the language.

The IPA might have helped the Ephraimites pass the deadly pronunciation test in today's narrative.

Jephthah is presented as a mighty warrior who was also a social outcast due to his mother being a prostitute (the story begins in Judges 10:6). He defeated the Philistines and Ammonites and rescued Israel from their oppression, but he also made a foolish vow to sacrifice the first thing he saw when he returned home (it turned out to be his daughter).

**Do not seek
revenge . . .
against anyone
among your
people, but love
your neighbor
as yourself.**

Leviticus 19:18

The conflict in today's reading took place because the Ephraimites were upset about being left out of this victory. Perhaps they were irritated that God had used people whom they saw as disreputable renegades. Jephthah argued that they hadn't responded to his call for help and gave God the credit for the victory. Somehow this petty conflict escalated into a battle in which Jephthah's Gileadites soundly defeated the Ephraimites. The Gileadites may have been forced to defend themselves initially, but in victory things got ugly. They

slaughtered the Ephraimites (an extreme violation of today's verse). In this story, words and language became a vehicle for the worst human impulses. If a person pronounced the word "shibboleth" with the wrong accent, they were identified as the enemy and killed, even though the battle was over. A single word fueled this grotesque revenge.

Apply the Word

Pronunciation or accent remains a source of sinful prejudice in today's world. In the United States, this is particularly true of ethnic variations, such as African-American or Hispanic English, but it can also occur with geographical variations, such as a Southern accent. We should love our neighbors whatever they sound like.

Pray with Us

This week the undergraduate students at Moody's Chicago campus are participating in Missions Conference. May God give these young men and women obedient hearts and a willingness to follow Him wherever He calls them.

Speaking & Faith: Dynamics of Sin in the Mouth of a Prophet

Years ago, Christian musician Don Francisco penned a song called “Balaam” that concludes with this lesson about the “talkin’ donkey”: “The Lord’s the one who makes the choice of the instrument he’s usin’ / We don’t know the reasons and the plans behind his choosin’ / So when the Lord starts usin’ you don’t you pay it any mind / He could have used the dog next door if he’d been so inclined.”

That a donkey talked is not the most remarkable part of today’s story. For the Lord, that was easy.

The truly remarkable thing here is God’s mercy and forbearance. The nation of Israel was camped by the Jordan River, preparing to enter the Promised Land. Balak, king of Moab, had heard about Israel’s defeat of the Ammonites and felt terrified, so he appealed to a local holy man to come and curse the “horde” (v. 4). We don’t know much about

Balaam, but he seems to have been a pagan who somehow had knowledge of the one true God. When God told him not to curse the Israelites, he initially obeyed and refused the king’s fee (v. 18). In the end, though, the price proved too strong a temptation, for Balaam was a man who “loved to earn money by doing wrong” (2 Peter 2:15–16, NLT). God’s anger (v. 22) confirms that the prophet’s intentions were sinful.

Balaam was on the verge of recklessly using words to disobey, but God stopped him by putting the gift of language into the mouth of a donkey. Thanks to the animal’s warnings, Balaam was saved from the sword of the angel of the Lord (vv. 32–33). He realized that integrity must not be for sale. This time he meant it when he said, “I must speak only what God puts in my mouth” (v. 38).

I must speak only
what God puts in
my mouth.

Numbers 22:38

Apply the Word

Much to Balak’s annoyance, Balaam ended up blessing instead of cursing the Israelites (Numbers 23–24). They learned that God is sovereign and that integrity means being responsible for the words we say. This is why David’s prayer should be ours: “May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord” (Ps. 19:14).

Pray with Us

Thank God for the Practical Christian Ministry Department—Gloria Alicea, Unity Ostercamp, Roberto Rivera, Donald Martindell, and Nathan Strand—that provides Moody’s undergraduate students with ministry opportunities at over 290 organizations.

Speaking & Faith: Language as a Center of Righteousness

Gossip can be a serious social problem. That's why one Colombian city actually decided to make a law against it. Malicious gossip is now punishable with a fine of up to \$75,000 or four years in prison. A city spokesman said: "People should be aware that using their tongues to speak evil is the same as having dynamite in your mouth."

Psalm 17 suggests that the mouth can be a center of righteousness. That is, our words are a basic indicator of whether or not we're walking with the Lord. In the last few days we've studied passages in which language is a focal point for evil, but it can also be a focal point for good. This psalm is framed as a kind of court plea. David claimed to be blameless and called out for help from a righteous God. His claim is based on his use of language: He

does not have "deceitful lips" (v. 1). He resolved that "my mouth has not transgressed" (v. 3). By obeying God's words he has avoided wickedness (v. 4). By contrast, the mouths of his enemies "speak with arrogance" (v. 10). They hunt him down relentlessly and without mercy (vv. 11-12).

My mouth has not transgressed.

Psalm 17:3

David trusted in the Lord to protect and save him from such people. "Show me the wonders of your great love," he prayed, "you who save by your right hand those who take refuge in you"

(v. 7). The difference between those who love God and those who don't is where their treasure lies (cf. Matt. 6:19-21). His enemies chased after temporal wealth, but David longed to see God's face (vv. 14-15). This very psalm is proof that David saw language as part of his walk with the Lord and as a way to praise and glorify Him.

Apply the Word

We've seen a variety of examples so far in our month's study. For instance, Adam named the animals and honored his Creator. David used words to compose prayers and poems for public worship. What can you do to obey the Lord with words and honor His gift of language?

Pray with Us

Will you commit to praying for Frank Leber, Vice President of Information Systems? Ask the Lord to use Frank's leadership and knowledge of technology to advance Moody's ministries.

Speaking & Faith: Sins of Language Must Be Put to Death

A brief biblical narrative set during the Exodus deals with the son of an Israelite mother and an Egyptian father (Lev. 24:10–23). Involved in a fight one day, he blasphemed the name of God with a curse. This was contrary to the Law, but the people were not immediately sure how to respond. In the end, at God's direct command, the young man was taken outside the camp and stoned to death.

Blasphemy against the Lord is serious business. Sins of language are as grave as any other sin. If our mouths are indeed to be centers of righteousness (see yesterday), and if we are to avoid the evils of the Gileadites, Balaam and others, then sins of language must be uncompromisingly “put to death” (v. 5). In today's passage, Paul built a contrast between how to live and how not to live as children of God. What we should do is set our hearts and minds on things

above (vv. 1–4). After all, we've been raised with Christ and redeemed for better-than-earthly things. His resurrection provides the power to live in light of eternity.

