

Apply The Word

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Message Info

Title:

The Mouth in Conflict

Speaker:

Steve Heitland

Date:

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Scriptures:

Proverbs 18:1–24

Theme: Tame your mouth by bowing your knee to the Lord.

Introduction: We all interpret and respond to reality all day every day with words. And those words are far more powerful and revealing than we may think. Proverbs 18 is an extended meditation on words and the effects they have. More specifically, it is a study of two kinds of persons: the proud fool and the chastened wise man.

Proverbs 18 presents two alternatives regarding the tongue:

1. The self-serving mouth of the fool (1–11)

- Verses 1–3 introduce the reader to the fool, who is characterized by isolation (v. 1), self-expression (v. 2), and pride (v. 3).
- The next section—verses 4–8—turns to the perverse speech of the fool, which is seen in the pugnacious, the rash, and the slanderer.
- Verse 9 is about work, and verses 10–11 deal with security and safety. The fool causes harm to the community and to himself.

2. The chastened mouth of the wise (12–24)

- The Lord opposes the proud for three reasons: (1) He is the Supreme Ruler over all things, (2) He alone is worthy of all honor and worship, and (3) Pride is contrary to all that is right and good in the world.
- Humility involves recognizing your finitude and your fallenness.
- Verses 16–19 give guidance if someone crosses your path with an allegation. Wisdom asks three questions: (1) Am I righteously involved in this matter? (2) If I am, am I following due process? and (3) What standard am I following?
- Verses 20–21 emphasize the power of our speech as it produces different effects.
- The final verse speaks of a friend who sticks closer than a brother, and there is no greater friend to sinners than Jesus Christ.

Questions:

1. In what situations or relationships do you see the power of your words?
2. How do you see some of the foolishness in verses 1–11 in your own life?
3. What steps do you need to take to pursue humility before God?