

THE USE OF YOUR TONGUE (WORDS)

James 3:9-10 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.

"The tongue," says Aesop, "is at once the best and the worst of things." Solomon wrote, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue. . ." (Proverbs 18:21) A commentator said concerning the tongue, "The tongue is the little hypocrite in our mouths that can make big hypocrites out of us. Here is the hypocrisy of the tongue: one minute it is blessing God, and the very next minute it is cursing men who have been made in the image of God."

James wrote concerning the sins of the tongue, "the tongue. . .is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts. . .it sets the whole course of one's life on fire. . ." (James 3:6) Solomon wrote in Proverbs 12:18 that "rash words are like sword thrusts. . ." and "A worthless man's speech . . . is like a scorching fire." (Proverbs 16:27)

James observed, "Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing." Then James said, "My brothers and sisters, this should not be." The writer to the Hebrews wrote concerning the proper use of the tongue, ". . .exhort one another every day. . .that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." (Hebrews 3:13) Continuing the theme of the proper use of the tongue, he wrote in chapter 10:24-25, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another. . ." Isaiah wrote, "The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary." (Isaiah 50:4)

In the Small Catechism, Luther explained the proper use of the tongue in his explanation to the eighth Commandment, "We should fear and love God so that we. . .defend (our neighbor), speak well of him and explain everything (concerning our neighbor) in the kindest way." The Psalmist said of his words, "I will guard my ways, that I may not sin with my tongue; I will guard my mouth with a muzzle. . ." (Psalm 39:1)

Prayer: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer." (Psalm 19:14)

We praise You, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
In grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
We lay it before You, we kneel and adore You;
We bless Your holy name, glad praises we sing.

We worship You, God of our fathers, we bless You;
Through trial and tempest our guide You have been.
When perils o'ertake us, You will not forsake us,
And with Your help, O Lord, our struggles we win.

With voices united our praises we offer
And gladly our songs of thanksgiving we raise.
With You, Lord, beside us, Your strong arm will guide us.
To You, our great Redeemer, forever be praise!
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