This is the opposite of living according to our “earthly nature” (vv. 5–10). The lists here are sample lists, not exhaustive ones, meaning that Paul could have added many other sins. The first list focuses mainly on sexual immorality, while the second focuses mainly on sins of language. These include anger (violence with words), rage, malice (injuring with words), slander (mean-spirited gossip), filthy language (obscenities), and lies. Words can do a lot of damage! These actions are sinful and inappropriate, out of step with the new life given to believers by Christ and the new self “which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator” (v. 10; cf. 2 Cor. 5:17).

Put to death,
therefore,
whatever belongs
to your earthly
nature.

Colossians 3:5

Apply the Word

Given the difficulty of controlling the tongue (James 3:8), everyone reading these words struggles with at least one sin of language. We're good at rationalizing or getting comfortable with wrongdoing. But when we learn to see sin as God sees it, we resonate with Paul's vehemence. In the power of the Spirit, put these sins to death!

Pray with Us

Please uphold in prayer Network and System Support employees: Joseph Kessinger, Andrew Carlson, and Paul Walker. As they make sure our computers and networks work without problems, ask for wisdom and insight in their day-to-day tasks.

Speaking & Faith: Righteous Words and Sinful Words

Language analysis can reveal much about one's character or personality. Researchers recently examined the vocabulary used in written texts by known criminals to describe their actions. They found that "the words of psychopathic murderers reflected selfishness, detachment from the crimes and emotional flatness." This kind of information could help police track down such murderers more quickly in the future.

Just as vocabulary choices reveal the heart of a mur-

derer, so also the content and quality of our words reveals our own hearts. This truth is clearly seen in today's reading, in which David proclaimed the righteous faithfulness of God's words (vv. 16–19) and contrasted it with the treacherous deceitfulness of his enemy's words (vv. 20–21). When David cried out to God, God was faithful to hear and answer him. He saved and rescued him, sover-

eignly keeping His promises "evening, morning and noon" (v. 17). On the other hand, David's "companion"—we don't know exactly who he means—had no fear of God. He attacked his friends and broke his promises, meaning he was a liar and a traitor. On the surface, his words seemed as "smooth as butter" or oil, but the reality is that he used words as "drawn swords" to further his schemes and injure others (v. 21).

**Cast your cares
on the LORD and he
will sustain you.**

Psalm 55:22

The psalmist was confident that justice would be done, because the unchanging nature of God is to defend the righteous and bring down the wicked (v. 23). As for David, the best use he can make of language is to cry out to the Lord for help and trust completely in Him. In the midst of a crisis, he left us these words of encouragement: "Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken" (v. 22).

Apply the Word

How might someone describe the words you speak? Are they "drawn swords" waiting to stab someone in the back? Are they "salt water" or "fresh water"? If the latter, then they are also "choice silver" and a "tree of life" (Prov. 10:20; 15:4). "The words of the reckless pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing" (Prov. 12:18).

Pray with Us

Your prayers will be an encouragement to Dr. Junias Venugopal, Provost and Dean of Education. Would you join us in asking the Father to refresh Dr. Venugopal's spirit through the power of His Word?

Question and Answer

Dr. David Rim, Professor of Theology



If John's Gospel did not use the term *trinity*, why should we use the term? I just cannot understand: if there is but one God, how can He be made of three co-equal persons working in unity? Doesn't one mean singular?



This is probably the most frequently asked and the most difficult question one can pose concerning the Christian faith. Yet it is so central to our faith that legions of theologians and philosophers have dared to tread these sacred grounds. Any response, especially in this limited format, will be incomplete and may be unsatisfying.

Let me begin by noting that while the term *Trinity* is not explicitly found in the Scriptures, the concept surely is. This doctrine is composed of three basic beliefs: 1) There is one God; 2) Father is God; Jesus is God; and the Holy Spirit is God; and 3) All three divine persons are distinct.

As you have correctly noted, this presents the Christian with a dilemma. Either there is one God, and therefore, only one divine person; or, there are three divine persons, and therefore, three gods. But orthodox Christianity rejects both of these options as being heretical.

One route is to argue that there is one divine essence, which is constituted by

three distinct persons, each identical to that divine essence. The oneness of the Trinity would refer to this divine essence. The threeness would refer to each of the divine persons, who simply are that one divine essence. This way of viewing things raises the issue of counting. How can there be only one essence when there are three divine persons identical to that one essence? That's like saying one equals three.

But one could argue that God transcends the human sphere in such a way that our concepts like "essence" or "person" cannot capture the rich details of the divine sphere. Think of it this way. A drawing by definition cannot be both a circle and a triangle. This is the case because one's perspective is that of a flat plane—two-dimensional. But if we expand our world into three dimensions, then we could have an object, such as a cone, which could be seen as a triangle from one perspective and a circle from a different perspective. It is the two-dimensional world's inability to capture the three-dimensional nature of the cone that produces this logical problem. Applying this to the issue at hand, our human concepts are like two-dimensional drawings trying to capture the reality of a three-dimensional divine Being.

The other route one can go is to argue that when we say there is one God, we mean that there is one "Godhead"—one divine society or family. In this case the Father, Son, and Spirit are members

Continued on next page

The triune nature of God is another way of saying: “God is love.”

Continued from previous page

of the same divine family. The problem facing this particular model is whether the belief in one “Godhead” is as monotheistic as the belief in “one God.” This understanding of the Trinity seems to position Christianity dangerously close to polytheism. But at the same time, its advantage is in its logical clarity. The oneness of the Trinity references the Godhead; the threeness references the Father, Son, and Spirit, who are members of that one divine family.

Different orthodox Christian theologians and philosophers support both of these interpretations. Those who desire to affirm a strong sense of monotheism tend to opt for the first model presented. Those who believe that conceptual precision is absolutely necessary in the formulation of our doctrines tend to opt for the second.

No matter where our disagreements may be concerning this most complex but crucial doctrine, we cannot forget that the triune nature of God is another way of saying what John has written in his first epistle: “God is love.” From all of eternity, the Christian God is one whose essence is love, a selfless love of one person for another; a love so pure that it can only be pictured by the love of a parent for their only child.



Once one becomes a believer and is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, is it possible for an evil spirit that may have taken up residence in that soul to still remain?



