

Speak Truth in Love

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Date: 14 July 2019

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[0 : 00] This morning's reading is from the book of Proverbs and chapter 26, which you'll find on page 662 of the Church Bible. Page 662, chapter 26 of the book of Proverbs, and we begin to read at verse 17 of that chapter.

And so we listen for the word of the Lord. Like one who grabs a stray dog by the ears is someone who rushes into a quarrel, not their own.

Like a maniac shooting flaming arrows of death is one who deceives their neighbor and says, I was only joking. Without wood a fire goes out.

Without gossip a quarrel dies down. As charcoal to embers and as wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome person for kindling strife.

The words of a gossip are like choice morsels. They go down to the inmost parts. Like a coating of silver dross on earthenware, of fervent lips with an evil heart.

[1 : 22] Enemies disguise themselves with their lips, but in their hearts they harbor deceit. Though their speech is charming, don't believe them, for seven abominations fill their hearts.

Their malice may be concealed by deception, but their wickedness will be exposed in the assembly. Whoever digs a pit will fall into it.

If someone rolls a stone, it'll roll back on them. A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin.

Don't boast about tomorrow, for you don't know what a day may bring. Let someone else praise you, and not your own mouth.

An outsider, and not your own lips. Stone is heavy and sand are burdened, but a fool's provocation is heavier than both.

[2 : 26] Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy? Better is open rebuke than hidden love.

Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses. Thanks be to God for his word.

Great. Good morning, everyone. Thank you, Robin, for leading, and Malcolm reading. And if you're new here at St. Silas, a big welcome to you.

What a joy to see you. So good morning, boys and girls, grandpas and grandmas, little babies. If you do have a little baby and they start crying, the talk gets too much, there's a creche room at the back, do jump in there, and that's fine.

Well, we've got some wonderful pictures in the story before morning. I wonder if you enjoyed that. Like a maniac shooting flaming arrows of death. That's a brilliant picture, isn't it?

[3 : 29] So some exciting stuff to look forward to there. But if we're going to hear from God and understand his word, then we're going to have to ask him to speak to us. So let's do that now. I'll close my eyes and then we'll pray.

Father, please speak to us now in these Proverbs. Please help us to think how we can use our words wisely. Amen. And if you're a little one and you'd like to come forward, please do.

That would be great fun. That would be an encouragement to me. And if you want to bring a grown-up with you, that's fine too. Or if you're like someone else and you just want to sit forward, that's fine as well. Great. So we're in the book of Proverbs.

And Proverbs is all about how we can live wisely and live the good life. And we all want the good life, don't we?

The good life is good, isn't it? That's why it's called the good life. And we've considered what wisdom is over the last couple of weeks. So we think wisdom is seeing and knowing.

[4 : 31] So wisdom is seeing. What do we mean by that? It's seeing that God made the world and everything in it is amazing. Sunrises, sunsets, fireworks, crackers, friends, yummy meals.

The world is amazing. And God made all of that. But it's also seeing that there's lots wrong in the world to God today that makes God sad.

And so wisdom is figuring out how we live in that world, knowing how we live in that world, living in the world in a way that pleases God, when often, very often, the rules don't apply.

And so today we're going to think about how we can use our words wisely. Hmm. I wonder if you've ever thought about words. Have you ever thought about words?

Words are wonderful things, aren't they? So with our words, we can say some wonderful things and be really, really kind to others. So what kind of things can you say?

[5 : 37] You can say, I love you and you can have my last chocolate. That's a really kind thing to say. Yes, yes. Some nods there.

But with our words, we can also be really spiteful and hurt other people. Like, I hate you and you smell.

It's not a very nice thing to say about someone, is it? So words can be used for good or they can be used for bad. And now we're going to have to figure out how we can use our words wisely.

So we're going to learn how we can use our words wisely. And we're going to learn what that is.

And that is speaking the truth in love. But first, let's consider what Proverbs says about how we can use words unwisely.

And if you're growing up there, you might want to look at verse 17. What does verse 17 say about what using words unwisely is like? It's like the one who grabs a stray dog by the ears.

[6 : 39] What does that mean? Well, I wonder if you've ever seen a dog walking down the street and it's growling and it's yapping. A very unwise thing to do would be to try and grab it by the ears.

Would you do that? Does that sound like a sensible thing to happen? No. What might happen? Do you want to shout out what might happen? You get into trouble, it might bite you.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Also, it doesn't sound like a very wise thing to do. But also, Proverbs describes using words unwisely as like, and I love this, like a maniac shooting flaming arrows of death.

And so they shoot out these arrows. And what happens with the arrows? If you think you're in a dry country, the arrows shoot out and they land in a field. And what happens to the field? The field gets on fire and all the food burns down and all the houses burn down and everything falls apart.

And so when we use our words unwisely, it causes lots of trouble. It causes fights. And so what happens is the police have to come.

[7 : 50] The fire brigade have to come. Ambulances have to come. And that is not the good life. So when we use words unwisely, that causes fights.

And that's not the good life. But I wonder if you can identify with this. Have you ever done this? This is another way that we use words unwisely. And it goes something like this. Mom, your hair is looking very pretty today.

