

Let Your Words Be Few

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[0 : 00] Good morning, guys. It's a joy to worship with you all. Please turn in your Bibles to Ecclesiastes chapter 5. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Sean, and I am one of the pastors of Trinity Campus Church.

And it is my great joy and privilege to preach God's Word to you this morning. Thank you.

Thank you. Heavenly Father, we do what the world might consider odd once again.

We come to listen to your Word, written so many years ago, but timeless. The Word of God that makes people wise unto salvation in Jesus Christ.

So, Lord, we incline our years, and we humble our hearts before your Word.

[1 : 43] Speak to us. Speak to us. Make your presence known, your authority known, your glory known, in the reading and preaching of your Word, so that we might be filled with a holy fear of God, reverence and awe before you.

So we might stand in wonder at the grace you have shown us in Jesus Christ. Meet with us now in Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Amen. Please stand, if you are able, as we read God's Word. Ecclesiastes 5, 1 through 7, and I will read it out loud for us.

Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they are doing evil.

Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God. For God is in heaven, and you are on earth.

[3 : 11] Therefore, let your words be few. For a dream comes with much business, and a fool's voice with many words.

When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it, for He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow. It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.

Let not your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands?

For when dreams increase and words grow many, there is vanity, but God is the one you must fear. This is God's holy and authoritative Word.

You may be seated. Let's pray. Let's pray. About 3,500 years ago, there were two men named Nadab and Abihu.

[4 : 14] They were sons of Aaron, the high priest, and as such, they were prestigious members of the priestly class among God's people in Israel with privileged access into the tabernacle, which is the dwelling place of God, where the sacrifices were offered and worship was given to God.

And one day, it says that each of them took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and then offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, which he had not commanded them.

Judging from the prohibition of drinking alcohol before entering the tabernacle that issues forth from this event, we can infer that Nadab and Abihu were probably inebriated.

They were drunk. And because of that, they didn't have the presence of mind, the composure, the self-control to resist taking a strange or foreign fire, an unauthorized fire into the tabernacle to offer it before the Lord.

And in doing so, they profaned the holiness of God. They treated the Lord God with casual contempt. And because of that, it says, fire came out from before the Lord and consumed them so that they died.

[5 : 32] Leviticus 10.2. A few hundred years later, Hophni and Phinehas came along. They were sons of Eli, again, the high priest.

Having grown up reading the story of Nadab and Abihu in their God-worshipping home, you would expect that they would know better. But despite the fact that they were priests, 1 Samuel 2.12 tells us that they did not know the Lord.

When the people of God would come to offer their offering, and the meat would be being boiled, about to be offered to God, they would send their servants. They would come with their big forks and dip it into the pot and grab a big hunk of meat, and they would march back home to their places, their rooms, to eat it while the offering was being offered to God.

And then, when the burnt offering is being offered, the sin offering is being offered, that offering was, the fat of the offering was to be burned completely because God said the fat belongs to the Lord. But these guys, they liked their steak, juicy and fatty, so they would interrupt the offering and say, we want raw meat before you offer it to the Lord.

And they would take it and eat it. As a result, it says that, thus the sin, 1 Samuel 2.17, thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the Lord.

[6 : 56] for the men treated the offering of the Lord with contempt. As a result, both Hophni and Phinehas perished on the same day in the hands of the Philistine army as the Lord has said they would.

Irreverent worship is a grave sin. God cares about how we approach Him in worship and how we relate to Him as our God and Lord.

So Ecclesiastes 5.1-7 begins by saying, guard your steps when you go to the house of God. And then it ends by saying, God is the one you must fear.

And that's the main point of this passage and indeed the main point of the entire book of Ecclesiastes and indeed the main point of all wisdom literature in Scripture is the fear of God.

That we ought to fear God. This is not a fear that terrorizes, fear of punishment, but a different kind of fear. The fear of punishment, it says in 1 John 4.18, is driven away by God's perfect love for us.

[8 : 02] But there's a second kind of fear in which we ought to relate to and respond to God with reverent obedience and humble submission. I'm not trying to take some barbaric teaching in the Old Testament about being terrorized by God and making it palatable for the modern audience.

The Bible itself makes this distinction between two types of fears. It says in Exodus 20.20, after God appears to the Israelites to give them the Ten Commandments and Moses says to the people, do not fear for God has come to test you that the fear of God may be with you that you may not sin.

