

## The Incredible Power of Words

by Bayless Conley

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If you haven't found James 3, why don't you find it now? We're going to dive in just a moment. Before we do, let's just take a minute and pray.

Heavenly Father, we approach Your Word with reverence, knowing that it is impregnated with Your life. Lord, what we're about to read in James 3, we know it's just as true as what we read in John 3:16. This is just as true. Help us to get it. Help us to understand it. Lord, our intent is not just to be hearers, but to be doers of Your Word, that You might be glorified thereby in Jesus' name. Amen.

I don't know if you've ever read Genesis 1, God's account of creation. God created everything with words. God said, and it was. He said, and it was. He said, and it happened. God made everything with words. He created the world with His words. Then it says, He created man in His own image and in His own likeness, which, among other things, means that He gave man the ability to speak words that can affect and change things. The only part of God's entire creation that He gave the ability to put heart and lips together and to speak as He does is you and me.

He created the world with words. To a degree, your own personal world is affected and impacted by the words you speak. As I said, we're doing a verse-by-verse through the book of James. James is actually the half-brother of Jesus. Same mother, different father. James would've had the unique opportunity to observe Jesus growing up in all kinds of situations. On many occasions, he would've observed Jesus's speech and the things He said and the way He said them in a number of different circumstances. He would've watched and listened to Jesus speak when He was provoked, when He was under pressure, when He was tired after a hard day's work, and when He was around pretty girls.

He saw that Jesus' tongue was always under control, and always, His life was under control as well. James would've listened and observed as Jesus spoke words of peace, hope, and encouragement. He would've seen the tangible result of those words, which confirmed Christ's own teaching that a good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, brings good things to pass. For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. James would've thought hard and long about these things before he ever pinned the words that we're about to read. James 3:1-2 NKJV,

<sup>1</sup> My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. <sup>2</sup> For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

Now, the word perfect just means "mature." Bridle means "to control." A person who can control their tongue can control their body. When he said, "Don't many of you become teachers," he's obviously talking about the ministry gift of a teacher in the body of Christ. Ephesians 4, "God has given some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, and teachers to

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equip the saints for the work of the ministry.” In 1 Corinthians 12, the apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Spirit, says, “Look, are all apostles?” The answer, obviously, is no. “Do all work miracles?” The answer is no. “Are all teachers?” No. Everyone is not called to be a teacher or has that unction or that anointing or that gifting to be a teacher to the church. The truth is God will judge those who teach in a stricter manner than any other member of the body of Christ. Why? Because of the power and potential of words, which are the instruments that they use in the performance of their calling.

The instruments used in different occupations can be potentially dangerous. A carpenter uses a hammer, a saw, and a nail gun. A welder uses a torch. A policeman uses a car and a gun. All are potentially dangerous, but the teacher uses the most dangerous instrument of all: the tongue. He said in verse 2, “We all stumble, and we slip up in many things.” The carpenter may slip up with his saw and lose a couple of fingers, but to slip up with your words can cause far more damage. More lives have been destroyed by an unbridled tongue than by anything else.

An unbridled tongue is a sure sign of an unbridled life. Maturity is measured to a large degree by a person’s ability to speak the right kind of words. Notice what he said, “The one who can control their tongue, can control their whole body.” That means all of their body can control its appetites, its desires, its passions, its inclinations, and its weaknesses. The whole body can be controlled by someone who learns to control their tongue. Verses 3–5 NKJV,

<sup>3</sup> Indeed, we put bits in horses’ mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. <sup>4</sup> Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. <sup>5</sup> Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!

A tongue is likened to a bit in a horse’s mouth, to a rudder on a large ship, and to a flame that starts a massive forest fire. If you think about it, there’s a progression there from small to large. It starts with this bit in the horse’s mouth. The horse is the metaphor for our body. A horse just has one rider. Initially, the tongue’s damage is singular, is just to that person, but it quickly escalates. The next thing he says is that it’s like a ship, a large ship. The ship has a lot of people on it, and a ship that’s out of control can be the ruin of many. Then it escalates to an entire forest burning out of control, which can affect and devastate whole communities, like the tragedy that happened recently in Lahaina on the island of Maui. I had breakfast with a fireman from Lahaina just the other day. He shared that the media actually didn’t touch on the extent of what happened, the loss of life, the loss of property, and everything else. They didn’t even come close to actually sharing how bad things actually were. It all started from a small flame.

