

Psalms

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Preacher: Dawson, Herbert (1890-1969)

[0 : 00] As the Lord shall be pleased to help me, I shall call your attention to a subject you will find in Psalm 141, verse 3.

Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth. Keep the door of my lips.

Psalm 141 and the third verse. Perhaps, maybe sometimes you dear young people, when you hear the subject announced, you have your own thoughts.

And you may think that a subject like this means that you will have something more like a sermon than a young people's address.

I do hope I should be helped to say something that will be profitable to you to listen to and good for you as grace is given to reduce it to practice.

[1 : 32] And I can tell you that I should be glad beyond words to describe if I could feel that all you dear young people listening to the preacher could find this petition in your hearts to utter it before God and to desire to live in the light of the truth of it.

Oh, it is a beautiful, a blessed, and necessary petition for old and young alike and godly David realized his deep need that it might be done in his own everyday life.

Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth. Keep the door of my lips. And now, that means I have got to say something to you at this time about the tongue.

And therefore, everyone under Union Chapel roof should have some interest in the subject for every one of us possesses a tongue. I wonder, many of you have had to humble yourselves before God times without number to desire mercies of him, the God of heaven, that he would undo the mischief and blot out some things that you have said with your tongue that your conscience has told you later on should not have been uttered.

And now, the Salmist had got something like that in his mind. Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth.

[3 : 40] Keep the door of my lips. And now, when you come to think about our tongues, you think, if you can, I know you cannot think very much about it, but do try and think a little.

You think, since you were born, since you left off your baby prattle, and you began to put words together, and how long you have lived since then, and think how many words have rolled off your tongue, and they still do roll off your tongue.

And they're not always words that are God honoring, words that help people who listen to them, but sometimes their words which you know ought not to be uttered, yet you have uttered these words, hundreds, thousands, millions.

And now, what does the word of God say about that? Because it is well to think about it. but I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

[5 : 28] and now that is what Jesus Christ said, and it will hold good for time and eternity too.

And now, if you can, try to visualize that when you have lived your life, and you go out of time into eternity, and you appear before God that all the words that you have uttered, which according to the word of God should not have been spoken, you will have to give an account thereof, give an answer unto God, and unless Jesus Christ is an advocate on your behalf, and your iniquity has been pardoned, you will go down into eternal misery, and forever and ever you will hear again all the idle words, necessary words, God dishonoring words, wicked words that you have uttered, living your life over again, and yet again, and yet again, until it goes on forever and ever, that is what the meaning of it is.

Some time ago, quite a few years ago, I was in touch with a gentleman who was somewhat educated, educated, but not the way that I like to meet people who are educated.

He was a scholarly gentleman, and he said to me, do you know science has found out something that's wonderful?

people, and I said, what is it that you are referring to? Well, he said, science has now found out that all the words that we speak, they go off our lips, and the sound thereof goes out into space and into the universe, and science thinks that if the right wavelength could be obtained, that we could hear some of the words that were spoken by people who lived some hundreds of years ago, for they are still wheeling about in the universe, and he seemed quite elated with what he thought was a wonderful discovery.

[8 : 26] I said to him, I can tell you, something much more wonderful than that, and what you have told me, may be just an opposition of science, so called and not science worth the name, and now I will tell you this, what the Holy Bible declares, which will not fail to come to pass, for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad, and I said, also, you see, you will be there, whatever words you have said or yet will say, you will hear them before the judgment seat of Christ, and your life as you have lived it, you must give an account thereof, what kind of life you have lived and are living, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad, and so he had got no answer to that, and he went on his way, but, coming back to this subject about the tongue, when the great war was on, wherever we went, we had notices that gave us a warning, careless talk costs lives, and now you can think of it like this, careless talk not only costs lives, it meant in wartime that someone might be speaking of where they were, they might be in the service of the king, and they might be uttering things which they knew they should keep inside, and not by any means give any whisper as to where they were or what they were doing, but there were spies about, on espionage, and they were ever intent to hear any little hint that would give them some information that they might make use of later on, and it might lead to destruction of poor people's lives, all because of careless talk, people's lives, and now there is another viewpoint, you may say, happily, it is not wartime nowadays with us in our land, but I'm going to alter one word, careless talk costs souls, and do remember that, so that it will be a great mercy, if grace is given to you, and grace to me, to be urgent and earnest, with this petition before the dear sinner's friend who is ever ready to help poor sinners, who feel their need of his divine aid, set a watch,