Don't fear. In other words, don't be afraid of God and His punishment and flee from this place. but fear God, meaning revere Him, stand in awe of Him, know how big He is and how small you are so that you are constrained onto obedience.

That's the kind of fear that's in view in this passage and Ecclesiastes 5.1-7 is particularly concerned with one way that the fear of God ought to be expressed and that's in the fewness of our words.

That's the main point that I want to bring to you this morning. Before God in heaven, we should let our words be few. And my first point is going to be talk less.

[9 : 27] It's pretty simple. My second point is going to be walk the talk. It says in verse 1, guard your steps when you go to the house of God. The command in Hebrew is literally guard your feet.

This is not a warning about some uneven steps on your way up the temple staircase. It's getting at the fact that whichever direction your feet are pointing, that's the way you walk.

Your feet and walking is a common metaphor. The metaphor of the journey and life and walking is commonly used in the Bible and so this here is referring to the same thing. Proverbs 4.27 says, Do not swerve to the right or to the left.

Turn your foot away from evil. So then, the preacher is warning us, when you approach God in worship, guard your steps. Watch your conduct.

Watch your attitude. Make sure that it fits the glory and honor and holiness of God. More specifically, the preacher continues in verse 1, To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they are doing evil.

[10 : 36] to listen, which in Hebrew, as is the case in the English, also means to obey, to listen to someone, to obey someone. And it's a very important command in the Bible.

In fact, if you look at the greatest command summarized in the Old Testament, in Deuteronomy 6.45, it begins this way. Hear, hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. Hear, pay attention, listen.

Some people have said that hearing is the most important spiritual faculty for the Christian. That of all our senses, that hearing is the most important. If you remember Doubting Thomas after Jesus' resurrection saw Jesus, he touched Jesus' nail-scarred hands and his spear-pierced sides and then he believed and then Jesus said, you have believed because you have seen.

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed because we as Christians ought to walk by faith and not by sight. And faith is the assurance of things hoped for and conviction of things unseen.

[11 : 57] And so how do we come to faith? Romans 10, 14 to 17 tells us, how then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?

And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? So faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ.

Saving faith is not a fruit of our personal search or investigation or an experiment. Saving faith is the fruit of our proclamation of God's revelation.

It is something that is heard. It is something that is received. And that means the activity that we're engaged in right now, the preaching of God's word and the hearing of God's word is a matter of life and death, of eternal salvation or eternal damnation.

When some people hear the word of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ, it lands on their ears like a seed that falls along the path that people walk on.

[13 : 06] It gets trampled on their foot and it gets pecked at and devoured by birds. These are the people who listen to the gospel, listen to the word, but they don't really hear it.

It just goes out the other ear. The seed never takes root in their hearts. And it's snatched away by the devil. And then there are some people, you guys might recognize this parable.

Somebody famous said this. Some people, the word of God lands on their ears like a seed that falls upon a rock. There's some shallow soil on the rock and so the seed quickly takes root, shallow root, and then it springs up quickly.

But because it doesn't have deep root, it withers away when the sun shines on it. It's like people who listen to the word and at first seem to eagerly embrace it and gladly receive it, but then as soon as trials and temptations come, as soon as the pressures of life bear upon them, there's no root and so they wither away.

For some people, the word of God lands on their ears like a seed that falls among thorns. They grow up, but they're choked away by the thorns and don't bear fruit.

[14 : 25] They're like the people who hear the gospel, hear the word of God, but then when they are tempted, they're preoccupied by the cares of this world, by the worries of life, by the riches of this world.

When they are lured away by the pleasures of this world, these things distract them and these things choke spiritual life out of them so that they don't ever bear fruit.

But for some other people, the word of God enters their ears like a seed that falls on good soil and then it grows and grows and grows and bears fruit a hundredfold.

They are like the people who hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart and bear fruit with patience. This is from Jesus' parable in Luke 8.

And you know what determines the fate of the gospel, this gospel seed in your life? Do you want to know how you can be this good soil that bears fruit a hundredfold?

[15 : 34] Jesus tells us in Luke 8, 18. Take care than how you hear. How do you hear?

Are you listening? To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools for they do not know that they are doing evil.

The preacher of Ecclesiastes has in mind a worshiper but a foolish worshiper who comes to the temple and offers sacrifices to God in the temple but doesn't actually listen to God, doesn't actually obey God in his life.