When an individual places his or her faith in the work of Christ on the cross, the apostle Paul writes that God has bought that one with the blood of His Son (1 Cor. 6:20). The mark of authenticity that indicates that we belong to God is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13–14). Finally, John tells us in his first epistle that the one who indwells us is greater than the evil spirits who are in the world (1 John 4:4).

Putting these verses together, I believe that any individual who comes to Christ has become a new creature. This means that all the old things have passed away, and God who now owns us, is in the process of making all things new (1 Cor. 5:17). In order to do it, He gifts us with the Holy Spirit, who becomes God’s seal of ownership. And since the Holy Spirit is greater than any evil spirit who may have occupied this individual in his old way of life, and since God does not share ownership, no evil spirit can remain in residence once conversion occurs.

This does not mean, however, that a believer cannot open himself to demonic influences because of poor or evil choices that he or she makes in life. Our experience of the Holy Spirit’s renewal of our lives requires our faith in God’s goodness and in His love. But as long as the individual continues to affirm the name of Christ (see 2 Tim. 2:12), I do not believe an evil spirit can take permanent residence in the life of a believer.

Speaking & Faith: Our Language Needs God's Purifying Touch

What is our greatest communication problem? Paul David Tripp asked this in *The Power of Words and the Wonder of God*. “My problem is in my heart. It’s only when you and I stand before our Redeemer and are humbly willing to say, regardless of the flawed people that you live with and the fallen world that is your address, that you are your greatest communication problem, that you are heading in a direction of fundamental biblical change in your world of talk.”

I am a man of
unclean lips, and I
live among
a people of
unclean lips.

Isaiah 6:5

Sin in our hearts means sin in our speech. Our language needs God's purifying touch, as Isaiah learned in his vision. Today's reading is a familiar one, the text for many sermons on God's awesome holiness and answering His call on our lives. Words and language are also at the center of this memorable narrative. For starters, we read the angels' words of praise, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his

glory” (v. 3). Their voices thundered so powerfully that the temple shook and was filled with smoke.

Isaiah was immediately and overwhelmingly conscious of human sinfulness, both personally and in general. He knew he stood under judgment, and his sense of sinfulness started, appropriately for a prophet, with his use of language: “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips” (v. 5). As such, he knew he could not stand in

the presence of an absolutely holy and pure God.

God took the initiative and sent an angel from His presence with a live coal symbolizing forgiveness and atonement. As Isaiah's confession focused on his “unclean lips,” so also did God's forgiveness—the angel touched the coal to Isaiah's lips (v. 7; cf. Jer. 1:9).

Apply the Word

Confession of sin is bad for our pride. We'd rather rationalize or minimize or just ignore the things we do wrong. After all, nobody's perfect, right? Confronted with a vision of God's glory and holiness, our petty excuses are swept away. Our sinfulness and need are undeniable. “I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy” (Ps. 116:1).

Pray with Us

Moody Theological Seminary—Michigan provides training to over 150 Christian ministry leaders in Plymouth, Michigan. Please pray for Raju Kunjummen, Eric Moore, and Micah Jelinek as they invest in the lives of the men and women studying at this campus.

Listening & Faith: Sitting at the Feet of Jesus

Science has shown that the spice turmeric has powerful healing properties. For example, because it contains the same anti-inflammatory ingredient as certain drugs, it can ease arthritis pain and swelling. Other studies suggest that it might also help prevent colon cancer and Alzheimer's disease and improve liver functioning. Turmeric is found in much Indian food, including common dishes such as curry.

Turmeric can contribute to our physical health; listening contributes to our spiritual health. Listening perhaps poses a challenge for loquacious Americans. Our culture tends to teach us the value of expressing ourselves while neglecting the value of listening to others. By contrast, the book of Proverbs affirms the virtue of listening, including speaking less. "The prudent hold their tongues" (Prov. 10:19; cf. Prov. 17:27–28). "To answer before listening—that is folly and shame" (Prov. 18:13).

Mary . . . sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.

Luke 10:39

The familiar story of Mary sitting at Jesus' feet reminds us that listening is valuable in and of itself. It was highly unusual for a Jewish rabbi to allow a woman to be present. Martha missed the point: she was annoyed that her sister wasn't helping with hospitality-related tasks. Jesus explicitly sided with Mary, affirming that she had "chosen what is better" (v. 42). This was a contrast not only of actions but also of attitudes. Martha was complaining, worried, and upset, while Mary was humble, expectant,

and teachable.

Listening can also be done badly, of course, as we've already seen this month. Samuel didn't recognize God's voice. Moses didn't want to obey it. Balaam didn't intend to heed it. The evil men in various psalms had no fear of it. Mary is a wonderful contrast and model to follow!

Apply the Word

An excellent book about listening is *The Lost Art of Listening* (2nd ed.) by Michael P. Nichols. It describes how most of us think we are better listeners than we actually are and explains practical steps to improving relational listening skills. The author asserts, "Listening to others is an ethical good . . . part of our moral commitment to each other."

Pray with Us

Continuing our prayers for Moody Theological Seminary—MI, remember professors Eugene Mayhew, John Restum, and Joseph Tucker. These faculty members equip pastors, missionaries, and biblical counselors to help meet the spiritual needs of our world.

Listening & Faith: Hearing Must Be Followed by Doing

The ratio of potassium to sodium in your daily diet could be a key indicator of the health of your heart. A recent study found that if you take in twice as much potassium as sodium, your risk of dying from heart disease could be cut in half. Many Americans consume far too much sodium, which is found in most processed foods and salty snacks.

The listening-to-doing ratio is an indicator of our spiritual health. Words cannot be separated from actions. There are times for sitting at Jesus' feet, and there are times for putting His words into practice. This begins, wrote James, with humility. Being quick to listen and slow to speak cuts off self-righteous anger and opens the way for God's Word to purify us (vv. 19–21).

Humility and openness to the Word work against self-deception, that is, the tendency to think that hearing correct

teaching is enough (vv. 22–25). This is patently absurd, like people who look at themselves in a mirror then immediately forget what they look like. Such inattentiveness borders on the ridiculous—the information provided by the mirror is effectively useless. By contrast, those who look “intently into the perfect law that gives freedom” are attentive and careful (v. 25). They understand the Word is a mirror that shows us ourselves and “judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Heb. 4:12), therefore they can listen and learn where they fall short. Then they “do what

it says” and are blessed as a result.

