Rock Valley Bible Church (www.rvbc.cc)

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Watch Your Words

Matthew 12:31-37

1. Some words will never be forgiven (verses 31-32).
2. Most words come from our hearts (verses 33-35).
3. All words will be judged in the final day (verses 36-37).

The book of Proverbs has much to say about our words. It contains many warnings for us to control our tongue. For instance, "When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, but he who restrains his lips is wise" (Prov. 10:19). Solomon was telling us that the one who loves to talk is in danger of transgression, as it is easy to sin with our mouths. So, the one who speaks little is wise. Yet, the Proverbs don't tell us to be silent. Rather, our words are to be truthful: "Truthful lips will be established forever, but a lying tongue is only for a moment" (Prov. 12: 19). Our words are to be helpful: "Anxiety in the heart of a man weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad" (Prov. 12:25). When you see a fellow believer who is downcast, you are to speak the words that will bring him up. Our words are to be careful: "The one who guards his mouth preserves his life. The one who opens wide his mouth comes to ruin" (Prov. 13:3). The thrust of the Proverbs is that we should be careful of the words we speak. This is the theme of my message this morning, which is entitled, "Watch Your Words."

In the section of Matthew 12 that we are examining this morning, we find ourselves in the context of Jesus exposing the absurdity of the Pharisees' accusation that Jesus casts out demons by Satan. By principle this cannot be the case, as a kingdom, city, or home divided against itself cannot stand. By practice this cannot be the case, as the Pharisees themselves could cast out demons on occasion. By parable this cannot be the case, as you cannot rob the strong man's house unless you first bind him.

Now, beginning in verse 31, Jesus will address the serious nature of our words. In these 7 verses, there are 13 times in which the act of speaking or the mention of word appears. The emphasis of Jesus in this passage is upon the words we speak.

My aim this morning is to focus your heart upon the impact that your words will have (for good or for bad). I once heard a man say, "You are the master of your unspoken words, but a slave to the words you have spoken." This is very true. My heart is for you to think of the words you say and watch your words before you speak them.

> Matthew 12:31-37
> "Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age, or in the age to come. Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. The good man out of his good treasure brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth what is evil. And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned."

These are sobering words.

1. Some words will never be forgiven (verses 31-32).

I want you to first focus your attention upon verse 31. Jesus said that "blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven."

I remember the first time that I heard about "the unpardonable sin." I was a junior or senior in college. I was in a meeting of our Fellowship of Christian Athletes group. There was some discussion of spiritual things. Then someone said, "If you blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, you will not ever be forgiven. It is the one sin that God cannot forgive." I remember being shocked at the mere mention of a sin that can't be forgiven. I was somewhat confused and bewildered. It was something that I found to be strange.
It simply didn't sit well with everything that I then believed about God. I didn't understand that there was a sin that God would never forgive, ... ever. I always understood Him to be a forgiving God.

So, I went back to my dorm room and looked up what exactly was this "unpardonable sin." I found my way to Matthew 12. I read it and was still a bit perplexed by the words. Many wonder what these things mean. It is often my practice to seek help from my wife with the passage I am preaching. There are times in which I ask her to take her daily time in the word and go over the passage that I am preaching. She takes pen to paper and begins writing down a bunch of observations and writes out question about the text that come into her mind. I find her work to be very helpful to me, as it helps me in the first stage of Bible Study, which is simply observing what the text says and what questions need to be answered. So, this week we were talking about this text, and she said (something to the effect of), "I can't help you much on your text this week. It is difficult to understand." I admit that it is difficult, but, we have come to in our exposition of Matthew, and we must walk through it.

