

Our Speech (Quality: Average)

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[0 : 00] Psalm 51 and the 15th verse. Verse 15. O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. I need to heartily remind you that our text is found in the penitential psalm of David.

With broken heart, with strong heart, he comes before his God, pleading for mercy, pardon, forgiveness, and restoration.

So that our text is found within this blessed psalm, wherein David, who had sinned so greatly, had been convicted so solemnly, thou art the man, had been brought back to the feet of his God in prayer and penitence and repentance.

It is not this evening my purpose to go through the psalm. It's a beautiful psalm. It's a solemn psalm. It's a psalm that surely all the godly know something about who have walked through the experiences outlined in the hymn you have just been singing.

[1 : 36] Here are the drawings. Here is the quickening. Here is the experience of salvation defined before us. But I want particularly this evening to come into this section here where David cries out, Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. So that David's petition here as he is being brought through this psalm experience is that his tongue and his lips and his mouth should be open, should be liberated, should be so used to the praise and the glory of God.

And it is that this subject I want to try and look this evening. O Lord, open thou my lips. O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

Now, the first consideration I want to lay before you is something which I suppose is so evident, and yet we ought to stop and consider it, is that man alone in the world of the natural creation is able to speak.

When the Bible talks about speech and utterance, it uses such terms as the tongue, the lips, the voice, the words, the throat, and so on.

[3 : 31] All these things which are involved with the wonderful gift of speech with which man was endowed as he came from the hand of his creator.

I know that the lower creation, the animal creation, can communicate with one another. There's no doubt about that. In a limited way, they can communicate with man, a man of understanding, can usually get the message, as it were, from an animal in need, distress, or even in its experience, whatever that may be, of joy, and so on.

It would be wrong to say that animals cannot communicate, but surely no animal, no beast has this particular gift given, given that the use of the tongue and of speech and of the lips should have this terrific ability given, thus to speak, to communicate.

So the gift of speech is unique to man. But having said that, we must go a stage further and realize just how solemnly perverted that gift has become.

I suppose we could say, like Isaiah said of old, we live in the midst of a people of unclean lips. And I think it is just one of the sad facts of the day in which we live, that as we see the continued spiritual decline and the decline in moral standards in our country, this decline is no more evident than in this realm of the speech and of the tongue.

[5 : 41] that which was given to bless God with is used to curse, to blaspheme, to lie, to deceive, to corrupt in every possible way.

And as we peruse the Psalms or other parts of the Bible, the scriptures tell us about the terrible extent to which fallen human nature has become involved with this misuse of the term.

Well, you've only got to look at the next Psalm, look, Psalm 52. How does it begin? Why boastest thou thyself in mischief? Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man?

Thy tongue devised mischiefs like a sharp razor working deceitfully. deceitfully. So there, just a few verses below, David's petition concerning his lips and his mouth, there is this reminder of the tongue of fallen man.

Or take the next Psalm, Psalm 53, the fool hath said, the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.

[7 : 05] And so we can see in that Psalm the depravity of man. Well, there are other places also in the Psalms and in the scriptures wherein we read of these things.

Paul, in Romans chapter 3 as he lists the terrible condition of fallen humanity as he makes this great indictment against all mankind, he says this, there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God, they are all gone out of the way, they are all together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good know not, while their throat is an open sepulcher, with their tongues they have used deceit, the poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.

Now, you know as well as I know that these things are sadly true and terribly manifest all around us in this present day.

and at this point we might turn back to the reading that we had and remind ourselves of the way, the very clear way that James the apostle demonstrates the terrible evil of the fallen human tongue.

When he says this he speaks of the bits in the horse's mouth, he speaks to the ship turned about by a small helm, and then he says even so the tongue, even so the tongue is a little member and boasted great things.

[9 : 05] Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindling. and then he goes on to speak about this fire, this fire of speech, of language, of the lip, and of the tongue, and what did he say?

The tongue is a fire. The tongue is a fire. Fire is something that will spread, something that will do great damage if it is out of control.

You know, it's a good servant and a bad master. the tongue is a fire. You don't treat fire carelessly, do you?

You don't treat fire lightly? Well, there's enough concern in the nation at this present time because of the fire and strength. That fire should get out of control.

The tongue is a fire. It's highly inflammable, you see. The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. So is the tongue among our mentors.

[10 : 05] that it defileth the whole body and setteth on fire. It is a fire and it setteth on fire. It's a fire that spreads, you see.