O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips, and now I'm going to say something, as I said at the first, about the tongue, alas, much of it is on the negative side, and there is also some that will come on the positive side, but I'm going to look, first of all, at the negative side, and do you remember, do you ever think over the words that have dropped from your tongue during the daytime, and the nature of those words, words that are not spoken up for God, but words that you have uttered, careless words, and now Job says, how forcible are right words, and I want to take you back to the chapter that

I read in James, and there you see, not what the Apostle James has to say about the tongue, but what he records is what the Spirit of God declares, and now think of our tongues, and this is what God declares, the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity, so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell.

you think how sometimes you have been set on fire. I'm not fitting any caps on, we're all alike, we're all born in sin, and we have all a carnal mind, an enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, and neither indeed can be, but the mercy is with many of us, I trust, that God has favoured us to be born again, so that we have a new heart, and a new nature, that we desire ever to govern us, what we do, and what we say, and where we go, and the company we keep, but now, you think of when you get in a temper, and now, how do you get in a temper?

What produces you to fire up, like you do sometimes, and then, what you say, is indeed not worth listening to, there is no profit in it, it can only hurt, and wound, those with whom you are in a temper, and now, do listen, the word of God says, it is set on fire of hell, then it goes on, but the tongue can no man tame, it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison, oh my dear young friends and children, is it not really, a terrible description of air tongues, an unruly evil, you cannot put reins on it, and put your hands on the reins and control it, like men can do with horses, as James uses that illustration, behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us, and we turn about their whole body, eh, but, says the spirit of

[16 : 20] God, the tongue can no man tame, it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison, and now you think of what you can hear, if you should listen to it on the radio, well, think of what there is to be seen and heard too, on television, and, think of what is printed, what the printing press pours out, that is not worth the paper it is printed on, because, it is words, that, a deadly poison, in the reading thereof, and the devil's own dope, and what is called, a silly word, pop music too, is just likewise, that which emanates from hell itself, and, you need to, pray this prayer, for these things are all around you in the age in which you have to live your young lives, set a watch,

O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips, and now, I have told you sometimes, in the pulpit, that, in the Selmist time, they used to, use a muzzle, it was called a branch, so that, those, who used their tongues too freely, and did mischief, were sometimes punished, and they were muzzled, so that they could not see, they were given the length of time, according to what their crime was, and now, the Selmist, in Selm 51, he uses that illustration as though he was a guilty sinner before God, which he really was, but he had not got the branch actually, on his face, to muzzle him, but he felt as though it was like that, in his approach to God, and he said,

O Lord, open thou my lips, and my tongue, shall show forth thy praise, years ago, in England, there was known what was called the cold bridles, when some of the women folk, were too free with their tongues, and became a nuisance, and they had a bridle, a muzzle, put upon them, and they were put on what was called the ducking stool, and ducked three or four times, in a nearby pond, or a river, and that was their punishment, for their tongues running too freely.

there is a need be, for such a petition as this, set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips, and now, coming down to some of the words that roll off our tongues, do remember I have told you sometimes about three Sids, and if you can use those three Sids, that will help you with this petition also, set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips, and now, the first Sids is this, is it true?

if what you have heard is not true, you have no right to repeat it, and sometimes if it is true, you must still weigh up whether it is worthwhile to do so, because there is another question, another Sids, is it kind?

[20 : 48] What you have heard may be true, it may be about someone or another, but you repeat it, but then, is it kind? Sift it through that Sids, before you say anything at all about it, and then bring it last through the third Sids, is it necessary?

What will be the good if you should repeat it? Three Sids, is it true, is it kind, is it necessary?

And now, there is a word I like to quote, words give pleasure, words give pain, words are wise, and words are vain, words are false, and words are true, words weigh most when they are few.

And now, coming to different kinds of tongues, tongues, and they're found in everyone's mouth at times, according to what one is by nature.

Mark what I said, according to what one is by nature. and now, think of how often you have had a grumbling tongue, and how many things you do grumble about, and yet, you are surrounded by the mercies of God, night and day, and while two-thirds of the people in this vast earth, go to bed hungry, you have never done so, unless you had to do it for a punishment, yet, how often you have a tongue that rolls off grumbling words, and you want this altered, and that rearranged, and all to please you, when it may be the order in which you are to live and move is that which is good and right and according to the word of God, but you do not like the restraint of it, and so you shake yourself, and you grumble, and what good does it do you?