Summing up this lesson, James commented, “Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless” (v. 26). He would return to this theme later in his epistle (see Oct. 9).

Do not merely
listen to the word,
and so deceive
yourselves. Do
what it says.

James 1:22

Apply the Word

The book of James is known for its teaching about faith in action. But do we realize that John was equally uncompromising? “Whoever says, ‘I know him,’ but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person” (1 John 2:4–5; cf. 3:18). Actions are concrete evidence of obedience and are based in God's love and truth.

Pray with Us

Concluding our prayers for MTS-MI, thank God for Brian Mollenkamp, Nicole Johnson, and Paul Wilson. May God bless these individuals for diligently overseeing MTS-MI's day-to-day operations and faithfully providing administrative support.

Listening & Faith: How Do We Respond to Jesus' Words?

Charles Wesley penned the words of this classic hymn: "O for a thousand tongues to sing / My great Redeemer's praise, / The glories of my God and King, / The triumphs of His grace! My gracious Master and my God, / Assist me to proclaim, / To spread through all the earth abroad / The honors of Thy name . . . Hear Him, ye deaf; His praise, ye dumb, / Your loosened tongues employ; / Ye blind, behold your Savior come, / And leap, ye lame, for joy."

By their fruit
you will
recognize them.

Matthew 7:20

How do we respond to Jesus' words? Do we long for a thousand tongues to sing? When it comes to listening, words, and actions, we have no more important decision than how to respond to the person and work of Christ. In today's passage, Jesus told a parable to make this very point. A parable is a short, symbolic narrative that in some cases, as here, amounts to a comparison or extended simile. This parable contrasts a person who hears

Jesus' words and puts them into practice with a person who doesn't. The first person is like a wise man who built his house on a rock foundation. When the storms came, the house stood firm. The second person is like a foolish man who built his house on a foundation of sand.

When the storms came, the house collapsed.

The houses represent our lives, projects, or endeavors. What we build them on—the foundation—represents what we believe, the truths we affirm and act upon.

Storms represent the circumstances and troubles of life. To build on a sandy foundation is to base one's life on temporal things—wealth, fame, and power. These are unstable and unworthy, an inadequate foundation for life. But to build on a rock foundation is to base one's life on eternal things, that is, God himself, the perfect Rock (Deut. 32:4; cf. 1 Cor. 3:11–15).

Apply the Word

The best possible use we can make of words is to praise and glorify the Lord. This is a lifelong journey that begins by believing in Christ and trusting Him for salvation. If you've never taken this step of faith, we encourage you to use the gift of language to do so today. He died and rose again for you, and has extended an open invitation for you to join His family.

Pray with Us

Collin Lambert, Vice President of Moody Radio, is grateful for your prayers. Please ask God to guide Moody Radio in creating biblical programming that encourages listeners around the world to take the next step in their relationship with Christ.

Purposes: Language Is for Confession of Sin

Language can be redemptive, Philip H. Phenix explained in *Education and the Worship of God*. “The saving power of language consists in its capacity for reestablishing broken relationships. By forming a bond of mutual understanding it overcomes estrangements and heals divisions. The God who creates also recreates, by restoring relations that have become disordered. Wherever words become an instrument in such restoration, the Word of God is at work.”

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins.

1 John 1:9

Phenix used confession of sin as his first example. To confess sin is to seek healing in broken relationships. For us as Christian pilgrims, confession is one of the key purposes of language. Having considered the foundations for a theology of language and explored passages about speaking and listening in the life of faith, we turn next in our month’s study to the biblical purposes for words and language. Given narratives such as the Tower of Babel (Oct.

4) and the slaughter of the Ephraimites (Oct. 10), it’s no surprise that confession of sin ranks high on the list.

Today’s reading includes a spiritual metaphor underlying confession (1:5–7), a description of confession (1:8–10), and a theological context for confession (2:1–6). The spiritual metaphor is light and dark. “God is light,” meaning He is absolutely pure and holy. As His children, we are to “walk in the light,” suggesting that righteousness is necessary for fellowship with God

and others. Sin is darkness and breaks these relationships. Sadly, this side of heaven it is a certainty that we will sin. We cannot purify ourselves—only Christ’s blood can do that—but when we sin we can confess in order to receive God’s forgiveness. He will cleanse us from sin because He is faithful (loving, keeps His promises) and just (Christ paid the price). In this matter, Christ is our advocate and atoning sacrifice.

Apply the Word

Obedience to Christ’s commands shows that we truly know Him and are coming to know him better. As John wrote, “Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did” (2:6). Since we are focusing our study this month on language, consider how Jesus spoke to people around Him. How did He use words to exhort and encourage others, and to proclaim truth?

Pray with Us

Keeping our focus on Moody Radio, today our prayers go to God for the Production team: Joe Carlson, Bill Davis, Jon Hemmer, and Eric Hufford. May God grant them wisdom and unity in their decisions as they work together to serve Christ at Moody Radio.

Purposes: Language Is for Praise and Witnessing

A recent historical survey of Protestant hymnals ended up with a list of 27 hymns that have endured through time. These included “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name,” “Holy, Holy, Holy!” and “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.” The author of the survey observed, “[These hymns] focus on such foundational themes as the enduring triumph of the Cross, assurance in the ultimate rule of Jesus, and prayer for the continuing experience of God’s love.”

In short, these classic hymns remind us that language is for praising the Lord! And as we see in today’s narrative, praising the Lord brings Him glory in ways that bear witness to unbelievers. In the name of Jesus, Paul had cast an evil spirit out of a fortunetelling slave girl, earning the enmity of her owners. Because their profits were diminished, they dragged Paul and Silas before the authorities of Philippi and made vague,

xenophobic accusations (v. 21). Mob justice led to the two men being beaten and imprisoned.

Acts does not record that Paul and Silas complained or argued. There is not even a record whether they prayed for rescue or release. What is recorded is that in jail they prayed and sang hymns. These are the actions of men who have hold of hope and life! With God, they had all they needed. That’s why the other prisoners were listening, perhaps incredulously

(v. 25). When God miraculously sent an earthquake and opened the prison doors, Paul and Silas sensed that He had a greater purpose than simply their release. So instead of escaping, they stayed and took the opportunity to lead their jailer and his household to faith in Jesus (vv. 29–34). They used the gift of language to bring glory to God and others to faith in Christ.