Let me make the first observation that this is a sin of speech. That is what the word, "blasphemy" means. It is not a sin of the heart. It is not a sin of the hand. It is not a sin of the foot. It is a sin of the mouth. The Greek word is blasfhmew (blasphemeo), which is often transliterated to our English, "blaspheme." In the 34 times that it occurs in the New Testament, the NASB translates it, "hurling abuse, malign, revile, slander, spoken against." The KJV translates it, "defame, rail on, revile, speak evil." Here are a few verses that give you a flavor of how the word is used in context:

- When Jesus told the paralytic, "your sins are forgiven," the scribes said to themselves, "This fellow blasphemes" (Matt. 9:3). That is, he says with his mouth that which is against God.
- Paul was relating his experience against the Christians prior to his conversion. He said, "I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme" (Acts 26:11). He was trying to get them to say things with their mouth that would be against God, so that he might accuse them.
- "Let all who are under the yoke as slaves regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine may not be blasphemed" (that is, "spoken against") (1 Timothy 6:1). As people see your poor testimony, they are able to say, "Those Christians are a bunch of hypocrites," which is speech against the doctrine of God.
- In the final days of this planet, we find the wrath of God poured out upon men who "were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues; and they did not

> repent, so as to give Him glory" (Rev. 16:8). Though these people were being punished by God, they refused to give him glory, but spoke against His name instead.

Blasphemy is the act of speaking evil. In this case, it is evil spoken against the Holy Spirit. Verses 31 and 32 contain parallel thoughts: "blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven" and "whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him."

Why did I tell you all of that? Because some people say that the blasphemy against the Spirit is unbelief. After all, it is the sin of unbelief that will never be forgiven. If you don't believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will not be forgiven and you will spend your eternal days burning in the lake of fire. This is what Jesus said: "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16). If you don't believe in Jesus, you won't be saved. Indeed, unbelief is a condemning sin. However, unbelief can be forgiven. There is much Biblical and historical testimony to this fact. But, the blasphemy against the Spirit isn't the sin of unbelief, because unbelief has to do with the heart. Blasphemy has to do with the mouth and the tongue. Blasphemy is something that is said. This is my point: "**Some** words will never be forgiven."

Before we actually look into what these words are, look first into what Jesus said about the extent of forgiveness in general. We are looking at it first, because Jesus said it first. He said, "**Any** sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men." There are plenty of sins that will be forgiven. Murder will be forgiven. King David was a murderer (2 Sam. 12:9), but found forgiveness (Ps. 51). Idolatry will be forgiven. Those in Thessalonica "turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God" (1 Thess. 1:9). Lying will be forgiven. There were many in Crete, who came from a lying culture, who found mercy at the cross (Titus 1:12). Hypocrisy will be forgiven. Peter who "stood condemned" for being hypocritical as he dealt with cultural differences between the Jews and Gentiles (Gal. 2:11-21) was later restored to be a "fellow elder" in the church. Unfaithfulness will be forgiven. Peter denied his Lord three times before the cock crowed (Matt. 26:75). Yet, he was restored by Jesus, Himself (in John 21). John Mark deserted Paul in Psidian Antioch (Acts 13:13; 15:37). Yet, later, Paul called him, "useful to me for service" (2 Tim. 4:11). Even blasphemy will be forgiven. Paul described himself as "a blasphemer," yet, he was shown mercy (1 Tim. 1:13).

There are many sins that will be forgiven. Fornicators will be forgiven. Adulterers will be forgiven. The effeminate will be forgiven. Homosexuals will be forgiven.

Thieves will be forgiven. The covetous will be forgiven. Drunkards will be forgiven. Revilers and swindlers will be forgiven. There were those in Corinth who had been forgiven of these things (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Jesus emphasized this universal extent of the different types of sins to which God's forgiveness will extended, "Any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men." There is only one exception: blasphemy against the Spirit. All of these sins are forgivable through repentance and confession of the particular sin committed and belief in Jesus.

In verse 32, Jesus continues with even more remarkable words describing the extent to which God's forgiveness extends, "Whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him." Think about this. What sin is greater than hating the Lord of the universe, speaking against Him, scheming to murder him, condemning Him to death on account of false witnesses, crucifying Him upon the cross, and mocking Him as He breathes His last few breaths? This is what the chief priest did. They mocked Jesus by saying, "He saved others; He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we shall believe in Him. He trusts in God; Let Him deliver Him now, if He takes pleasure in Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God'" (Matt. 27:41-43). They were kicking Jesus when He was down. Matthew records for us that both of the robbers who were crucified with Him were casting the same insult at Him (Matt. 27:44). That was a terrible sin.