Let’s back up for a few moments and talk about each one of these. The horse, the ship, and the forest fire. First, the horse. An average horse weighs about 1,000 pounds, but you can put an 85-year-old girl on the back of that horse, and if she knows how to ride, she can control it. She can make it stop. She can make it go left and right with the reins that are attached to that bit in the horse’s mouth. My mom was quite a horsewoman. She taught me to ride when I was a little boy. She, actually, was put on a horse’s back, literally, before she learned to walk.

The woman could ride. We used to ride a lot. We’d go to different places, and the stable hands would always come around when my mom was there because she was kind of cute. They found out she could ride, and more than once, they challenged her to race. My mother never lost a race. Never. In fact, one time, they were taunting her. There was an unsaddled horse there. She

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jumped on the back of this horse bareback and just took off. She knew how to control a horse. In the same way, if we can learn to control our tongue, we can control our body.

Then the ship, look also at the ships in verse 4. Although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Pastor Kenneth and I were in Seal Beach last week, and we had breakfast. Then we walked down Main Street, went out onto the Seal Beach pier, and stood on the end of the pier. I stood in that same spot. Well, sort of. The pier has been rebuilt twice, once destroyed by fire and once by big waves. Basically, standing in that same spot I was in 1967, and I watched the Queen Mary sail into Long Beach Harbor. I watched that massive ship come in.

I've been in the wheelhouse of that massive ship. There's just a small wheel. You turn it, and it turns the rudder. The pilot could, literally, with one hand, move that massive ship. The ship would respond as the pilot just moved that rudder by turning the wheel. Notice what it said, "This large ship, driven by fierce winds." Interesting. The word driven is the same word used in the Gospels when a demon would drive a demoniac into the wilderness, someone that was driven into the wilderness. Fierce winds speak of trials and troubles. It's a picture of someone whose life is being driven by fierce demonic forces into the rocks of poverty, illness, divorce, despair, addiction, depression, and defeat. I have a question. If that is you, would you like to see things turn?

If that is your life today, would you like to see things turn for the better? Would you like to see things turn in the right direction? To turn from chaos to harmony, from despair to hope, from sickness to health, and from anxiety to peace? The ship can turn regardless of the winds that are trying to drive it. How do you turn the ship? By changing what you say. You work the rudder, and in particular, the words that you speak as a habit of life that are connected to your insights, things that come from your innermost being that you speak as a habit of life, will affect your life more than any other words you speak.

Right now, some people are listening to me, and your boat is being blown by the winds of immorality onto the rocks of sin. Turn the rudder. Some of you, your marriage is being blown by the winds of selfishness and strife onto the rocks of divorce. Turn the rudder. Some are being driven by demonic forces, by demonic winds of worry and anxiety, onto the rocks of complete mental and physical breakdown. Turn the rudder. If you want the ship to turn, you have to start working the rudder. I know some are thinking, "I'll start talking differently when things change. I'll say, 'By His stripes, I'm healed,' once I feel better. I'll say that God supplies my needs once I see some money. I'll say that God is faithful to guide and to make His wisdom known after He's gotten me out of the problem. Otherwise, it would be hypocritical. It would be false."

Imagine the pilot in this great ship being driven by these winds into the rocks and everyone on board yelling, "Turn the wheel. Work the rudder. Turn the wheel." He says, "I'll turn the wheel once the ship turns. I'm not going to be hypocritical. That would be false. Once the ship turns, then I'll turn the wheel." Now you're done for. You're a shipwreck that is going to happen. Turn the rudder, and the ship will turn. Change what you're saying, and your life will turn. Find a promise. Fill your heart with it. Treasure it up in your heart, and then let your lips agree with it. Speak in alignment with what God has said. Don't be like the guy who gets on the elevator and pushes the button for the 16th floor.