**Paul and Silas
were praying and
singing hymns
to God.**

Acts 16:25

Apply the Word

Praising God is not a matter of feelings. It’s about ascribing glory to His name and honoring Him before the world. The emotions may or may not be there. Sometimes, in fact, we’re called to praise the Lord in the midst of irritating and unjust situations, ones in which we might feel angry or depressed. May we follow the example of Paul and Silas!

Pray with Us

Continuing our prayers for the Moody Radio Production team, remember Josh Klos, Lee Rugen, Chris Segard, Joel Swan, and Steve Tabor. Ask the Father to use the programs they help produce, such as *Midday Connection*, to give hope to millions of listeners.

Purposes: Language, Culture, Obedience, and Revival

How well do you know English? Are you sure? Have you received “ham” in your email inbox? “Ham” means a legitimate email (as opposed to “spam”). Would you recognize the scent of “petrichor”? That’s the “pleasant smell that accompanies the first rain after a dry spell.” No doubt we can all describe a WOMBAT situation. WOMBAT stands for “waste of money, brains, and time.”

Most of us reading this speak English as our native tongue, and it’s an important part of our identity. This was the case for the Israelites returning from exile. In their absence, various other peoples and languages had moved into the former nations of Israel and Judah. These peoples worshiped other gods, yet the Israelites intermarried with them. They then strayed so far from the covenant that some of the children could no longer speak Hebrew (v. 24). This is the key

issue that concerned Nehemiah in today’s reading.

Nehemiah, cupbearer to the emperor, had come to Jerusalem in 445 B.C., led the rebuilding of the city walls, and with Ezra also led a spiritual revival among the returned Jewish exiles. Then he had returned to Babylon, and in his absence things went very wrong. The people broke the Sabbath. They stopped giving the Levites their portions. They corrupted the temple. When Nehemiah returned in 432 B.C. he found things in a sorry state. The

intermarriages were wrong not for ethnic reasons but for religious ones. As had been the case with Solomon (vv. 26–27), such marriages had led to spiritual compromise and idolatry.

Thanks to Nehemiah’s courageous leadership, worship of the one true God was restored.

Will you not
revive us again,
that your people
may rejoice
in you?

Psalm 85:6

Apply the Word

The “new covenant” made with Christ’s blood is not linked to national or cultural identity or language. What we can do is follow Nehemiah’s example of using language to demonstrate commitment and zeal and to spur commitment and zeal in others. His motivation is summed up in the book’s closing prayer, “Remember me with favor, my God” (v. 31).

Pray with Us

Christine Gorz, Vice President of Corporate Communications, welcomes your prayers as she and her various departments, such as Web Communications and Public Relations, work to communicate with employees, students, and friends of Moody Bible Institute.

Purposes: Language Is for Learning and Witnessing

The world record for the longest language lesson is held by a class of 26 Chinese students. They sat through an English lesson that lasted 72 hours! The students were paid \$15 per hour for their participation, an amount that tripled after they surpassed the previous record of 66 hours.

In the Bible, Daniel is perhaps the model language learner. The learning done by him and his three friends showed their faithful hearts, earned God's blessing, and became a witness to the Babylonian government! The circumstances were more than difficult.

This was no study-abroad program. They had been taken to Babylon as a prelude to the conquest of Judah—part of the empire's strategy to rule the world not just with military power but through education and commerce as well. Daniel and others were brought to the capital city to study a three-year

program of language and literature (vv. 4–5).

The original plan was to change their religion as well, as reflected in the new names given to the four men (v. 7). Daniel, however, “resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine,” since it had almost certainly been offered to idols (v. 8). This was a dangerous stand to take. Since he was from a nearly subjugated people group, he had no leverage in this situation. But God gave him favor in the eyes of his supervisor, and the man agreed to the proposed ten-day

test. Daniel didn't take his stand in an abrasive or confrontational manner. Instead, he addressed the official's concerns in a reasonable and sensitive way and trusted the Lord for the outcome. God richly blessed them with success in the ten-day test (v. 15) as well as in their overall learning (v. 17).

God gave
knowledge and
understanding
of all kinds of
literature and
learning.

Daniel 1:17

Apply the Word

Can one be righteous in a corrupt system? Daniel's life answers with “yes.” The Babylonian empire was as sinful and idolatrous as any in history. Given the “shrinking,” globalizing world in which we live, where power, culture, commerce, morality, and religion remain hotly contested issues, the godly example of Daniel is more relevant than ever!

Pray with Us

We invite you to pray for the Customer Service Center: Ann Bolger, Jens Douglas, Janet Giesler, and Faith Grudziecki. May God give them peace and strength, as this month marks the beginning of their busiest season of the year.

Purposes: Language Is for Prayer

On the topic of prayer, evangelist George Whitefield said: “In the heart of every true believer there is a heavenly tendency, a divine attraction, which as sensibly draws him to converse with God, as the lodestone attracts the needle.” We could say that faith draws believers to prayer as iron is drawn to a magnet.

In today’s well-known passage, Jesus taught His disciples how to pray. This is certainly one of the primary purposes of language, although we also know that words aren’t always necessary in prayer (see 1 Sam. 1:13; Rom. 8:26). The first lesson is to pray for the ears of God, not people (vv. 5–6). Hypocrites and show-offs make a big deal out of praying in public, looking to be admired for their eloquence and piety. Rather than give in to this temptation, Jesus’ disciples were advised to pray in secret, trusting God to reward the rightness of their hearts.

**Your Father knows
what you need
before you
ask him.**

Matthew 6:8

The second lesson is to pray concisely (vv. 7–8). Many words do not necessarily make a better prayer; in fact, Jesus compared it to “babbling like pagans.” They think they have to perform to get their god’s attention and win his favor (as in 1 Kings 18:26–29). As believers in the one true God, however, we have no such anxiety. We know He knows, cares, and is able to respond. All we need to do is make our requests known to Him (Phil. 4:6).

The third part of the lesson is the model prayer itself, known as the Lord’s Prayer (vv. 9–13). This prayer is made on the basis of a close relationship, “Father.” It gives glory to God and hopes in the spread of His kingdom. The petitions are straightforward—physical needs, forgiveness of sin, and protection from temptation. These are the essentials of life!

Apply the Word

The Lord’s Prayer is a good Bible passage to memorize. Scripture memorization is an excellent language habit to cultivate. As one rehearses the words and commits them to memory, the truths the words communicate become part of our hearts and minds. Then they can indeed be a lamp for our feet and a light for our path (Ps. 119:105).