Yet, we know that one of the robbers on the cross found forgiveness, as Jesus said, "truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). We also know that after Jesus raised from the dead, "a great many of the priests [became] obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). Furthermore, while upon the cross, Jesus also prayed for those crucifying Him, saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). In the mind of Jesus, they had not committed the unpardonable sin. Otherwise, He could not have prayed in the manner that He did.

It is amazing to me that God has such patience and long-suffering to forgive these people--those who mocked Jesus to His face. But, this is the character of our God. The Psalmist says, "You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You" (Ps. 86:5). God is compassionate and gracious and slow to anger--even when the sin is directly against Him. As Jesus said in verse 32, "Whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him." This is amazing! This is amazing grace and compassion. You ought to marvel in these words. These thoughts of God's tremendous grace to you will teach you how to live righteously (Titus 2:10, 11).

But Jesus continues, "... but whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him. ... " And Jesus adds onto the strength of His statement by saying, "... either in this age, or in the age to come." In Mark's account, it is called, "an eternal sin." When this sin is committed, a line is crossed. When this sin is committed, you can no longer go back. It is like the turnstiles at airports or amusement parks. Once you reach a certain point, you can't go back.

Church family, sin is a very dangerous thing. Every time you sin, your heart is made a little harder to repentance. In the case of blaspheming the Holy Spirit, it is a case that the heart becomes so hard that repentance is no longer possible. It is the last in a long line of sins. Charles Spurgeon wrote, "He who is guilty of this outrageous crime has sinned himself into a condition in which spiritual feeling is dead, and repentance has become morally impossible" (Matthew Commentary, p. 155). The reason why it will never be forgiven is because it will never be confessed and repented of. In verse 31, Jesus was emphatic, "any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men." Forgiveness comes when you acknowledge the sin and agree with God that it was a terrible act and confess it as such before Him. God will extend forgiveness in Christ Jesus to those who repent. But, in the case of the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, repentance will never come. John Piper says it succinctly. He says that this sin "puts you beyond repentance and therefore beyond forgiveness" (in a sermon preached April 1, 1984, Beyond Forgiveness: Blasphemy Against the Spirit").

I have had many discussions with people over the years dealing with election. The objection often comes in the form of a hypothetical question, "What if a non-elect person cries to God for mercy for his sins? Are you telling me that God won't forgive Him?" To this, I always reply, "Nobody will ever perish who pleads for mercy at the foot of the cross." The issue is that the non-elect will never plead for mercy at the foot of the cross. Their hearts are so hard that they are moving from God, and God lets them go to commit whatever sin their heart desires (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28). With respect to the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, it is exactly the same. God will not withhold forgiveness to those who confess their sin and repent of it, while trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. The issue is that those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit will never repent of such a crime, and therefore, will never find forgiveness .... ever.

I gave the illustration earlier of those passing through a turnstile. Once they have reached a certain point, the mechanics of the turnstile prevent it from turning the opposite direction. But, you will never see one who has blasphemed the Holy Spirit trying to go backwards through the turnstile, but finding resistance. Those

who commit this sin will continue on straight ahead, never wanting to return again. Those who pass through these turnstiles have usually been preparing themselves to pass through. In the case of those in the airport, they have planned their trip, purchased their tickets, packed their bags, driven to the airport, checked their bags in, received their seat assignment, and pass through the turnstile on their way to board their airplane. They don't want to go back. In the case of the amusement park, those who pass through the turnstile are interested in riding the roller coasters. They aren't interested in turning back and getting in their car again. So too, those who have committed this sin are too far gone in their sin to want to turn back to God.

There is a time, I know not when,
A place, I know not where,
Which marks the destiny of men,
To glory or despair.

There is a line by us unseen,
Which crosses every path,
The hidden boundary between
God's patience and His wrath.

