



In a day and age when **WORDS** --- have become cheap, untrustworthy **soundbites and tools to leverage hidden agendas via spin and fake news**, it seems as though **words (through their human users) have gotten a bad reputation!** Linguists tell us that more words are dying out in our English language and becoming extinct, than are being born, coined, invented, and added to our vocabularies and dictionaries. This is mostly attributed, they say, to the digital age. But fear not -- the Bible contends it is **not MORE WORDS that we need.**

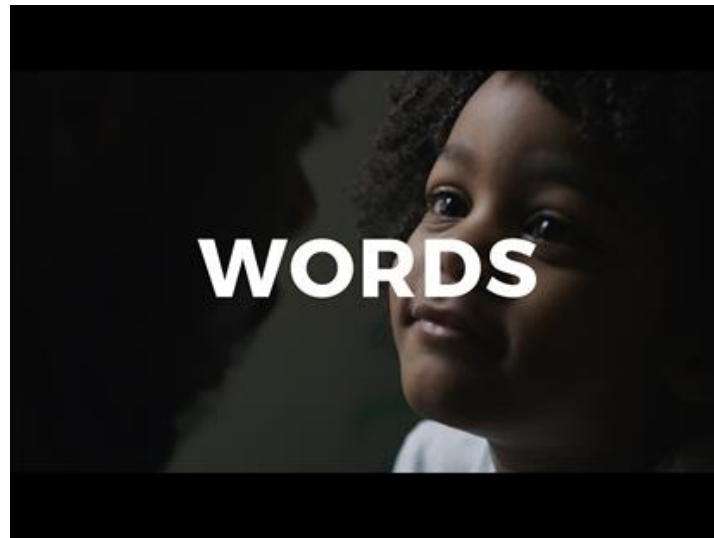
Solomon reminds us that **"many words mark the speech of a fool" (Ecclesiastes 5:3)**. **Jesus said** the **babbling pagans** think they will be heard **"because of their many words" (Matthew 6:7)**. Again, Solomon says, **"God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few" (Ecclesiastes 5:2b NIV)**. Turns out what we need is not QUANTITY, but QUALITY!

Today, as we continue our **"THIS IS US"** preaching series on **THE BELOVED COMMUNITY** (the family of God), I want to explore with you **the power and importance of our words that will BIRTH AND BUILD this BELOVED COMMUNITY**. Far too many of our words in life hinder, harm, divide, and destroy the life that God intends. I want to remind us today that **the things we write and say have both meaning and consequences**. We are called to "tend to our words like a garden" so that we will, birth, build, bless, and become the beloved of God.

The people at **RYPE.TV** who produce **"Sunday Films"** for faith communities have created a two-minute masterpiece on the importance and power of words in the lives of those who speak. Discover and wonder at the one thing

we might have in common with God. Let's lift our eyes to the screens and listen in:

Play Video: "Words" <https://www.sermonspice.com/sermon-illustrations/96653/words>



What will we **SPEAK INTO EXISTENCE** this week? Words are powerful, when we believe them and burn with them in our hearts. Not just for preachers who stand behind pulpits—but for parents who stand next to bunkbeds; for spouses; teenagers. Our tongue is so small, says James, like a tiny rudder on a huge ship; or a small spark in a great forest (James 3:4-6). Every tongue tells a story. What story are we telling?

Dr. Martin Luther King became an exemplary master is **USING WORDS** to tell the story and dream of **KINGDOM LIFE!** As Psychologist Robin Jeffrey has so eloquently stated,

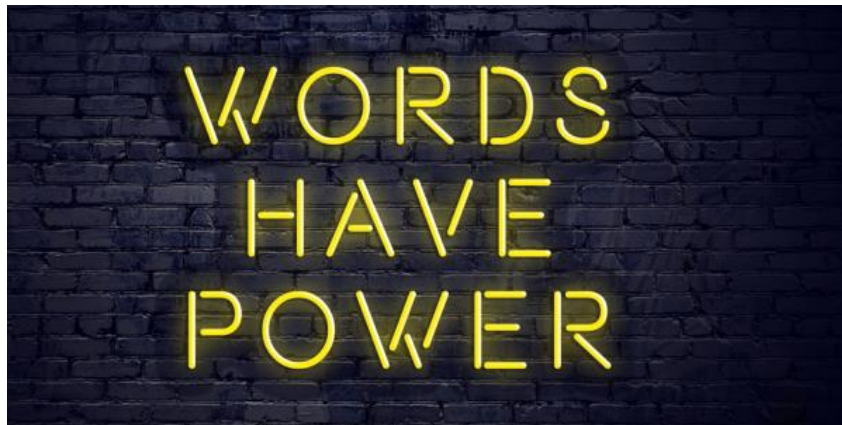
"No social figure of the last fifty years has used words the way Martin Luther King, Jr. did. From his lips and from his pen, words were more than empty promises, more than incitements, more than personal opinion...He used words for good; not for evil. He used words as a bandage to bind the whole world together in healing."

Robin Jeffrey

The answer to the destiny of language lies in what the Apostle James called, "The word of truth." This *WORD (LANGUAGE)* is Heaven's purposed vehicle through which the Beloved Community is born. God has in mind the creation of "a kind of first fruits," which is a perfected, ripe, and most excellent family --- nurtured on the vine --- created, cultivated and gardened by His hands. Here is how James writes of this **LANGUAGE THAT BIRTHS AND BUILDS!**

Read James 1:16-18 NIV

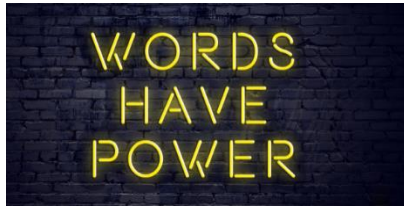
16 Don't be deceived, *my dear brothers and sisters*. 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. 18 He chose to give us *birth through the word of truth*, that we might be a kind of *first fruits* of all he created.