Pray with Us

Continuing our prayers for the Customer Service Center, let’s lift up Adam Reece, Linnea Wheeler, and Sarah Woods. Ask the Lord to use this team to encourage the many people they speak with over the phone each day.

Purposes: Language Is for Instructing Others in Truth

William Tyndale is sometimes called the “Father of the English Bible.” His pioneering translations laid the foundation for the King James Version and many subsequent translations of the Bible into English. Tyndale paid the ultimate price for his faithfulness to the Lord—he was opposed by the church officials of his day and burned at the stake as a heretic in 1536.

God’s Word reveals another key purpose of language, that of instructing others in truth (2 Tim. 3:16). It is true that this is a special responsibility of pastors and elders (2 Tim. 1:3–14), but it is also the job of all of us to instruct and exhort one another toward truth and obedience.

In today’s reading, Malachi denounced sins that were being committed by the returned Jewish exiles in the days of Nehemiah, probably between his two periods of leadership in Jerusalem (see

Oct. 21). He rebuked the priests and other religious leaders because they had not set their hearts on honoring the Lord (vv. 1–3). God was righteously angry! If they didn’t change, He would curse their blessings, end their family lines, and (metaphorically) smear their faces with animal entrails, which would defile them and prevent them from functioning as priests.

What you heard
from me, keep
as the pattern of
sound teaching.

2 Timothy 1:13

To repent and honor the covenant again, said God through Malachi, they should follow the example of Phinehas (vv. 4–6). Phinehas, grandson of Aaron, was a priest during the Exodus who acted with zeal for God’s honor and by his actions stopped a plague among the Israelites (Num. 25:1–13). This is exactly how a priest ought to act as a “messenger of the Lord Almighty” (vv. 7–9). The priests of Malachi’s day, however, had done wrong, led others in breaking the covenant, and shown partiality in matters of justice.

Apply the Word

When we fail to set our hearts on truth and God’s glory, God is angered by our faithlessness and wearied by our false words (Mal. 2:17). While we recommend you leave your spears at home, we do recommend following the example of Phinehas in spirit. He set his heart to honor God’s name in all he said and did, and so can we.

Pray with Us

Would you join us in praying for Steven Mogck, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer? Ask the Lord to grant Steven wisdom as he serves and leads Moody’s operations staff.

Purposes: Language Is for Godly Fellowship

What are people talking about these days? Social media has the answer! Google can tell you which topics are searched most on the Internet. Twitter can tell you which topics are trending among those who “tweet.” And Facebook stands ready with up-to-the-moment news of what your friends are doing, eating, playing, reading, dreading, or celebrating.

Words are an important dimension of godly fellowship, as explained by the apostle Paul. For our purposes, verses 19 and 20 are the key part of today’s passage. How should we speak to one another? With “psalms, hymns and songs from the Spirit,” that is, with a heart full of worship. This is the opposite of the bad priests in yesterday’s reading, whose hearts were not set on honoring God. Speaking and singing in this way is both literal and figurative. Sometimes we really are speaking and singing to and with one another

in such a way. But the Christian life isn’t musical theater—Paul meant mainly that our fellowship should be filled with the Holy Spirit and gratitude and focused on honoring the name of Christ.

Godly fellowship also includes living wisely, being filled with or controlled by the Spirit in every area of life, maximizing opportunities for witness, and mutual submission. Christian fellowship is not some sort of Sunday-special, feel-good club. It is for the purpose of spurring one another on toward love and good deeds (Heb.

10:24). Imagine if all this became evident in the words we speak and hear from ourselves and other believers! How does the language we speak, hear, and read during church events compare to this standard? Let the prayer of our hearts be for the word of Christ to dwell in us richly so we can fellowship as God intends (Col. 3:16)!

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and songs from the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:19

Apply the Word

We might need to broaden our idea of godly fellowship. “Church fellowship” used to be a synonym for “church potluck,” and while sharing a meal can be an occasion for fellowship, there’s more to it. Fellowship isn’t just about prayer requests on Facebook or “tweets” from your small group. Go deeper in your spiritual relationships!

Pray with Us

Donor Resource Management welcomes your prayer support. Pray that God will equip Edgardo Camacho, Norma De Jesus, Kyella Gilliam, and Brian Ixcaraagua with everything they need to process Moody’s mail quickly and accurately.

Purposes: Language Is for Showing God's Glory

Golfer Jim Furyk made a two-foot putt to win the 2010 Tour Championship and FedEx Cup. Surprisingly, the putter in his hand that day was a used \$39 club he had bought at a discount golf shop less than a month before. His win earned him a total of \$11.35 million—pretty good for a \$39 putter!

A cheap, used golf club playing a role in a professional tournament victory is a bit like God using the foolish to confound the wise and the weak to shame the strong (1 Cor. 1:27–29). When Paul planted the Corinthian church, his attitude was not to trust in his own strength or persuasive talents, but to know only Christ (vv. 1–3). Evangelism and discipleship are not about the skill of the preacher but about a Spirit-filled ability to communicate words of truth (1 Thess. 1:5). As a result, Paul's ministry was not built on his eloquence but on bearing

witness to the power and glory of God and His plan of redemption in Christ (vv. 4–5).

Why did Paul take this position? So that the faith of the Corinthian believers would have a firm foundation. He didn't want them following human wisdom or himself as a charismatic leader. Instead, he wanted them to recognize the power of God at work in history and in their lives. He didn't mean to say that words don't matter. After all, on many occasions his language was eloquent, vivid, or theologically

I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

1 Corinthians 2:2

precise, as circumstances warranted. He also didn't mean to say that the gospel is foolish, only that in displaying a wisdom not of this world it might appear as foolishness to finite and sinful human minds (vv. 6–10). God's perfect and "secret wisdom" is exemplified in His glorious plan of redemption in Christ.

Apply the Word

The Greek word for "demonstration" in verse 4 suggests something like a logical proof in philosophical argumentation. That is, the phrase "demonstration of the Spirit's power" means that the Holy Spirit is the persuasive evidence, the final proof, the conclusion of the argument. This is good to keep in mind when we're sharing our faith with others.

Pray with Us

Concluding our prayers for Donor Resource Management—Amelia Mendez, Sharon Cluff, Patricia Fletcher, David Kocourek, and Dona Lorange—pray that God will give the members of this team deep fulfillment as they carry out their responsibilities at Moody.