So, we come now to the million dollar question: **What exactly is this sin against the Holy Spirit?**

I believe that the key to understanding this is the context. Jesus does an undeniable miracle before the crowds. This blind and dumb man is instantly able to see and speak. It is so undeniable that the Pharisees don't deny it. Rather, they explain it away by ascribing it to Satan. In Mark's account of this same event, we find that Jesus said these things about the sin that will never be forgiven, "because they were saying, 'He has an unclean spirit'" (Mark 3:30). In verse 24 (of Matthew) we see what they were saying, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons." That which was undeniably of God, the Pharisees explained it away as being done by Satan. Here you have a clear testimony of the undeniable working of the goodness of God in the miraculous healing of this man being explained away as being done by the greatest evil, Satan, Himself. Isaiah said it this way, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and clever in their own sight" (Is. 5:20-21). In this case, it is "Woe to those who call the miraculous, healing power of God a work of Satan."

The blasphemy against the Spirit is that sin that would verbally acknowledge that the undeniable, good work of the Holy Spirit is actually a work of Satan.

Now comes the next million dollar question: **Can you blaspheme the Holy Spirit today?**

Some commentators say that you cannot commit this sin. They say that it could only be committed during a day of miracles while Jesus was walking upon the earth. I was talking to a man this week about my upcoming preaching and told him that I was preaching on the unpardonable sin. He said, "People don't understand that Scripture today. It is important for people to be told that they can't commit this sin today." I respectfully disagree. I believe that it is possible to commit this sin today.

I believe that we underestimate the role of the Spirit in our lives today. In John 16: 7, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." What a statement! Think about this for just a moment. Jesus was talking to His disciples. These were the same men who had walked and talked with Jesus. They had learned from Jesus. They had heard Him preach many times. They had seen Him perform awesome miracles. For three years they walked on this planet for God Himself. Jesus says that He has something better for the disciples. The presence of the Spirit would be better for the disciples than the presence of Jesus!

Jesus said that the Spirit would come (John 16:7), convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-12), guide the disciples in all truth (John 16:13), and glorify Jesus (John 16:14-15). Certainly, the Holy Spirit does all of those things today. He works in the hearts and minds of men to lead them in the truth about Jesus, which causes them to see their sin and how they need a righteousness that's not their own and that judgment is coming. And when the Spirit of God works in the heart of a sinner in a clear and unmistakable manner that they are sinners in need of a Savior, but faces rejection in a human heart to such an extent that a man would verbalize with his mouth that the convicting work of the Spirit in his life is actually a work of Satan, Himself, it is then that the blasphemy against the Spirit has been committed. The sin will never be forgiven, because the heart has become so hard to the convicting work of the Spirit, that repentance will never come. It is when the agent of our salvation, (the One who convicts of sin and the One who guides in all truth and the One who glorifies Christ--the Third Person of the Trinity), is not only rejected, but identified as Satan, that repentance will never come.

One more question: **How do I know if I have committed this sin today?**

This is where the rubber meats the road and is the most difficult question that we will ask today. The question is a difficult one, because Jesus isn't even clear that these Pharisees had actually committed this sin. If you look carefully at the text, Jesus never said, "You Pharisees have committed this sin." Perhaps they did. Perhaps they didn't. But, certainly they were in danger of it. Certainly, they were headed down that path.

And for anyone today, it is very difficult to know if you have committed this sin against the convicting, reproving work of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps, even you have said things which you have wished that you never said. I have heard of those who are continually haunted by the things that have come out of their mouth in a moment of rebellion, wondering if they have passed through this turnstile, never to return again! They are sorrowful for the things that they have said and done against the Holy Spirit.

For those who feel this way and are repentant in their heart, they can be assured that this sin wasn't committed. For those who commit this sin are beyond repentance. A heart of repentance is the clear indication that this sin wasn't ever spoken.

Let me say that I haven't spoken with anyone here at RVBC about this, but perhaps you are in this situation of thinking that quite possibly you uttered these words of blasphemy against the Spirit. Or, perhaps someday you will counsel another person in this situation. You (or they) need to hear the emphasis of Jesus' words when He spoke of the unpardonable sin. Jesus' clear emphasis in these verses are upon His gracious forgiveness of all sins, even those committed against the Son of Man, Himself. Jesus comes as a forgiving savior, granting forgiveness to all who seek Him in humility and brokenness. If you are concerned with the words that you have uttered at one time, confess them as sin and plead for God to forgive you in Christ. God will never turn away a repentant sinner.