This contrast between listening and sacrifice is one we find in other parts of scripture as well. We just read in our confession of, in the call to worship, right? The sacrifices of God are a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

in 1 Samuel 15, 1-3, prophet Samuel tells King Saul while he is on his way to make war against the Amalekites, he says, now therefore listen to the words of the Lord.

[16 : 40] And this is the word of the Lord that Samuel gives to Saul. This is what you should listen to. He tells him, the Amalekites have oppressed my people. They are thoroughly idolatrous and therefore you must devote them to destruction.

Do not save the spoils. But Saul thinks he knows better. All these animals, all this wealth, all this gold, all these women, he decides to keep the spoils to indulge in them.

And then when Samuel comes to confront Saul about his unfaithfulness, he deviously says, oh no, no, I kept this so that we can use these animals to sacrifice to God. He was all for a good reason, to worship God.

And then this is what Samuel says. Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to listen than the fat of rams.

What good is lip service of sacrifice when you have no listening ear? What God desires is obedience. We are to present our bodies, our very lives, as it says in Romans 12, as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.

- [18 : 26] That is our spiritual worship. David echoes the sentiment in Psalm 40, verses 6 to 8. I think I have that to show. In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear.
- Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. Then I said, behold, I have come in the scroll of the book. It is written of me. I delight to do your will. Oh my God, your law is within my heart.
- The expression, you have given me an open ear, if translated more literally, is you have dug open my ear, which is a powerful illustration of how we ought to take care to listen to the word of God.
- It's as if God takes a hole and shovel and picks at our hard heads and our deaf ears to dig open an ear upon which he can plant the gospel seed.
- What good is it if we come to church on Sunday to worship God in our Sunday best clothes with our Sunday best smiles on and then we shake our hands with each other and then we raise up our hands in worship and then we utter our platitudes in prayer only to let the word of God that we hear go in one ear and out the other.
- [19 : 50] only to contradict our profession of faith on Sunday with the conduct of our lives Monday through Saturday. Proverbs 28.9 says, if one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.
- Why would a worshiper, think about this for a second, why would a worshiper offer sacrifices to God but not listen to him? because other people see sacrifices offered in public.
- They don't see the way they talk and live in private. There's another reason to consider why would a worshiper offer sacrifices but not listen to God.
- Some people offer sacrifices without obedience because sacrifice seems like an effective or efficient way to get God to do what you want him to do.
- hundreds of millions of people throughout the world still keep idols and altars in their homes and businesses and they bow to them and bring food to them, offerings to them, and worship these idols because they believe that if they do make these regular sacrifices, then those so-called gods will help them to prosper, keep their families healthy, keep their businesses prospering.
- [21 : 12] this is a classic patron-client relationship. The client brings the payment and the patron bestows the favor. It's transactional, not relational.
- It's selfish at its root because it's really not even a gift, it's a bribe designed for your own selfish ends. It's a way of getting God to do what we want instead of doing what God wants us to do.
- it's a presumptuous attempt to shape God to be the way we want Him to be instead of being shaped by God's Word to be the way He wants us to be.
- It's what we confessed earlier, it's a way of improperly seeking concessions from God when we should be seeking guidance from Him. When our proper posture before Him is submission, not negotiation.
- what is your relationship to the Word of God? Are you submitted to it? Or are you trying to extract concessions from it?
- [22 : 27] Are you listening to it? Or are you talking over it? That brings me to verse 2. Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God.
- For God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore, let your words be few. If we have a humble posture of submission before God in worship, then we're going to let our words be few.

Why? The preacher tells us, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Imagine that you're a student and your professor invites you to accompany him to a prestigious gathering of leading experts in this research field.

Would you go there and then take a seat among the table among these great scientists or whatever they do and then blabber away about the little that you know?

or would you just stand up to the side quietly and listen? If you're a summer intern at your new work in your company, would you go barging into the CEO's office and tell him, hey, I can tell you how to run this office better.

[23 : 47] I can tell you how to run this company better. Or would you seek to learn? If that's the case with humans, how much more with God?

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. Between the Lord and us, there's an infinite gap.

I talked about, would a firefly go to the sun and say, look what bright light I have. Would a muddy puddle on the ground on a rainy day say to the ocean, look how deep and pure my water is?