Now, there's another guy on the elevator, and he asks, "You're going to floor 16?" "Huh? I hope not." He says, "You just pushed Button 16." "That doesn't have anything to do with it." "Actually,

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it does. That's the way the elevator is created to work." "I don't believe that." The guy says, "You spend a lot of time on the 16th floor, don't you?" He says, "Yes, it's so frustrating. I don't know why God keeps sending me there." "God is not sending you there. You send yourself there because you keep pushing the 16th button." "They don't teach that in our church. You're extreme." If you think that's extreme, look at what James says next. Again, verses 5–6 NKJV,

<sup>5</sup> Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! <sup>6</sup> And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

Notice it corrupts and defiles the whole body. All of its appetites, its desires, its passions, its inclinations, and its weaknesses are set on fire by the tongue. Then he says, "And it sets on fire the course of nature." It doesn't just affect your body. It sets on fire the whole course of nature. That literally means the totality of your existence, every facet of your life. The ERV version says it starts a fire that influences all of life. The NLT says it can set your whole life on fire. In fact, the Greek word for course, that your tongue can set on fire the course of life, is the word for a wheel.

The picture is a mini spoked wheel. Every spoke representing a different facet of your life; each one is catching fire and sending the fire's destructive power to every area of life. Into your marriage, your children, your business, your other relationships, your health, and your spiritual life. The whole wheel of your existence. Every spoke, and every facet. Some people have burned their marriage down around them by the words they've spoken. Some people have torched every endeavor they've ever engaged in because of the words that they've spoken. Sometimes, when everything is aflame and burning up, it's hard to relate back to the fact that it all started from a small flame that was loosed from your tongue.

I had a little friend named John. We were boys, and there was a third in this three Musketeer group. His name was Don. There's Don, Bayless, and John. We used to hang out all the time. One day, Don and I went over to visit John. I think we're seven or eight, something like that. We knocked on the door, and his mother answered. We asked, "Can John come out and play?" She said, "No." She said, "You want to see what he's doing?" We said, "Sure," and came in. In the living room, there was a huge blackboard set up, and John was writing over and over, "I will not play with matches. I will not play with matches. I will not play with matches."

His mother said he had to write that 1,000 times. For a little kid, she may as well have said infinity. We asked, "What did you do?" He said, "You know our fort?" We had this big wooden fort on the side of the house. He said, "Do you know our fort on the side of the house?" We said, "Yes." He said, "I burned it down." We said, "You're kidding?" He said, "No. I was playing with matches, and it got out of control." Actually, the whole thing burned down, and it almost caught the house on fire. We went out, and there's huge scorch marks coming up the side of the house. His mom had to come with a garden hose and put it out. There are some people here; if I could, I'd give you a blackboard and have you write 1,000 times, "I will watch my words. I will watch my words. I will watch my words." Proverbs 18:21 NIRV says,

<sup>21</sup> Your tongue has the power of life and death. Those who love to talk will eat the fruit of their words.

Friend, this is life and death stuff we're talking about. It gets more interesting as we look closer at what James is teaching. James 3:6 NKJV, once again,

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<sup>6</sup> And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

What? What does that mean? It means the devil is after your tongue. Satan wants to inspire your speech because even if you don't know the power of your words, he does. James is actually giving us some insight into how spiritual warfare works. I want you to listen closely to these verses, and please stay with me. This is so important. Second Corinthians 10:3–5 NKJV says,

<sup>3</sup> For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup> For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, <sup>5</sup> casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

It's talking about our warfare. Somebody says, "What the heck? Thoughts and arguments? What do they have to do with spiritual warfare?" Everything. The battleground of the ages, my friend, is the human mind. The way the devil works is he brings a suggestion, a thought that's contrary, that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. We need to learn to capture our thoughts. Take hold of them, turn them over, and look at them. Ask, "Wait a minute, where did those thoughts come from? What is the origin of these thoughts? Is this consistent with Scripture?" Capture it.

It may be a thought that has to do with anything from raising your kids, to handling your money, or something as basic as salvation. Salvation is through Christ alone. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. "No one comes to the Father but by Me," Jesus said. But then this thought comes, "How could a loving God condemn anyone to go to hell? If someone is really genuinely trying to be good, certainly God will let them into heaven." Wait a minute. That's not what the Scripture teaches. I need to take that thought captive. If I give it room in my thinking, what happens is it escalates, and we actually have a progression here.

He starts at the end and then goes back to the beginning. It starts with a thought, and if we don't capture the thought that's contrary to the truth of God's Word, it escalates into an argument. At one time, we would have utterly rejected it. Now, it begins to argue against the truth of God and begins to make sense in our minds. We've given it room. "Oh, well, I guess God is love, and a God of love would never do that. He would never condemn anyone, so, ultimately, everyone has got to be saved." That's just one example you understand. Now, it becomes an argument and is directly contrary to the truth of God's Word, but it begins to make sense in our minds.