Redemption: Only Ears of Faith Can Understand Words of God

Auditory processing disorder (APD) is a little-known syndrome that affects an estimated 2 to 5 percent of all children. APD interferes with the brain's ability to recognize and interpret sounds. Words such as "bed" and "dead" might sound the same. Abstract language and word-play might be confusing. APD usually leads to poor performance in school and trouble listening and paying attention.

A lack of faith can lead to a similar experience with our spiritual ears. Only ears of faith can understand the words of God. In our month's study, we move now from considering the purposes of language to a final section on language and redemption. When it comes to God's Word and our words, all roads lead to the Bible's central story.

In today's text, Jesus was teaching on spiritual slavery and freedom. His listen-

ers were offended by the very notion that they, as descendants of Abraham, needed to be set free (v. 33). But this is the essence of the gospel message—we are all slaves to sin, we all need to be set free, and freedom can only be had by believing in Christ (vv. 34–36).

This message is direct from God the Father (vv. 38, 42). Jesus' listeners claimed to be children of Abraham, but their beliefs and actions showed them to be children of the devil, as seen in their refusal to accept Jesus and their readiness to kill Him.

This is why they failed to comprehend Jesus. He spoke truth but they were children of Satan, whose native language is lies (vv. 44–45). They had spiritual APD. Their ears heard the words, but their faithless souls couldn't make sense of them. Jesus told them bluntly, "The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God" (v. 47).

Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say.

John 8:43

Apply the Word

Hearing and understanding God's words requires faith. By the Holy Spirit "we may understand what God has freely given us . . . The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit" (1 Cor. 2:12, 14).

Pray with Us

Please partner with Ken Heullitt, Chief Financial Officer, in prayer. For over 125 years, God has faithfully provided for Moody's financial needs, and we prayerfully trust that the Lord will continue to meet all of our needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Redemption: Languages, Pentecost, and God's Plan

Microsoft is currently developing software that can translate to and from 26 different languages. You work with the device for about an hour so that it “learns” how to sound like you, and then it can translate anything you say into other languages, while still sounding like you. Many are eagerly awaiting the arrival of this software in the global marketplace.

God had His own way of addressing the multiplicity of languages present on the Day of Pentecost. As the creator of language, He empowered the believers to speak fluently in foreign languages (vv. 1–4), that is, languages that they did not previously know but which were known to the multinational pilgrims in Jerusalem (vv. 5–12). They had come for the Jewish holiday of Pentecost, also called the Feast of Weeks, a harvest festival that took place 50 days after the Passover Sabbath. Meantime, the

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:4

believers were awaiting the promised Holy Spirit (see John 14:16–17). His arrival was manifested as a wind and as tongues of fire resting on each of them, and enabled them to preach the gospel in many languages. This was a historically verifiable event with thousands of witnesses, but that didn't prevent some from offering absurd explanations (v. 13). Peter proclaimed that this event fulfilled a prophecy by Joel, and went on to preach about the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.

Pentecost makes a fitting counterweight to the Tower of Babel (Oct. 4). At Babel, languages were multiplied in order to confuse and thwart human pride; at Pentecost, languages were multiplied in order to preach the good news of salvation in Christ. The diversity of languages demonstrated God's love for all people—people of all languages will be praising God in heaven (Rev. 7:9).

Apply the Word

Sharing the gospel across cultures and languages is part of what Christians are called to do (Matt. 28:19–20). It was Paul's driving “ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known” (Rom. 15:20), and it is the driving ambition of many missionaries, evangelists, and Bible translators today! How are you spreading the good news of Jesus?

Pray with Us

Dr. Larry Davidhizar, Vice President and Dean of the Undergraduate School, welcomes your prayer support as he oversees the school's academic programs and faculty. May his work continually improve programs and encourage faculty.

Redemption: Languages, Cultures, and God’s Plan

The only known example of an individual creating an entirely new system of writing is Sequoyah’s invention of written Cherokee in the early nineteenth century. Inspired by the way he saw white settlers using writing, he devised 85 symbols that correspond with sounds in Cherokee. Soon the Cherokees were highly literate in the new script and were even printing their own newspaper.

As we see throughout Scripture, and especially in yesterday’s reading, God’s plan for the world involves many cultures and many languages. This wasn’t immediately obvious to the early church, however, as the Jewish Christians had been conditioned to think of Israel as the “chosen people” and Gentiles as “outsiders.” But the coming of Christ had turned a page in history, and today’s narrative is part of how God worked to start overcoming that old way of thinking. He had sent an angel

to Cornelius and now He sent a vision to Peter. In the vision, a sheet full of unclean animals was lowered and offered as food, a thought repugnant to a Jew. It meant that spiritual categories were changing, the ritual aspects of the Law were ending, and God was revealing more of His plan (v. 15).

God does not show favoritism, but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.

Acts 10:34–35

Peter understood, for he immediately extended hospitality to the (Gentile) men sent by Cornelius (v. 23), and the next day he accepted hospitality in the centurion’s (Gentile) home (vv. 27–29). These were enormous steps of faith across cultural boundaries for Peter, who expressed amazement at the broad scope of God’s love (vv. 34–35). God confirmed this insight by sending the Holy Spirit in a kind of mini-Pentecost (vv. 44–48). “There is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him” (Rom. 10:12).

Apply the Word

These events were key at the Jerusalem Council, at which Peter sided with Paul about the Gentile controversy (Acts 15:6–11). Yet apparently Peter temporarily forgot this lesson from God, and Paul had to rebuke him (Gal. 2:11–21). We, too, learn lessons on the mountaintop that we forget later in the valleys. Thank God for His patience with us!

Pray with Us

Engineering Systems—Alfredo Rios, Paul Siebold, and Teddy Vinlasaca—helps manage Moody’s utilities, such as electric, gas, and water. Thank the Lord for their valuable behind-the-scenes work at Moody!

Redemption: Language Is for Proclaiming Christ's Kingship

Text messages are by far the preferred method of communication among teenagers. About 77 percent of teens have a cell phone, and three quarters of these send text messages regularly. A typical teen sends or receives 60 text messages every day. Girls ages 14 to 17 lead the way with about 100 text messages per day, as compared to 50 for boys of the same age.

Language is always changing and developing, but the communicative purpose remains the same. For Christians, one of the most important messages we have to communicate is the kingship of Christ. At the end of the well-known hymn recorded in today's reading, we see that knees and tongues will do what knees and tongues were meant to do at the culmination of history. Every knee will bow at the name of Jesus, and every tongue will confess Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father (vv. 10–11; cf. Isa. 45:22–24).