2. Most words come from our hearts (verses 33-35).

Jesus was lamenting the hypocrisy of the Pharisees when He said, "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is

good? For the mouth speaks out of the that which fills the heart. The good man out of his good treasure brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth what is evil" (Matt. 12:33-35).

Jesus puts forth this simple principle. You know a person by their words. If their heart is good, their mouth will flow forth good words. If their heart is bad, their mouth will flow forth in bad words. This is the main point of what Jesus said at the end of verse 34, "for mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart."

Although your tongue is only 6 inches long and reaches to the back of our throat, it has this amazing ability to skinny itself like an earthworm and stretch itself close to 18 inches long, so that it might reach down into your chest, where your heart is and brings out what is there. We speak what is in our heart. This is why it is so difficult to control the tongue: because our hearts are corrupt. And when the source of our speech is a corrupt heart, what would you expect to come forth from your mouth? This, by the way, is why the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is so bad, because it indicates a heart that hates the Spirit. Do you want to know the secret to having a righteous tongue? Have a righteous heart and the tongue will take care of itself.

I have a friend who has a prized sports car, an Avanti. He is very careful with his car. In the wintertime, he will never drive the car. It remains all winter long under a cover in a garage, lest the salt on the road infiltrate the car and begin the rusting process. When it gets warm enough to drive, he will never drive it when there is still much of the salt and sand on the road that the snowplows have distributed. He takes great care of his car to protect it from the harm of the road. Do you want to have a clean car? Then don't drive in the mud! Do you want to protect your car from scratches? Then don't drive on gravel roads! Do you want to have a clean tongue? Then direct your heart along the clean path. "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things" (Phil. 4:8). When you do this, you tongue will follow with righteousness.

Solomon, likewise, instructed us, "Watch over your heart will all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life" (Prov. 4:23). In Matthew 15:18, Jesus says that "the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart and those defile the man." To deal with your speech, you need to deal first with your heart. To deal with your heart, deal with your thoughts. Every day, you will be infiltrated with thoughts that come into your mind. Some of them will be good ones. Some of

them will be bad ones. These can be anything. They may be thoughts of something that you have against another person. They may be thoughts of sexual sin. They may be a covetous desire for more money. As thoughts come into your mind, sort through them. Purge the bad ones. Keep the good ones. You say, "Steve, I can't stop these evil thoughts from coming." I simply say this, "Do you like those thoughts? Or, do you hate those thoughts?" I admit, you can't stop the thief from entering your house. But, you can shut your curtains and lock your door to make your house less vulnerable. The same is also true of our thoughts and our hearts and our words. You can't stop the bad ones from entering, but you can make yourself less vulnerable by cultivating proper thoughts.

I would exhort you, church family, to deal with your hearts, by setting your minds on things above, not on earthly things (Col. 3:2). Look "for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus" (Titus 2:13). Remembering the cross of Christ and all that was accomplished there. When you do these things, your tongues will be pure.

But, the surprise in this passage comes in what Jesus actually says to the Pharisees. Look closely in verse 34, "You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good?" This is why I entitled my second point this morning, "**Most** words come from our hearts." I say this, because Jesus is astonished at the words of the Pharisees. He knew of their wicked and evil hearts. He knew this because He knew their thoughts (verse 25). He knew this because He observed the Pharisees and how they acted and what they did. John the Baptist couldn't read their minds as Jesus could, but also called these men a "brood of vipers" (Matt. 3:7). It was obvious. Yet, they spoke what is good. They were hypocrites. When we arrive in Matthew 23, we will catch a glimpse of their hypocrisy. On the inside they were corrupt and defiled and worthless, though on the outside, they often put on a front that would be so nice and shiny and pure, that you might never suspect it. There were times where their words were wonderful and beautiful, especially as they spoke in the synagogues. This is why Jesus said, "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you can clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also" (Matt. 23:25-26).

In our men's exposition conference this past weekend, we studied the book of Titus and encountered a group of men much like these Pharisees. They were the teachers in Crete, who were interested in "Jewish myths and commandments of men." They taught circumcision and held tightly to the law. Here is what we

heard, "They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him" (Titus 1: 16). This is a hypocrite. People in the church learn to be good about this. People in the church learn how to put on the smile and say that everything is OK. They come across and being fine and talking lovely, though in their hearts, they are harboring wickedness in their hearts. Now, at Rock Valley Bible Church, I'm not advocating that you come to church looking grumpy. I simply ask that you be real.