<https://www.thepattersonfoundation.org/blog/thought-leadership/words-have-power.html>

Your words and my words have power because God's words have power. We are the bearers of His image and likeness. The Creator meant us to be co-creators – partners living in pursuit of life, healing, reconciliation, forgiveness, and restoration --- for ourselves and for others.

Speakers of truth, grace, and mercy. In order for us to live out this amazing vision of our life as life-givers, handed down to us from heaven by Jesus, we must attend to these simple and profound truths that James has spoken.

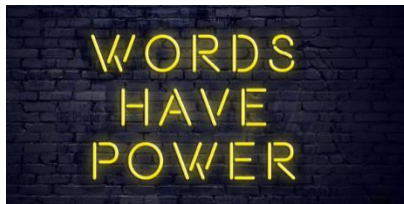


Vs. 16 – We must **STOP STRAYING OFF PATH by deception.**

“You make known to me the path of life”

Psalm 16:11 NIV

The Greek grammar assumes ongoing actions that are actually prohibited but still practiced. When we wander away from God’s providential path to life, we harm ourselves and others. David tells us that the path to life is found at the right hand of the Lord – the relational place of favor and blessing.



Vs. 17 – God is the **UNCHANGABLE SOURCE of all good.**

“There is but one God, the Father, who is the source of all things, and we exist for Him”

1 Corinthians 8:6 AMP

This is a vision of the endowing God who sets us up to succeed in His purposes of creation, love, and redemption. God is the giver of **GOOD & PERFECT** with an eye to a great harvest. ***GIVING the best to GROW the best!***

WORDS
HAVE
POWER

Vs. 18 - God **CHOSE BIRTH** Through His **WORD of TRUTH**.

“All things came into being through Him [The Word], and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being”

John 1:3 NASB

SPEAKING LIFE was **God’s PURPOSED PATHWAY** to creating and sustaining life. He determined and resolved that His words, through His **WORD** (Jesus), would bring life to all. This is the language he now wants us to speak---**FLUENTLY**---as our new **FIRST LANGUAGE**.

When something lives deep within you --- a passion, hope, vision, or dream – perhaps fanned by longing, anguish, heartbreak, or an indomitable spirit that refuses to concede – this birthing dream becomes an **ETERNAL FIRE** lit from within. ***Even in the face of a mean, angry, hateful, broken world, the dream cannot die. It burns and aspires to live and be expressed.*** This was Jeremiah’s journey:

“Whenever I speak, I cry out proclaiming violence and destruction. So *the word of the Lord has brought me insult and reproach* all day long. But if I say, “I will not mention his word or speak anymore in his name,” his word is in my heart like a fire, *a fire shut up in my bones*. I am *weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot*”

Jeremiah 20:8-9 NIRV

God planted a word in you and me and he intends for it to be expressed. Jesus wants to get out of your skin, through your mouth, into and beyond your hands and feet to bring life to the world. Will you let Him govern, call, command and commission your body, soul, mind, and spirit? I love what Hamza Yusuf once said about what we would call a kingdom kinetic connection:

“Words move hearts and hearts move limbs”

Hamza Yusuf

God’s Word is **TRUE NORTH. It compasses our lives.** It tutors our soul; it molds our heart, it tempers our spirit, and teaches our tongue. The word of truth shapes me for service, and **teaches me the LANGUAGE OF LOVE.** Words have power to hurt or to heal, to hammer or help, to bring life or bring death. They can make us feel like heaven or feel like hell. They can comfort us – or terrorize us. As Solomon has rightly said:

“The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit”

Proverbs 18:21 NIV

So, here’s the million-dollar question for each one of us today. **Are you a LIVING STONE or a THROWN STONE?** Our WORDS can be **“LIVING STONES”** that are gracious and true. They build a community through love, affirmation, encouragement, and validation. Many have been rescued from despair and emotional death by these gracious gifts on loan from heaven, spoken in a timely way and authentic manner:

“The *right word* spoken at the *right time* is as beautiful as gold apples in a silver bowl”

Proverbs 25:11 NCV

Or WORDS can also be **“THROWN STONES”** which are used to shout, talk over others, make a point, get my way, defend a position, accuse, and demonize others. None of those words build the beloved community that the architect of Heaven has designed. They only create divides, chasms, and estrangement. Some have been **DAMAGED BY WORDS** on their journey through life. We tend to **internalize deeply** the things we hear from those we **ADMIRE, LOVE, AND HOPE TO BE LOVED BY.**

The prayer of the Beloved Community in its pursuit of all relationship encounters:

“Let the *words of my mouth* and the meditations of my heart *be pleasing* to you, Lord, my rock and my redeemer”

Psalm 19:14 CEB

Let me close with this thought. Back in 2012, Christian music artist, Toby Mac, released a song that summarizes my message today. This song was inspired by the writing of Catholic Author, Father Brennan Manning, made famous by his book, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*. Manning said, **“In every encounter we either give life or drain it, there is no neutral exchange.”** What are people receiving from you? – and from me? **The chorus section of Toby Macs song will be Heaven’s final admonition into our life of VOCALIZED DISCIPLESHIP today.**



**So speak life, speak life
To the deadest darkest night
Speak life, speak life
When the sun won't shine
and you don't know why
Look into the eyes of the broken hearted
Watch them come alive as soon as you
speak hope, you speak love, you speak Life**

James L. Moore / Ryan Dale Stevenson / Toby Mckeehan, 2012