A fire that ignites. A fire that goes on to do great damage. Behold how great a matter. A little fire tindling. Just a spark.

Never forget. During the drought, the summer before long, put in a match to a pile of stuff in our garden. I hadn't realised just how inflammable this dry material could be when the sun had been on it for a day.

And one moment I was standing by it with a match and the next thing the whole thing had gone up. And I just realised just how dangerous. Think of all those heat fires and woodland fires that occurred down.

a little spark. Behold how great a matter. That's the time. That's the time. And where does it get the fire from? James tells us this quite clearly.

[11 : 12] Setteth on fire the course of nature. It sets all the evil of human nature working. And where is the origin of it? It is set on fire of hell.

It is set on fire of hell. It is a fire. It will set on fire. And it was set on fire of hell.

So that what we are talking about tonight is something which the devil has got affirmed upon. Human speech. Human language.

The tongue. It's set on fire of hell. And I think in the light of what we have read here it is something a very important matter that we should consider.

And it said every kind of beasts and of birds and of serpents and of things in the sea is tamed and hath been tamed and mankind. But the tongue can no man tame.

[12 : 17] The tongue can no man tame. It is an unruly evil full of deadly poison. What an indictment.

Stop and think about it. A fire set on fire of hell. It's unruly. Cannot be ruled. An unruly evil. It's full of deadly poison.

It's poisonous and it's a killer. Deadly poison. Therewith we bless God even the Father. And therewith curse we man.

were made after the similitude of God. Now do you see the magnitude of the problem that we are confronted with this evening when we consider David's good prayer in Psalm 51 when in the light of his failure and sin he came back to his God in penitent, contrition and godly sorrow that worketh repentance not to be repented of and as he poured out his heart before his God he said oh Lord open thou my lips.

He daren't say a word. You see before the holiness of God every mouth is stopped and all the world is brought in guilty before God.

[13 : 46] Oh Lord open thou my mouth open thou my lips. and my mouth shall show forth dying. Praying. And I'm quite sure that as you've been listening to me this evening you've already had your mind go to another desire of David that you find in Psalm 140 where realizing the dangers of Psalm 141 realizing the dangers that we have been reminded of this evening he says set a watch oh Lord before my mouth keep the door of my lips.

Set a watch oh Lord before my mouth keep the door of my lips. well now let's just think a little bit about what we have around us we have a fallen world you can't go into a shop you can't have a conversation with someone in the street you can't stop and pick up a few gallons of petrol or something like that in a garage without coming into contact with someone who every other word will use some blasphemy some filthy word some corrupt expression isn't it true?

a few years ago it would have been unthinkable that such language should be used in public places but now it has become the norm and on the media and in the press and so on things are printed and uttered which a few years ago I say would have never been permitted no not for one moment but the tongue of man has been set at liberty you see restraints have been taken off and wherever you go you hear it you hear the filth the corruption and then you become aware of something else that in a day of increasing atheism of increasing godlessness you will yet hear the name of god and of christ much used but not used alas by those who believe respect reverence or trust in the precious name of god or of christ but in blasphemy and in vain in this phase in a day when so few professed to believe in god or in christ these terms are used every every other word is a swear word and every other swear word involves the name of god and of christ well that's what i'm trying to do in the days in which we lived we had a young lady come to work for us not long ago she was quite a decent girl she was young nothing wrong with her by the world's standards and yet she couldn't say a word without saying oh god oh god you see just it would just come out it was an expression but when we spoke to her about it she finally got out of a habit but it was just the normal the standing the tongue you see blasphemy swearing corrupt language on every hand but then it goes further than that because of course the tongue is what lullies are told with the tongue is that which practices deceit the tongue is that which procrastinates making promises that are never going to be kept and how we become accustomed to it even in public life talk about the politicians and the political parties and the manifestos and so on that they have and why my friends how short they come in their what in their performances but yet it's accepted yet lies about in public life lies about in every level of life it's taken for granted it seems to me that if you've got a difficulty or a problem you just tell them there's no such thing as a white line no such thing as a white line but the tongue how these things slip out so we could go on and speak of the manifest evils of the tongue this unruly member this fire this thing which set it on fire not to mention such things as backlighting and slander and character assassination which is done with the tongue and you see the misuse of the tongue is not limited to the coarser stream of human life because you see there are far more subtle things that the tongue is involved in and how mischievous conversation can result in the most terrible consequences a careless word have you ever stopped to think the