Friend, at that point, it must be cast down. And it gets harder and harder to deal with. It's easier to capture the thought and look at it and kick it out than it is to cast down something that's become a legitimate argument in your mind. And if you don't cast it down at the argument stage, it elevates further and becomes a stronghold. A stronghold is a position from which the enemy can work. The apostle Paul, in Ephesians, talked about spiritual warfare as well. I know almost everyone will be familiar with this. Ephesians 6:11 NKJV says,

<sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

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The strategies, the tactics of the devil. He talks about the different pieces of armor and what they represent, and then we come to verse 16 NKJV,

<sup>16</sup> Above all (or most important), taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

What kind of darts? Fiery darts. What are the fiery darts of the wicked? What is Satan's strategy? What are his tactics? The fiery darts are thoughts and suggestions that are contrary to the knowledge of God and His Word. If you don't take it captive and get rid of it, it'll grow into an argument. From there, it becomes a stronghold. That fiery dart and that fire will drop down to your tongue. Ultimately, that's what the devil is after. He wants your tongue to be set on fire by hell, but it starts with your thoughts. That is his target. That's what he's ultimately after.

If you begin speaking those thoughts, it will set your whole life, every spoke of your existence, aflame. A thought comes, "You'll never get out of this depression. You should just kill yourself. Your spouse and your kids would be better off without you. You're just a burden to everyone. If you were gone, they wouldn't have to deal with this. It would be so much better. You should just end your life." Or, "You should divorce. Your spouse isn't fulfilling your needs. You need to find yourself. You have a right to be happy. It was never God's Will for you to marry this person in the first place. The kids? Hey, children are resilient. They'll be okay. You need to do something for yourself and do it quickly. Life is passing you by."

Or, "You know your grandfather died early. Your dad died before 60. You're going to die young as well. In fact, there's something wrong with you already. You may not feel it, but it's already working. It's working in your heart. You won't live out half of your days. The same thing that happened to them is going to happen to you." What is Satan after? He's after your tongue. What do you do? You resist him.

You take every thought captive, and you replace it with the truth, just like Jesus did when He was tempted in the wilderness. In the very last verse of Matthew 3, the heavens opened, and God the Father spoke, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I'm well pleased." We take two steps into chapter 4, and the next thing that happens is Jesus is in the wilderness, and Satan tempts Him. He says, "If You're the Son of God," immediately challenging what God had said. This thought, this suggestion that exalts Himself against the truth of what God has said.

God just said, "This is My Son." Satan says, "If You're God's Son, command these stones to be made into bread." What does Jesus do? He said, "It is written: man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Satan, if nothing else, is persistent. He says, "If You're the Son of God, throw Yourself down from the temple. It's written, angels will carry You in their hands, lest You dash Your foot against a stone."

Yes, the devil knows the Bible, and he can quote it out of context. Jesus said, "No, it is written, you shall not tempt the Lord your God." Immediately, He took that thought captive. Immediately, He cast it down and replaced it with the truth. The devil has to change his tactics. He says, "Okay. I know why You're here." He shows Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. He says, "These are mine. They've been delivered to me." By the way, they were delivered to him through Adam. He says, "If You fall down and worship me, I'll give them all to You. You can take a shortcut." Jesus said, "No, it is written, you shall worship the Lord your God, and Him alone shall you serve. Get out of here, Satan," and the devil left Him. I don't think we're doing any damage to the story by saying He left him wounded and bleeding. My friend, that is spiritual warfare. That is how it works. James 3:7–10 NKJV,

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<sup>7</sup> For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. <sup>8</sup> But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup> With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. <sup>10</sup> Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

I was an assistant pastor for a couple of years in Banning, California, and among other things, I had the privilege to be a worship leader. I remember one Sunday morning. I'm up with my guitar, and the band is playing. We're worshiping God with just a great sense of the presence of God there. This lady on my left would have been sitting on the right side, facing forward, but she's on my left and has her hands lifted. Her face was aglow like she was an angel.