Can I do the dishes? Would that be helpful? Well, I've tidied my room. It looks amazing. Can I please stay up all night on PlayStation eating chocolates until 4 o'clock in the morning?

What have I done there? What have I done there? I wonder if you can guess. What have I done there? Should we give this a go? What have I done there? Does anyone want to go? What have I done? And tried to trick her into staying up all night eating chocolate?

Yes, I've tried to trick her into staying up all night eating chocolate. Yeah. You might have lied.

Yeah, I might have told her little fibby. Yeah. And that's an unwise way of using words, isn't it?

[9 : 04] And that's a way that flatters falsely. And flattering is really doing exactly what you said. It's saying something just to get something out.

And so look at what Proverbs says about speaking in a way that falsely flatters. Though their speech is charming, Mom, your hair is beautiful, yada, yada. Do not believe them.

Like a flattering mouth works ruin. And that ruin, everything falls down and it's not very nice. So if we're going to think about how we can use our words wisely, what does the Bible say about how we can use wisely?

Well, here's a verse from the New Testament that's going to help us think about how we can use our words wisely. And that is that we need to be speaking the truth in love.

So speaking the truth, what's that? Well, that's simply saying that God made the world. Speaking in light that God made the world. He made everything in it. That it's wonderful. And that also lots in the

world is wrong.

[10:03] But good news. Jesus has come to bring forgiveness and good things. And then also speaking the truth in love. And that's in a way that's kind and loving to others.

And in order to do that well, we're going to have to practice how to do that. So I've asked a friend to help me practice how we can speak the truth in love well.

Should we give this a go? Should we try and figure this out? Heather's going to help us. Right. So here's the first way we could speak words in a way that sound loving but actually hurts.

So let's give this a go. James, I'm going to get all my money from a piggy bank. I'm going to spend it all on chocolate. And I'm going to eat it all myself. Oh, Heather. That sounds wonderful.

You should have a really good time eating all that chocolate by yourself in your room hidden away. That's great. Have a great time. Was that a wise way of using words?

[11:05] No. Why was it unwise? Why was it unwise? Should we give a go? Have you got a go? Why was it unwise? Yeah, just let Heather get on with it.

Do whatever she wants. Let's think about... But there's another way that we could use words that are very true but not very loving. So let's give this another go. James, I've got all my money from a piggy bank.

And I'm going to spend it all on chocolate. And I'm going to eat it all myself. What? That's mental. Don't be so ridiculous. How selfish. That's what a silly thing to do.

Was that truthful? Yes, that was probably right. Was it loving? No chance. That wasn't very kind, was it? Right. So let's think about how we can use our words wisely.

And that is speaking the truth in love. I wonder what that's going to look like. So let's give this another go. James, I've got all my money from a piggy bank. And I'm going to spend it all on chocolate.

[12:05] And I'm going to eat it all myself. Good grief, boys and girls. I'm going to have to say something to help Heather out. I don't think that's very wise. Heather, do you think that's the wisest way to use your money?

Maybe not. Do you think there's a way that you could be kinder to others in how you use it? Do you know, maybe I could share the chocolate with everybody here once I bought it. That sounds amazing.

And that's a wise and loving way to use our words. Big thanks to Heather. Right. So which one of those ways do you think was the right way to use words?

Was it, number one, words that sound loving but hurt? Was it, number two, words that are true but not really loving? Was it, number three, words that speak the truth in love? Who wants to go? What do you think?

I think it's number three. Number three, yeah. Anyone else? Three. Three. Three. Yes. I wonder if all the grown-ups agree. Do the grown-ups agree? Yes. Yes. Speaking the truth in love is a wise way of, we've got another comment here.

[13:12] Yes. Is speaking the truth in love like speaking Latin? Grown-ups. I'll speak to your parents later.

Right. Brilliant. But oh no, I've just forgotten something. I've just forgotten something. What have I forgotten? Oh no. I'm not very wise with words. I always get things wrong.

And if I speak the truth in love, that might mean that, well, my friends like Heather might react badly to that. That's not very good, is it? So let's think about a guy called David Brainerd.

He lived a long, long, long time ago. How does that song go? Long time ago. And David Brainerd said something very silly by accident one day.

And his professors heard it at school. And what did they say? They said, no, David. You can never come back to school. You must go away. And what happened?

[14:16] David pled and he pleaded and he said, please let me come back to school. But they would never let him come back to school because he had used his words unwisely.

But what happened was that God used David for great purposes to tell lots and lots of other boys and girls about what a great and glorious God we have.

And then we also think about Jesus. Jesus always spoke the truth and love. But his friends didn't really respect that at that time. And what did they do?

Well, they said, let's crucify Jesus for speaking the truth and love. But what happened? God used that for a great big good to bring lots and lots and lots of boys and girls to knowing Jesus as their

personal Savior.

for when they haven't spoken wisely and for when they have got things wrong. Isn't that a good thing that Jesus came? That even though we speak unwisely, God still uses that for good.

[15 : 23] Right. So we've got lots of things to pray about there. I wonder if you can remember how we pray. So let's give it a go. P-R-A-Y Dear God, we thank you for wise words.

We pray that we would use words wisely and not unwisely. We pray that we would always speak words that are true in a loving way.

Amen.