[23 : 15] then the psalmist speaks also about a hasty tongue, and he says here in the preceding psalm, for there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.

You see, you have heard often the text quoted, thou God seest me, you might think of it like this, thou God hearest me, so that the words that do roll off your tongue, whether it be to grumble, or to be hasty, or to be in a temper, and pull a praise to what you are by nature, God hears every jot and tittle of it, and unless you were brought to repent, and to confess your sin, your guiltiness before God, and you live and die without doing that, God will remind you of it before his judgment sees, and that is a very solemn consideration.

There is another tongue which is very evil, and that is a flattering tongue. When words are spoken by others which are very pleasing to what you are by nature, and it puffs you up, and you go down under it in your own feelings, you are very pleased with it, and yet it is a deadly poison, flattery, is a deadly poison.

It has wrought great mischief among millions in their everyday lives, and there are times when even those who know better, I mean people taught of God, have fallen a prey to it, and have realized the evil of it, and even this godly David, who records this prayer that you and I might say amen to it, set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips, what does he say in another sound?

what shall be done unto thee, O thou false tongue? And there he himself had turned aside from that way which he knew to be right before God and man, then there is a trifling tongue, subjects that are talked about, a multitude of words may be used in discussion and argument and all of it is just superficial, there is no foundation, no profit, and it is just trifling and it is frivolous.

[26 : 39] Then there is a mischief maker in tongues, and it says in the word of God, it was said to Israel of old, thou shalt not go up and down as a tailbearer.

And now you look at a bill posting station, and you will find that where the spaces are blank for other bills to be posted, there is a warning, bill stickers beware, which is to say that this particular bill posting station is for a particular purpose, and other people who make use of it to stick bills on, which ought not to be there, will need to beware, because the matter will be looked into.

And now, when you use a mischief-making tongue, when you become a tailbearer and pass on something that you know about one and another, that you want to pour into someone else's ear, you need to think of this, bill stickers, beware, there is a particular punishment, even in the law of the land, for those who use such practices to stick bills on posting stations, which do not belong to them, and this mischief-making tongue has got in it a backbiting tongue, a sarcastic tongue, a fault-finding tongue, a cynical tongue, sarcastic.

You, dear young people, never indulge in sarcasm. You look up the dictionary and see what it says about sarcasm, apart from what the Bible says about it.

The dictionary says about sarcasm and that which is wounding, to the flesh. So poor Job found it. His friends were sarcastic to him in what they had to say and they wounded him sorely and then he began to hit back and became sarcastic too.

[28 : 58] No doubt you are the people and wisdom will die with you but it did no good and he gained no ground along that line of thought but when he came before God with whom he had to do he said behold I am vile and he was helped to confess his guiltiness and God granted him the wondrous mercy of the forgiveness of sins and do keep that word in your mind if you should ever feel guilty at the end of the day when you lie awake on your bed if you do and think about things you have said that you know you ought not to have said do remember this word if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness yes and especially remember one thing to do with the tongue that you do not really need to be told about yet you must be told because it is what the word of

God declares thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain you see what a need to be there is for this prayer set a watch O Lord before my mouth keep the door of my lips and now I read a little while ago about a sailor who would come home on leave and he went into a public house and instead of asking for the drink that he wanted he asked for a quart of damnation and somehow the publican seemed able to interpret what the meaning was it may be something that sailors use regarding a particular kind of drink

I do not know that but at any rate the publican gave him what he wanted and he drank it up and dropped dead in the public house where he had drunk it and now just think of what that must be to go before God like that with those words having rolled off his tongue and the last that he had been permitted to speak and I have told you too about the man in a public house on the Saturday night who said he was going to get up early on the Sunday morn to clean out his pigsty and he was going to do it before the almighty was awake a very very solemn thing a blasphemous thing to allow to roll off his tongue and he did get up early and he did attempt to clean out his pigsty but he dropped dead in doing it and he went from that pigsty to appear before God and I read of another man who where he lived he had so much trouble that he made up his mind he would go afar off and he would escape from God and he sold up his possessions and made all arrangements to go quite afar off to another land where he thought he would escape from God very foolish consideration it was for him ever to think such a thing but he did so and he sought to reduce it to practice and he had got all the possessions he desired to take in a large trunk and when this trunk was carried out of his house where he had been living he helped to lift it up into the vehicle that he might go on his way but something went wrong and the trunk fell off and crushed this man underneath it and he died there and then with a broken neck and now