She was worshiping God, blessing His name, singing with gusto, and just worshiping and worshiping. Then, after service, she caught me in the foyer, and with the same tongue she'd been using to bless God, she began to run down someone she didn't like. She was quite eloquent and heated in her denunciation and vilification of this person. She just went on and on until she noticed that I wasn't responding. She said, "You agree with me, don't you?" I said, "Even if I did, I wouldn't say so." Then she turned that little red rebel behind her teeth loose on me, and she let me have it.

One minute, blessing God; the next minute, cursing people made in God's image. These things ought not to be so. Don't get me wrong, when it comes to our perceptions of people and events, most of the time, it's healthy to share your opinions with others when you're willing to listen to them as well and when your opinions are not based on second and third-hand hearsay or unbiased media reporting. Ultimately, you must be willing to submit and subject your opinion to the unfailing, always right counsel of God, which is His Word.

Think twice before you speak once. The book of James says, "Be slow to speak." You may have heard this before. Think twice before you speak once. T-H-I-N-K. T, is it true? If it's not true, don't say it. H, is it helpful? Everything that's true is not always helpful for you to repeat. Some people love to gossip, and some of the things they gossip about are true, but it's sure not helpful. In fact, listen, it is always wrong, always wrong to share private information with people who are not part of the problem or part of the solution. That is gossip, and it is a sin. Is it helpful? I, is it inspiring? Is it going to encourage and lift up people in any way?

N, is it necessary? Finally, K, is it kind? The virtuous wife in Proverbs 31, one of her great attributes is that on her tongue is the law of kindness. Think before you speak. T, is it true? H, is it helpful? I, is it inspiring? N, is it necessary? K, is it kind? Somebody says, "Wait a minute. What's the point? Didn't we just read that no man can tame the tongue, so why even try if the battle is lost before I even start?" Let's look at that again. James 3:7 NKJV,

<sup>7</sup> For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind.

Now, the word mankind means "man in his natural ability." But by human beings, and it's true. You go to SeaWorld, where they've got killer whales and sea lions, and they've been tamed. You go to the San Diego Zoo and they have lions, crocodiles, elephants, and every kind of beast that you can imagine. Man, in his natural ability, has been able to subdue and tame every creature in the world. Verse 8. "But no man can tame the tongue." In context, no man in his natural ability can tame the tongue. "It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." We need and

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can find supernatural help for controlling our tongues. You can't do it on your own. You need God's help.

On the day of Pentecost, 120 people gathered in the upper room waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit came like a rushing mighty wind, and divided tongues of fire sat on each of them. The first thing the Spirit did was inspire their speech, and they began to speak in other tongues as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance. My friend, your tongue and my tongue are waiting for inspiration. You will find that inspiration from either hell below or from heaven above. It'll be set on fire by hell, or it'll be set on fire by heaven. I, for one, would rather get some fire off of heaven's altar and have that ignite my tongue and speak blessing, goodness, encouragement, and speak in line with God's Word, rather than taking those hellish flames and letting that destroy everything in my life and set on fire the totality of my existence. Every person's tongue is waiting for that inspiration. Ephesians 4:29–31 NKJV,

<sup>29</sup> Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. <sup>30</sup> And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

Listen to me, parents, grandparents, you can build champions with your words. Yes, you can build champions with your words. The words you choose to speak to your kids and to your grandkids, and the words they observe you speaking when you're in the middle of the tempest when the storm is raging around you, they hear what you're saying, and it will affect them. I remember reading a story this guy wrote about when he was a little boy in the Midwest. His grandpa was a farmer. There had been a whole lot of rain and flooding, and all of Grandpa's crops were ruined. He said, "Even as an eight-year-old boy, I understood what that meant. We got nothing but a hard way to go." He said, "I stood on the edge of those destroyed fields, all of the crops gone, holding my grandpa's hand, looking out over those devastated fields. I looked up at my grandpa, and there were tears rolling down his old, weathered face, and he began to sing,

Rock of Ages, cleft for me  
Let me hide myself in Thee  
Let the water and the blood  
From Thy wounded side which flowed  
Be for sin the double cure  
Save from wrath and make me pure.

He said, "I understood that day my grandfather realized that spiritual things were more important than natural things and that he'd put all of his trust in God. He said, "That day, as an eight-year-old boy, I decided Grandpa's God would be my God. I made the decision that day, holding my grandfather's weathered hand, that I would serve this God with all of my heart and all of my soul for all of my life." He said, "I have done it because of the words that came out of Grandpa's mouth when facing that terrible tragedy." The truth is, we all have people in our lives who need a good, uplifting word, and God is looking for someone to speak it through. The testimony is given of Job in Job 4:4 MSG. It says,

<sup>4</sup> Your words have put stumbling people on their feet, put fresh hope in people about to collapse.



