

Bermudian Church of the Brethren

WEDNESDAY'S WORD – a midweek thought from Pastor Larry M. Dentler
to share a word of inspiration ... encouragement ... challenge ... a smile ... in the middle of your week
September 12 in the year of our Lord 2018 - #757

Lip Service...

Me ... in my most compassionate, pastor's voice ... reading the prayer request from the yellow form we use for that at Bermudian.

*"...Cathy Dowell's sister Susan goes to Maryland on Thursday for **lip** surgery."*

As I started to read the next line off the yellow form ... I realized that I must have misunderstood the handwriting on the form.

"She had a replacement seven years ago and it keeps coming out of the socket."

Yep! The word was "**hip**" not "**lip**" ... and I was embarrassed!

Our mouths can sure get us in trouble. And I cringe sometimes when I see & hear folks claiming to be Christian whose mouths, and social media posts, spew forth words that should make any real follower of Jesus blush bright red! Why is it in our culture today we think that words don't matter? What was once language only heard from the lips of the most hardened person, now flows from the lips of the most refined. Our athlete heroes & movie star types use language that was once reserved for back alley types. And when those obscene words flow freely ... how does our culture most often respond? With laughter. What? We think it's funny for obscenities to be sprinkled freely in conversation? The Lord's Name taken in vain? Sexual crudeness marking everyday conversation? Please! Heaven ... heaven ... help us! I think there is some lip surgery needed! The Bible is not indifferent on this matter!

"Watch the way you talk. Let nothing foul or dirty come out of your mouth. Say only what helps, each word a gift.

Ephesians 4:29 Message

Can you be a Christian, a true follower of Christ, and have lips that are comfortable with foul, obscene, impure words? Posts that are filled with impurity? Conversation that is laced with vulgarity? Well, the Bible is clear about that as well.

"With our tongues we bless God our Father; with the same tongues we curse the very men and women He made in his image. Curses and blessings out of the same mouth! My friends, this can't go on. A spring doesn't gush fresh water one day and brackish the next, does it? Apple trees don't bear strawberries, do they? Raspberry bushes don't bear apples, do they? You're not going to dip into a polluted mud hole and get a cup of clear, cool water, are you?"

James 3:9-12 Message

And James compares our words to sparks like those that started the great fires in the west destroying vast amounts of land and possessions. He says in our own way our words can be the spark that destroy our lives and sentence us to the Lord's punishment.

“The tongue is a fire. It is full of wrong. It poisons the whole body. The tongue sets our whole lives on fire with a fire that comes from hell.”

James 3:6 NLV

I think our casual reaction to this serious matter comes from a true loss of the sense of the absolute holiness of God! Words DO matter! What comes from our lips! The words in our posts! Our casual conversation! They DO matter! So today... maybe a little honest evaluation of our own lips. Do you find that obscenities, foul language, crudeness, taking of Jesus' Name in vain ... comes in your conversations day-to-day? Or are sprinkled freely in your social media posts? And to paraphrase the misunderstood prayer request,

“Seven (or 10, or 20) years ago Jesus made this person new, but their lips keep coming out of socket.”

True repentance is called for. God's holiness we acknowledge and bow before. A serious commitment is required. Lip surgery by the Master Surgeon! When we open our mouths ... let us reflect the purity, the love, the grace, the holiness of Christ in an increasingly vulgar world!

Still a little red-faced from my mistake and from the words that come from my own lips sometimes! Praying that the Master Surgeon will perform lip surgery on this struggling sinner. From my lips ... may only purity, praise & love flow! Pastor Larry <><