Every tongue
acknowledge that
Jesus Christ
is Lord.

Philippians 2:11

On our way to this glorious moment, Christ is our example to follow (v. 5). He did not pursue self-advancement. Instead, He demonstrated humility by taking a lower position in obedience to God. How low? So low that God became a human being. So low that

He was executed as a criminal. So low that He's described as a king's opposite—a servant. The incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection were all part of God's plan of redemption. The downward movement of verses 6 through 8 is followed by an upward movement in verses 9 through 11.

God exalted His Son to a higher position. How high? So high that His name is above every name. So high that He will be king over all creation. So high that all of creation will sing His praises. He is indeed "the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End" (Rev. 22:13).

Apply the Word

Jesus Christ is both a servant and a king. The life of faith is full of these kinds of spiritual paradoxes. Serving to rule. Dying to live. Surrendering to win the victory. The last shall be first. Obedience is freedom. Living by such truths has never been easy, but Jesus has shown us the way. We've been called to follow "in his steps" (1 Peter 2:21)!

Pray with Us

Today, please pray for Lloyd Dodson, Vice President of Human Resources. He faithfully guides Moody's efforts in the recruitment and development of faculty and staff. Ask the Lord to continue bringing the right people to Moody to advance the cause of Christ.

Redemption: People of All Languages Praising God in Heaven

In his book *In the Beginning Was the Word* Vern Sheridan Poythress said, “Redemption by Christ is a story. It is a story of something that really happened in history, in space and time. Because it is at the heart of God’s purposes for the world, it is the one central story. So, in the end, all the other stories about working out human purposes derive their meaning from being related to this central story.”

The same is true for words and language. Words and language derive their primary meaning from God’s loving plan and His unfolding story of redemption. That’s why in John’s vision we find people of “every tribe and language and people and nation” praising God before His throne in heaven (v. 9). A call had been issued for someone worthy to open the scroll with the seven seals. Only Christ is worthy to do so, or as one of the elders

calls him, the “Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David” (v. 5). He is worthy because He has triumphed over sin and death and succeeded in His mission of salvation. Unexpectedly, He appears not as a lion or as a conqueror but as a “Lamb, looking as if it had been slain” (v. 6). This reminds us of His once-for-all sacrifice, while the seven horns and seven eyes allude to His perfect omnipotence and perfect omniscience.

With your blood
you purchased
men for God from
every tribe and
language and
people and nation.

Revelation 5:9

As soon as Christ the Lamb takes the scroll, the four living creatures and 24 elders fall down in worship. They sing a “new song” in praise of His victory (vv. 9–10). The song then expands to include hosts of angels (vv. 11–12), then every being in all of creation (v. 13): “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”

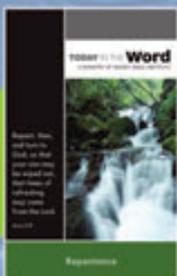
Apply the Word

One of the best things we can do with God’s gift of language is to cultivate a spirit of praise and worship. Focusing on the goodness and gloriousness of God will lead us to speak and sing the most true and beautiful words there are! As the psalmist said: “My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor all day long” (Ps. 71:8).

Pray with Us

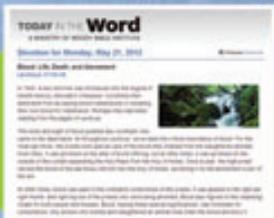
We hope that this month’s study has deepened your theology of language. In your prayers today, thank the Father for the ability He has given us to communicate with Him and with others. May He help us honor Him with the way we listen and the words we speak.

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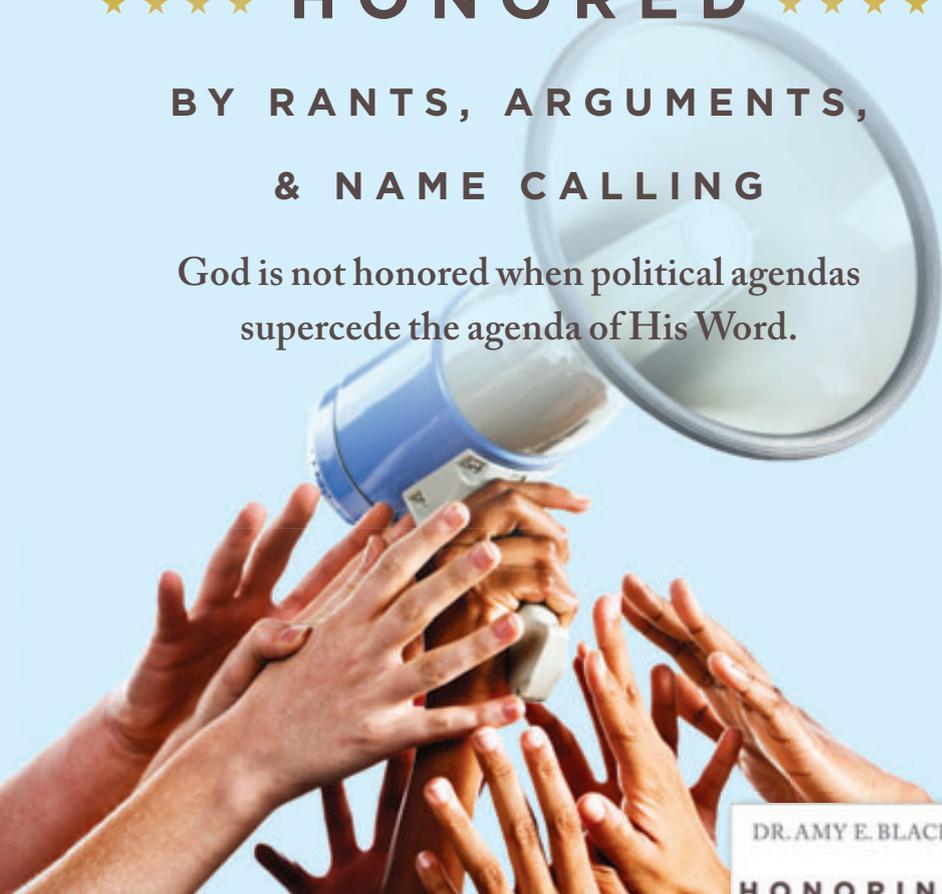
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