Jesus was getting at these Pharisees for their hypocrisy. This is why He said in verse 33, "Either make the tree good, and it fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit." Jesus was telling these Pharisees to make up their minds! Be consistent! Are you good or bad? Though these Pharisees were wicked and self-centered, they still were able to put on a good face and say good things from their mouth at times.

As I thought about this passage a bit more, I realized that these Pharisees could control their tongues. Though they were wicked on the inside, they could speak forth what is good. They put on a good show of righteousness. Likewise, those who have been redeemed by Christ should be able to control their tongues. Oh, I admit that it is difficult. It has been said that "The tongue is a wet place, and easily slips." I also admit that we can't be perfect in this matter either. "If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well" (James 3:2). I also admit that our tongue is a wild beast and impossible to be fully tamed (James 3:8). Our tongue is like the wild tiger that attacked the magician, Roy Horn, in a Las Vegas show this weekend. For 40 years he has dealt with White Tigers, yet, they are still wild. But, if the wicked Pharisees could speak what is good, why cannot we, who have been redeemed by the blood of the lamb, and who have been cleansed by the "washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit," (Titus 3:5), speak forth what is good?

We ought to find the words that build up those in the body of Christ. Proverbs 10: 32 says, "The lips of the righteous bring forth what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked, what is perverted." Oh, may God grant that those at Rock Valley Bible Church would "bring forth what is acceptable" to others. May we encourage one another (1 Thess. 5:11). May we build each other up (1 Thess. 5:11). May we stimulate one another on to love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24). May the fruit of our lips always give thanks to His name (Heb. 13:15). These types of words are fitting for sound doctrine (Titus. 2:1). These types of words are "according to godliness" (Titus 1:1). Prov. 18:21 tells us that "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." With our tongue we can destroy our neighbor. With our tongue we can encourage them on. "May we bring life to our neighbor with our words."

3. All words will be judged in the final day (verses 36-37).

Jesus said, "And I say to you, that every careless word shat men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned" (Matt. 12:36-37). What a shocking statement! You stand before God and God pulls out a transcript of every word that you have ever said. Now, for some, this book will be quite large, filling many volumes of books. I remember having a discussion with a man one time, who found out that my family and I had gone swimming at a local pool. He said, "Did you see my wife? She is the one with a sun-burnt tongue, because she talks so much." A man was talking about his wife, "My wife always has the last word." To which another man replied, "You're lucky. Mine never gets to it." For these, the number of books they will fill will be quite large. For others, the books will be smaller.

It has been estimated that each day, we speak from 30-40 pages of text if all of our words were transcribed. That means that we fill up a 200 page book every week of your life. You will have volumes of material for God to pull out at the judgment. So, imagine yourself standing at the judgment and God pulls out all of the volumes of words that you have ever spoken. It takes God a second to read through everything (because He takes His time). Then, He pronounces a judgment based upon your words. "By your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned" (verse 37). **What a scary thought!**

Now, you need to be careful with understanding these words, because you need to compare Scripture with Scripture. In Matthew 25, the criteria for judgment comes on the basis of how well you treated the "stranger," the "naked," the "sick" and the "imprisoned" (Matt. 25:31-46). In Romans 8:1, we find that the condemnation won't come upon those who are in Christ Jesus. The marvels of the gospel of grace is that God justifies unworthy, undeserving sinners by faith in Him. So, you can't understand these words of Jesus in an absolute sense that your words alone will ultimately determine your final destiny.

I believe that Jesus could say this because your words are an expression your hearts. If God has transformed your heart, your words will give testimony of your love for the Savior and you will "enter into the joy of your master" (Matt. 25:21). If your heart remains hardened by sin, your words will testify against you that you deserve to spend eternity in hell. God will have a legal file that will fill many, many volumes, which will testify against you for eternity in these matters.

I exhort you, church family, "watch your words!"

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For more information see www.rvbc.cc.