

# DAY 10 WORDS



## **Matthew 12.36**

*"I tell you, on the day of judgment, you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter."*

We live in a world of noise. Constant chatter, input, opinions, thoughts. For most of us, it is more difficult to find time in our day that does not have noise than the opposite. In 2009 the NY Times found that humans consume 34 gigabytes of data a day. Within that is over 100,000 words per day! We are constantly flooded with words and noise.

The result? Our words are daily cheapened and diminished. We flippantly use our words in all sorts of different environments.

Contrast this with the way that the scriptures speak about the importance of our words. Our words carry spiritual power. While not as powerful as God's, it should forget that Genesis tells us that God "spoke" the world into being. This is a deeply formative view of words. Words create worlds.

Words have power. They wound and heal. They break down and build up. They discourage and encourage. Jesus places eternal value on them when he says we will be judged by the words we have spoken. Words are always more than words.

Because of this reality, we—as followers of Jesus—must be the first to take seriously the importance of our words. We shouldn't dare to underestimate the damage of harmful words. They can tarnish confidence, reputations, spread rumors, split families, divide communities, and spark wars.

The old children's rhyme, "sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never hurt me," is a bold-faced lie.

The opposite of this is also true. Words have incredible power to build up. Words of love and appreciation have the potential to bring blessing and life. They can make God's love real for recipients. They can offer life-giving reality to those around us.

This particular verse is housed within a larger teaching of Jesus about the recognition of fruit and the health or lack of health of a particular tree.

*"Make a tree good, and its fruit will be good or make a tree bad, and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him. But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. For by your words, you will be acquitted, and by your words, you will be condemned."*

Matthew 12.33-37

It would bid us well to pay attention to the manner in which we speak, post, type, communicate because all of it is symptomatic of what is going on internally in us. It reveals our character; it reveals our disposition and the type of "tree" that we are.

### **Daily Practice**

Make today a Lenten blessing day. Consciously use words in ways that heal, build up, and encourage. Seek to do this in as many conversations as you can during the day.

The below reflections are written by congregants & staff of CPC. All reflections are following Trevor Hudson's book *Pauses for Lent* and are both heavily influenced and borrowed from his work. Any quotes without attribution should be credited to him.