And even that doesn't quite capture the gap between God and us because as I said two weeks ago, God is not only quantitatively different from us, he's qualitatively different from us.

He's not just a superlative version of man. He's as different from us as the author of the book is from a character in the book as the potter is from the clay that he is shaping.

[24 : 52] Who are we to speak back to God? We should know our place and know better than to blabber on and on and on before God.

God. This is why the reading and preaching of God's word has such a prominent place in our corporate worship. We gather here for about two hours, a little less, every Sunday.

We spend almost half of that time reading and listening to God's word preached. this is also why my job isn't to regale you with entertaining stories from my life or to peddle some self-help tips and give motivational speeches or be a mouthpiece for politicians from the pulpit.

Rather, my job is to faithfully interpret and apply God's word to our lives. I don't get to say what I want to say. I must say what God's word says and no preacher should ever preach unless they have first listened to the word of God.

This also has implications for how we pray to God and this is one of the reasons why during our corporate prayer times I ask people to pray, especially during that popcorn prayer time, pray concise to the point prayers because I don't want people to feel pressure to pray these elaborate eloquent prayers because I want us to be able to listen to one another pray and join in instead of planning our next prayer lines while someone else is praying just like when you talk to somebody they're not really listening to you because they're planning what they're going to say next to you.

[26 : 47] Jesus taught us in Matthew 6, 7, 8 and when you pray do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do for they think that they will be heard for their many words do not be like them for your father knows what you need before you ask him God is in heaven and we are on earth and God is sovereign he is all-knowing he knows better than we do what we actually need God doesn't listen to us more just because we talk more or because our words are well phrased it's the heart not the word count that counts when my children ask something of me they don't you know butter me up with flattery or say some you know long elaborate request they're right to the point they're simple direct but their requests have power with me why not because they're eloquent not because they have this long fancy request but because they're my kids and

I'm their dad that's why your prayer has power because you're God's children God is your father not because your prayers are long or eloquent so don't be discouraged that you can't pray as some other Christians can pray from the heart to your heavenly father and let your words be few verse three continues for a dream comes with much business and a fool's voice with many words a fool's voice comes with many words Proverbs 17 27 and 28 says whoever restrains his words as knowledge and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise when he closes his lips he is deemed intelligent the season four episode ten of the Simpsons have you guys seen the Simpsons actually includes a take on this proverb in the scene the mom

Marge says to her baby daughter who has delayed speech oh Maggie when are you going to talk and then her precocious other daughter Lisa responds well don't push her remember tis better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt and at that point Homer Simpson thinks to himself what does that mean I better say something or they'll think I'm stupid and then he blurts out it takes one to know one thereby removing all doubt that he is a fool we live in an age of many words an average person can speak up to 16,000 words per day every day 7.5 million blog posts are written published 7.5 million that's many words as a younger pastor

I diligently wrote blog posts and scheduled out my posts out on then Twitter and Facebook because I didn't deem preaching God's word to be enough I also needed to share my wonderful opinions and hot takes on every cultural issue for the world to hear I'm not on any social media anymore it's pride that produces many words I'm not saying that if you're on social media you're prideful I'm just saying that that's possible as it was the case for me the book of Proverbs makes an insightful connection between wealth and words Proverbs 10 15 says the wise lay up knowledge but the mouth of a fool brings ruin near a rich man's wealth is his strong city the poverty of the poor is their ruin the mouth of a fool parallels the poverty of the poor and they both bring the person to ruin there is an implicit parallel there between the wise who lay up knowledge store up knowledge and the rich who lay up wealth and store up wealth as a safeguard the stored up knowledge of the wise protects them stored up wealth of the rich protect them so the wise save up their money and spare their words

Proverbs 10 18 continues when words are many transgression is not lacking but whoever restrains his lips is prudent the tongue of the righteous is choice silver the heart of the wicked is of little worth again there's a connection between words and wealth choice silver is rare silver precious silver it's worth a lot like the tongue of the righteous his lips are restrained in contrast the heart of the wicked is of little worth and that's paralleled by many words when transgression is not lacking in other words when there are many words there is a lack of wisdom when words are few there is much wisdom wisdom words are like money the more you print into circulation the more it loses value the more you speak the less value it has the less weight it has the less wisdom it has when there are many words there are often premature words imprecise words partial words words that are out of place out of turn but once they leave our mouths we can't take any of it back so it says the wise store up their words like the rich who store up their wealth the first clause a dream comes with much business is related to this idea people with many dreams are preoccupied with much anxiety in their hearts they say to themselves today or tomorrow

