

Garth Brooks sang a song a while back that if you have never heard it, you should it is a great song. It's called "Unanswered Prayers" and it not only sounds good but it has great theology as well. A lot of country-western songs have great theology behind them. Willie Nelson not only looks like an Old Testament Prophet, sometimes he sounds like one as well. Now if you have never heard the song "Unanswered Prayers" the premise of it is this: This guy goes with his wife to his hometown football game and while he is there they run into his old high school girlfriend. When he sees her, he starts to reminisce about how much he loved her way back when and how each night he would pray that God would always let them be together, and if God would only answer that one prayer, he would never ask for anything again. He prayed time and time again, God let her be mine. But after God had said no, and the years had passed, he stands there and looks at his wife, and he then thanks God for that "unanswered prayer".

I like that because it says a great deal about not only our prayers but also God's response to our prayers. Sometimes, we want something that we really shouldn't want. And all the time, God is good enough to us to say "no" when we don't need it. I can look back on my own life and see the times when God didn't give me what I wanted that eventually it was for the best and my life is a lot better today because I didn't get what I wanted.

That's important for us to know because God will always answer our prayers, but sometimes the answer to those prayers will be no, and that is not because God is mean or uncaring, but rather because God knows what is best for us and out of His amazing love for us, sometimes he doesn't give us what we want. ***The other morning, one of my girls woke up and wanted breakfast, but not any old breakfast, no they wanted a Hostess cupcake. Now as a loving father, I told them no because it was not nutritious to have a chocolate cupcake for breakfast, instead I gave them a piece of left-over pizza from the night before.***

But because God loves us, He doesn't always give us what we want because often what we want is not what we need. This morning we are going to start a new series of messages looking at the idea of "I know what I want but Thank God He knows what I need." What we want to do is to look at some of the things we want, some of the attitudes we want, and some of the behaviors we want to be able to do and compare that instead with what God says we really need. And we will find that as we go through this that they are not always one and the same. And when our wants contradict what God says we need, it is our obligation to then change our wants to match what God says we need.

This morning we want to take a look at something we tend to want to do quite often, and that is we want to give someone a piece of our mind. I don't know about you, but there are times when someone does something or says something that I just want to lay into that person and set them straight. But is that what God wants me to do? Instead of giving them a piece of my mind, I need to, by the grace provided by the Prince of Peace, give that person some peace in their mind. So what this entails is controlling the strongest most dangerous muscle on our body, and that is our tongues. [Chuck Swindoll referred to the tongue as the "two ounce slab of trouble."](#)

So I want us to look at three things we need to do to make sure our tongues are used to give others peace of mind, and not simply to give them a piece of ours.

The first things is that we need to be careful with what we say. Look at [vs. 29](#). It says, "[Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.](#)" Don't let any unwholesome talk come from your mouth. The word there translated unwholesome literally means rotten, and it carries the idea of rotting vegetables or rotting fish. It carries the meaning of being worthless and rotten. So what are some ways that unwholesome words can come from our mouth?

One way is by obscenity. [Ephesians 5:4](#) in the Living Bible says, "[Dirty stories, foul talk, and coarse jokes--these are not for you. Instead, remind each other of God's goodness, and be thankful.](#)" A foul mouth is not befitting of a follower of Christ. In addition, it shows a lack of a decent vocabulary and instead of making you look cool it makes you look little. [Charles Schultz, Charlie Brown's creator, said that he had a strong dislike for vulgar phrases and said that he found that the terms "good grief" and "rats" will cover virtually anything that happens.](#) In other words, those foul words not only are they awful, but there not needed. And remember, you represent Christ in this world, and a foul mouth does not represent Christ well.

But dirty words are not the only way you speak unwholesome words. Another way is to use them to put down other people. [A while back I was flipping through the channels and I saw a show on the guide and it said, Fight club, and I thought, "oh, there's a boxing match on" and I tuned into it, but what it was is two guys surrounded by a bunch of other people and they were trading insults with each other. And it got me to thinking which was more brutal, a boxing match or trading insults. Bruises heal, but the effects of the painful words tend to linger.](#)

There is nothing more painful than words meant to hurt. That's why in the book of James, James called the tongue a fire because its burns are every bit as destructive and disastrous as those of a blowtorch. **Proverbs 12:18** says, "*Reckless words pierce like a sword....*" You've probably heard the expression, "Sticks and stones will break my bones. But words will never hurt me?" Is that true? No! It's not! As we have stated, words hurt and they have consequences. What you say effects others, whether you want them to or not.

Have you ever heard the singer Karen Carpenter? She sang "We've only just begun. To Live. White lace and promises." When she and her brother first started singing, one of the critics that covered the band referred to her as "Richard's chubby little sister." And that comment demoralized her. From that moment on, every time she looked in the mirror, she said to herself, "I'm Richard's chubby little sister." And she started taking drugs to lose weight. And she became then became bulimic and anorexic and eventually died because of it.

Your words are powerful and has the power to tear apart a life. **Proverbs 18:21** says, "*Death and life are in the power of the tongue*". So be careful what you say. When you go to yell at your kid, think about the impact of what you will say. If a kid grows up hearing from his dad, "you're stupid!" Guess how that person is going to grow up thinking, "I'm stupid!" So choose your words carefully.