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I want to be that guy. You ought to be that girl. Now, the next couple of verses, verses 11 and 12 in James 3, just reinforce what he's already said, clearly illustrating the kind of words that we should be speaking as a habit of life, seeing as we are believers, and that our source is the well of the living waters. I'd encourage you to read them and reflect upon them. We just don't have time to get into them now, but I do think perhaps the greatest illustration of the power of our speech comes right back to Salvation.

The book of Romans says, "If you believe in your heart, God raised Jesus from the dead, and you confess Him with your mouth as Lord, you'll be saved. For with the heart, one believes unto righteousness, being made right with God, and with the mouth, confession is made resulting in salvation." When you put your heart and lips together, it can change your eternal destiny. I had severe problems with substance abuse, and I'd been on a four-year drunk. I went forward in that little street mission in Medford, Oregon, and I said "Yes" to Jesus. I put my trust in Him and confessed Him as my Lord.

I knew something had radically, radically changed in me that day. I knew that I knew. It changed my eternal destination from hell to heaven when I put my heart and lips together. I've heard Pastor Tom share the story many times about his dad. A year before his father passed away, his dad was a German engineer, very precise and maybe not the most emotional guy, Tom asked him, "Dad, would you go to heaven if you died?" He said, "I hope so." Tom said, "You can't rest on 'hope so.' You need to settle this thing. Hope so is not good enough." Tom shared with him, "If you believe in your heart God raised Jesus from the dead, confess Him with your mouth as Lord, you'll be saved." He says, "Dad, you need to settle this and be clear about it."

He led his dad into prayer. He said, "God if I've never been clear about this before—" He was a churchman. Tom told him, it just came out of Tom's spirit beforehand; he said, "When you do, Dad, you're going to feel it." His dad prayed, "God, if I've never been clear about this before, I want to be clear now. I believe Jesus Christ is Your Son. I believe He was raised from the dead, and I embrace Him as my Lord and as my savior." Then Tom's dad said, "Tom, I feel it. I feel it." He said, "If I don't make it to the next Christmas, you just need to know you've given me the best Christmas gift ever: salvation."

I don't think we should base our salvation on feelings. However, in 1 John, John writes this. He says, "We know," we're not hoping, "We know that He abides in us by the Spirit that He's given to us." We know. Friend, when you get born again, you ought to know it. When the Creator of the universe takes resonance up inside of you—I don't base salvation on my feelings, but there are some things I know in my knower. That night, in that little street mission, I knew I was changed. I still had a load of questions that would get answered in the process of time, but I knew. He just took up residence and started moving the furniture around, and I realized He was there. You can know that you know.

A couple of things we want to do. First, I just want to take a moment and pray because I truly do believe there's someone in your world who may be a child, a sibling; in fact, there's somebody here; you've got a sibling who is having a really, really rough time emotionally and mentally. Man, they need you to speak life to them. God will use you to send hope to them and to send comfort to them. It might be a coworker, the guy at your local market who you see all the time and who bags your groceries. Maybe it's a neighbor, someone in your world who needs to be put back on their feet because they're ready to collapse. Words can do it. We want to pray and ask God,

## The Incredible Power of Words

Lord, if there's somebody who I can speak words of blessing and life to, who I can get some fire off of heaven's altar and let it come off of my tongue into their life, let it be so.

Let's just pray right now.

Heavenly Father, if there's anyone who we can bless, who we can encourage with our words, show us. Show us who. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord.

All right. Mary, the mother of Jesus, said something very profound. It was at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee. She told her Son they'd run out of wine. She said to the servants there, "Whatever He says to you, do it." Oh, that's good advice. "Whatever He says to you, do it." Don't think about it, and don't delay, do it. Almost always, 99% of the time, the end of service, I'll lead people in a salvation prayer. Confessing the lordship of Jesus made pretty clear how important that is in the message. I just want to encourage you wherever you're watching this from, if you're outside or in the amphitheater right now, or in your living room, or sitting in a pub in Scotland, settle it. "I hope so. I hope I go to heaven when I die," is not good enough. You need to know so.

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