[33 : 11] I will go into such and such place and such towns spend a year there and trade and make a profit but James 4 13 to 16 reminds us yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring what is your life for you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes instead you ought to say if the Lord wills we will live and do this or that as it is you boast in your arrogance all such boasting is evil I think I've told you guys this already I forget when I told some of you this but I have had two friends in my life who told me confidently I'm going to be the president of the United States of America one day honestly with one of them I almost believe that they're two of the most charismatic people I know to this day but they're also the ones that are now struggling the most their lives are riddled with addictions blew away a lot of chances and opportunities that they had we're finite creatures who have no control over time and chance it's the

Lord who is over those things and the dreams of the future that we preoccupy our minds and hearts with are a form of boasting before God because we don't even know whether we'll be living tomorrow so before God in heaven we should let our words be few humility before God makes us talk less it also makes us walk the talk as verses 4-7 teach us it says when you vow a vow to God do not delay paying it for he has no pleasure in fools pay what you vow it is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay let not your mouth lead you into sin and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands for when dreams increase and words grow many there is vanity but God is the one you must fear in Psalm 15 the psalmist describes it gives us a portrait of a righteous person and one of the characteristics of a righteous person that is pleasing to

God is this that he swears to his own hurt and does not change meaning that this person would rather suffer loss than break his word probably not many of us have in this day and age have encountered people like this words are cheap nowadays people say in court I swear to tell the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth and then perjury is all too common lovers take their solemn wedding vows and then casual divorces mock the vows that they have made promises oaths and vows are taken lightly in our culture considered a formality something that is fungible circumstances changed we say sorry and by making such excuses we betray the fact that our words are only as good as our circumstances that we keep our word only when it is advantageous for me but

God delights in the person who swears to his own hurt and does not change scripture takes swearing oaths very seriously Isaiah 65 16 commends to never take an oath by anyone else but the God of truth it's because only the unchanging and eternal and faithful nature of God and the character of God is the only secure basis for an oath and the third of the ten commandments forbids us from taking God's name in vain and swearing by God's name in vain it because of this to renege on one's oath or promise was to profane God and impugn his character to make God out to be someone who is not constant and faithful and reliable because you swore by his name so we shouldn't make promises unless we are resolved to keep them even to our own hurt in fact Jesus takes this command not to swear falsely even further and brings it to do not take an oath at all let what you say be simply yes or no anything more than that comes from evil sometimes circumstances force us to take an oath so if you are a witness testifying in court you do have to take an oath even

Jesus when he was in court being tried by Caiaphas the high priest he adjured him by the living God made basically invoked an oath for Jesus to say whether you are the son of God or not so if that happens to you by the circumstances that's okay but don't voluntarily enter into such oaths on your own rather everything we say at all times should be completely true so that a simple yes or no suffices without any further asseveration to asseverate is to affirm or to declare positively or earnestly we asseverate in many ways by prefacing our words with words like this honestly truthfully I swear as if the other things we say are not true and honest I've used these words myself out of habit because these asseverations are so much a part of our culture which is saturated with lies truth so we need some way to distinguish lies from truth what if we were so manifestly truthful in all that we ever said that people actually took us at our words we should we should be so steadfast in our truth telling that when we tell people that

[39 : 29] Jesus Christ is the son of God that he died for my sins and he was raised from the dead so that I might have eternal life it is impossible for someone to dismiss you lightly it makes them pause and ponder because even if they don't believe it they do so at their own peril because they know you are a man or a woman of integrity and they know that you are telling the truth verse 6 says let not your mouth lead you into sin and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake this likely has in view a messenger from the temple who is sent to remind this person of the vow that he made that he would bring such and such sacrifice or such offering to the temple in the future so this messenger is coming to bring this person to account and when

I don't intend to fulfill that to rescind a vow you made up to God is to make a mockery of his name and he says you will arouse his righteous anger it is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay verse 7 and parallels verse 3 for a dream comes with much business and a fool's voice with many words for when dreams increase our words grow many there is vanity but God is the one you must fear once again dreams are associated with words how many times have we in the heat and the height of emotionalism at a conference or at a retreat made a rash vow to God God I dedicate my life to you as a missionary for life God I will give half of all my income to local church