I simply tell you those incidents that you shall know that what the word of God declares is indeed a solemn reality and there is a very great need for you to be taught to pray this prayer set a watch oh Lord before my mouth and keep the door of my lips and now all this is to do with the negative side now let us come to the other side which is positive and now in approaching the subject from that viewpoint of it I read to you in James epistle the tongue can no man tame but do remember there is one who can do it you put a capital

O when you write down that one because it is God with whom you have to do and it speaks in Ezekiel a new heart will I give you a new spirit will I put within you I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh I will give you a heart of flesh and now when that miracle is wrought in a poor sinner's breast all that it might be wrought in every one of you listening to the preacher then you will find a new heart will also give you a new tongue and you find in the Acts of the Apostles quite a deal about having new tongues and now think of what God was pleased to do for Saul of Tarsus and the evidence that he gave to that good

[35 : 55] Ananias that Saul of Tarsus was born again the evidence was this behold he prayeth yes and now how good it is when our tongue is used to have to do with God if so be you can draw near to God and tell him all the truth as to how you feel as a poor sinner needing his divine aid seeking grace to help in time of need and wisdom to handle matters wisely oh what a mercy oh what a mercy it is to be taught to pray and there is another thought I must put into words as I come toward the amen you dear young people it may be I will say I hope it is that your dying hour is quite a way off from you but it will inevitably come and now when you stand by the grave side of your godly father or mother it may be as you look down upon the coffin that contains all their mortal remains that you will have some very solemn thoughts about words that you have said which you wish that you would never utter to them while they were watching over you and training you up in the way in which you should go

I remember when I stood by my mother's grave and I suppose then I must have been between 40 and 50 years old I could remember before my teenage life some things I had said which I wished I had never allowed to drop from my list but my mother knew what I was and she was a good mother to me and she rejoiced in what God had made me as a minister of Jesus Christ but even then as I stood by her grave and looked down on her coffin oh how I wished those words had never dropped from my lips and you think about it and let not the words be spoken ask God to tame your tongue by that power which he alone can communicate the grace of

God and then you will find where sin hath abounded grace shall much more abound and then the word of God speaks of a wholesome tongue and now that is a good adjective wholesome which is to say if you listen to someone who has a wholesome tongue it is someone who is born again and as you listen to them in the right frame of mind what they will have to say will do you good to listen to and be profitable and then the word of God says the lip of truth shall be established forever which is to say that if you dear young people at all times tell the truth it will stand for time and eternity too before God and man let your yea be yea and your nay be nay at whatever cost it is then there is just another adjective to use think how good it is to have a peacemaking tongue there are people whom we know and we are glad to know them that we look upon them as those who have grace abounding and they lose no opportunity to be peacemakers there are some people the opposite alas who are peace breakers and you want to give them a wide berth and not listen to what they may have to tell but when it comes to the peacemakers oh you will find there is something behind what they say that will help you to be in a right frame of mind and the saviour said blessed are the peacemakers yes and they are blessed and it would be good in their denominational life if we had got many more peacemakers than there often seems to be but now let us come back to this petition set a watch oh lord before my mouth keep the door of my lips and remember it is said a word spoken in season how good is it oh it is good beyond words to describe and think that if at any time you can say something for the honour of

God his glory and according to what says the scriptures God will regard it he will not overlook it God will not forget it no but he will make you to understand them that honour me I will honour they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed perish policy or perish perish all that fears the life whether losing whether winning trust in God and do the right and I want to conclude by reading what I have read to you once or twice but it will do to repeat it as it is to do with the tongue here is what a godly man wrote as to what he felt and he was in the spirit that godly

David was in when he said set a watch oh lord before my mouth keep the door of my lips my tongue my tongue a most unruly member which wags a mane a thin polluted hell in kindled ember my constant vain all takes its ways apparently unguarded tis well if what it says is not regarded though in the mind of God tis all recorded completely plain lord take my tongue and make it wholly designed to speak for thee its godless language checks its speech refined most blessedly may it be used to thy exalted praise may it be found a servant in thy ways till at the end of my appointed day

[43 : 41] I dwell with thee the lord bless you dear young people and grant you a tongue to speak for God and that you may find when you come to the end of life's journey what one dear hymn writer realized when this poor lisping stammering tongue lies silent in the grave then in a nobler sweeter song i'll sing thy power to save amen amen