Now something that goes with this is that not only are we to not let any unwholesome talk come from our mouth, but we are also supposed to use our words to build each other up. Listen to this verse again, **Eph 4:29**, "*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*"

Not only can your words tear down people but they can build people up as well. Tony Campolo told the story about how when he was growing up, around his neighborhood their lived a Jewish family and his family as you can tell by his name was Italian. He said that the Jewish family, their kids were smart, they were happy, and he said that he realized that every time he went over there, their mom was constantly praising them, uplifting them, saying something good about them. He said that influenced those kids and they became successful in life. He said his mom constantly nagged and fed him pasta, so he grew up to be bald and fat. Think about how one encouraging word can uplift you.

You have the ability, with your words, to make a person stronger. Your words are to their soul what a vitamin is to their body. If you had food and saw someone starving, you would share it, right? If you had water and saw someone dying of thirst, you would give them some, right? Of course you would. Then let's do the same for their hearts.

Another part of this is that by choosing your words carefully, sometimes that means that you shouldn't say anything at all. Remember that phrase, "If you can't say anything good then don't say it at all." Well that is true. Someone has observed, "The reason a dog has so many friends is that he wags his tail more than his tongue."

There are times when you are going to want to say something to somebody, or to repeat something you have heard, but learn to keep your mouth shut. I was reading a while back a book about Winston Churchill, and the book said that Churchill was a great orator but he didn't always know how to bite it. After a day of heavy intoxication, a woman approached him and said, "Sir Winston, You are drunk!" Winston Churchill then said, "M'lady, you are ugly. And tomorrow I will be sober!" I don't think she voted for him. And you will hurt a lot of people and lose a lot of friends if you don't learn to bite your tongue.

Now, before you say something, think about it. I want to give you a little acrostic to think about each time you decide to say something. T- Is this true. H- Is this helpful. I- intelligent, N- Is it necessary, K- Is it kind.

Now some would say what's the big deal with my words. Their just words. But unwholesome words are a symptom of a far worse problem. Jesus said in [Matthew 12:34](#), "For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks" If the tongue is inconsistent, there is something radically wrong with the heart. I heard about a professing Christian who got angry on the job and let loose with some swear words. Embarrassed, he turned to his partner and said, "I don't know why I said that. It really isn't in me." His partner wisely replied, "It had to be in you or it couldn't have come out of you." If your language is filled with hateful things, then its an indication of a hateful heart, a heart that needs to be cleansed by the blood of Christ.

So the first thing we need to do is to watch what we say. Another thing to help us give others peace of mind and not simply a piece of our mind is that we must let go of our anger. Look at [Ephesians 4:31](#), "***Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.***" Unrighteous anger destroys. And it is no accident that this passage puts together unwholesome words and anger because one of the quickest ways to say an unwholesome word is to do so in anger.

When you are mad you tend to say things that you normally wouldn't say. That's why whenever you want to give someone a piece of your mind, you need to stand back and let that anger die down first, because if you don't you will regret it. Very rarely I have I heard someone say, "I wish I would've said that." But quite often I've heard someone say, "I wish I would have never said that." And unrighteous anger never ends good. [Wil Rogers](#) said, "People who fly into a rage always make a bad landing." So let go of that anger.

And finally, there must be a loving Christ-like attitude within you. Look at [Ephesians 4:32](#), "[Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.](#)" Now you may say, wait a minute, I want to give that person a piece of my mind, and let them know what for because of the way they treated me. But you need to understand, how you respond to that person is not based on how that person treated you or on what that person has done to you...it is based upon what Jesus Christ has done for you and how he has treated you.

Jesus said to love your enemies and to do good to those who would do harm to you. How do you respond to some one who is mean to you. By doing good to them. Try it. Next time someone at work won't talk to you, smile at them and get them a cup of coffee. If someone is talking about you behind your back, give them a compliment in front of the boss. Don't be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good.

The story is told of a man many years ago who found his neighbor's horse in the middle of his field. He was so angry about it that he took the horse to the public pound. Meeting the owner soon after this, he told him what he had done and added, "If I catch him there again, I will do the same thing." The neighbor then replied, "Well, the other night I looked out of my window and saw your cattle in my field. I took your cattle and drove them over to your house, and put them in the barn, and fixed the gate. If I catch them there again, I will do the same thing." The man was reportedly so struck with his neighbor's soft reply that he at once took the horse out of the pound and paid the charges himself.

You see, that is how we overcome evil in this world, not by becoming evil ourselves, but by overcoming evil with good. Our purpose as Christians is not that we get even with everybody, but that people see Christ living in us, working in us, to the point that they in turn seek out Christ. Imagine the impact it would have if every person went out this week and gave up their right to get even with people. If someone cuts you off, imagine if you didn't sound your horn and extend to them a one fingered wave, but instead let them in and wave and smiled at them. Imagine how it would be if you

everybody here went to Wal-mart, and instead of complaining about the long lines and the associates lack of motivation (I notice these things to), you complimented her in some way and asked her how she was doing. We could go on and on, but you get the point. Don't overcome evil with evil, but overcome it with good.

Don't be overcome with evil but overcome evil with good, and our example for this is Christ. Upon the cross, men spat on Him, cursed at Him, mocked Him, and tortured and crucified Him; yet not once did He curse back. Not once did he strike back at them, instead He prayed for them. He loved them and he prayed for them. And He did the same for us. While we were yet still sinners Christ died for us, and when we have deserved wrath, He instead has poured out blessing after blessing. Now let us do likewise.