God I'm going to how many times have you made these grandiose new year's resolutions that were never carried out God I'm going to read the Bible for an hour every day I'm going to go to Wednesday prayer meeting every Wednesday I'm sorry if you've actually made those new resolutions before I say this without knowledge instead of multiplying words the preacher tells us do what you say walk the talk remember words are like money the more money you print in circulation the less value it has the more words come out of your mouth the less weight they have when dreams increase words grow many there is vanity but God is the one you must fear there is heavily futility and vanity in our many dreams and many words so before

God in heaven we should let our words be few but our words happen many haven't they how many of you have exaggerated the truth or leave some crucial detail out of your story for your advantage how many of you have multiplied many dreams and many words have said words that you didn't mean in order to protect yourself or to avoid conflict how many of you have failed to do what you said you would do how many of you have used words to blame shift manipulate and gossip and slander I myself have done every single one of those things when words are many transgression is not lacking so what hope is there for sinners like us the good news for us is that God is not like us we renege on our promises we revoke our oaths but

God always keeps his word numbers 23 19 says God is not man that he should lie or a son of man that he should change his mind has he said and will he not do it or has he spoken and will he not fulfill it God long ago promised his people that he would redeem us from our slavery to sin and death God long ago promised us that he would make atonement for our sins so that we can be forgiven of our sins and be reconciled to God the father God promised long ago that he would mercifully forgive us he would defeat death once and for all and give us eternal resurrection life and you know what God kept every single one of those promises in Jesus Christ John 1 describes Jesus as the eternal word of God in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God he was in the beginning with God all things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made in him was the only son from the father full of grace and truth the only son of

[45 : 11] God the father who is the eternal word of God took on human flesh and became a man and lived among us that's our Lord Jesus Christ and Jesus had no sin he never said a false word in his life and Jesus God's word is the antidote to our many words and our many sins Jesus had no sin but he was slaughtered as the unblemished sacrificial lamb on the cross to make atonement for our sins and on his way to death he says that he was led like a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before its shears is silent so he did not open his mouth because we opened because we spoke our many words and because of our many sins Jesus the blameless lamb of God goes silent to the cross in submission to God the father so that by his death we might live so that by his death we might be forgiven and not a single one of us has any word to add to that word that

God has spoken the gospel of Jesus Christ it silences us Ephesians 2 8 to 9 says for by grace you have been saved through faith and this is not your own doing it is the gift of God not a result of works so that no one may boast God saves God through faith because faith is the anti work it's the opposite of work faith is not a work that we do it's an admission that no work of ours can ever save to believe in Christ for salvation is to receive his salvation if we somehow earned our way to God if we had some merit or work to show for ourselves then we would at least in part deserve a seat at the table we should have some rights some entitlements a say but no because

God saves us by grace through faith in Jesus Christ we have no say we have no word to add to the word of Christ it silences us all our boasting that we might even say is a defining mark of a Christian the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector in Luke 18 illustrates this Pharisee and a tax collector go up to pray in the temple the Pharisee's words are many God I thank you that I'm not like the other men extortioners unjust adulterers or even like this tax collector I fast twice a week I give tithes of all that I get blah blah blah blah blah blah blah the tax collector doesn't even dare to draw near he's standing far off he doesn't even dare to look up into heaven he just beats his chest and says

I'm a sinner God be merciful to me his words are few because his heart is not lifted up before God and Jesus says that it's that tax collector who humbled himself and not the Pharisee who exalted himself that goes home justified before God when we truly understand the gospel of Jesus Christ when we really see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ it stops our mouths it stops our blabbering boasts of self righteousness and self justification it stops our gabbing bluster of self importance and self sufficiency it stops all the look how great I am and look at all the good things I've done and look at all the amazing things that I'm going to do look at all my experiences and knowledge the gospel of Jesus Christ abases us it humbles us into silence so that we can't help but say along with

Job behold I am of small account what shall I answer you I lay my hand on my mouth before God in heaven we should let our words be few let's pray father have mercy on us we thank you that when our words are many when our sins are many that your mercy abounds all the more humble us

[50 : 38] Lord make us more like Jesus in his precious name we pray amen someone and un