Bible said we have to give an account of every idle word the talk of the lips tendeth to penury in a multitude of words they're wanting not sin so that in the end it's not enough for us to gather in this chapel this evening and talk about the wickedness of the world around us but we have to come to this point oh you say oh I've often been hurt I've often been saddened by this thing that he or she said to me or about me yes but wait a minute wait a minute you've got a tongue too you know you've got lips so have I I've got a mouth I've got a voice you sit here tonight and say you've never said something that you'd have given anything to have caught back to recall you can't you see so we're all under the same condemnation the tongue the lid the mouth well

I've spent probably a long time looking at the dark side of it let's try now and see what the gospel has to say about this and what the word of God has to say about a manner in which such a condition may yet be dealt with you see David says open thou my lips open thou my lips there's only one man that never misused his tongue and he was the God man how blessed it is to think of this hath in these last days spoken by his son the Lord Jesus Christ never spake an either word he never told a dog he never used this seed he never had the poison of asps under his tongue there's a wonderful expression in Psalm 45 concerning him my heart is indicted a good matter

[21 : 16] I speak of the things which I have made touching the king my tongue is the pen of a ready writer beautiful expression that isn't it thou art fairer than the children of men grace grace is poured into thy lips therefore God bless thee for ever grace is poured into thy lips therefore God has blessed thee for ever as we look at fallen humanity about us or as we consider our own shortcomings and failures in this terrible respect how good it is to see that in the person of God's dear son we have one who overcame even this sore temptation of the devil and that he never sinned with his lips God was not found in his mouth they all wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth never man spake like this man he never told a lie every word is true isn't it good to think here's a word you can rely on you can't trust anybody these days but it's true isn't it you don't know what to believe you don't know whether to believe the politician you don't know whether you believe the man that's selling you the motor car you don't know whether you can believe this or that but here's one you can believe he is the truth his word is pure his word is true his promises will be kept in every iota he never sinned with his legs the lovely little thought expressed in hebrews chapter 2 and in a sense this is very relative to our hope even this evening as we gather together when he says i will declare thy name unto my brethren in the midst of the church will i sing praise unto thee the lord Jesus christ himself spoke to sinners it was he that said come unto me it was he that could speak with power and authority he could still the storm he could cleanse the leper he could call forth the dead and in all these things he never sinned with his lips he was never presumptive he never in any way incurred the wrath of god now what does james say about that i think it's worth noting going back to that he says this in that chapter that we read that if any man sin not with his mouth the same is a perfect man the same is a perfect man and surely this is the only definition for the lord Jesus christ for he is the perfect man in many things we offend all if any man offend not in the same is a perfect man and they will also bribe the whole body well it rules us out and then it puts him in the proper perspective when i wanted the world make of him he who never said a word wrong was the object of the most terrible flounder he was the object of

the most terrible enmity he endured contradiction of sinners against himself how they insulted him how they blasphemed how they drank his name in the gutter he went to his death because of lying witnesses and all the enmity that was against him and right to the last they mocked him they scoffed as they nailed him to the tree and watched him suffer bleed and die he stands out against a background of fallen humanity the one that prays for those that nailed him to the tree father forgive them for they know not what made him but did they silence his woman no that's a blessing on him though they kill him yet death could not hold him so we find him in his resurrection appearances speaking still words of truth peace and comfort the risen savior had a tongue a voice the gift of speech was still there as he came forth from the dead and what wonderful words he spake in the upper room on the

Emmaus road by the seashore wherever he met with his saint his words were wonderful indeed his mouth was opened and he showed forth the praises of his father but not only then but on the one hand in heaven itself we have this one that ever liveth to make intercession for us he pleads his people's cause above and not only there but surely his voice is still heard speaking in the days in which we live you see oh lord open thou my lips thy mouth shall show forth thy praise the miracle is this that this terrible organ the tongue the lip the mouth which James so rightly exposes for what it is by nature by the power of Christ and the power of the Holy

Spirit is completely transformed and instead of being set on fire by hell it's set on fire by something else because you see there was a day of Pentecost wasn't there and the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples and among those disciples there was a Peter that had denied his law a Peter that had cursed and sworn there was a Thomas that would not believe there was James and John who had been busy seeing who was going to be the chiefest in the kingdom with all their idols chattered and all their foolish talk and these who are in so many ways seen as being poor sinners such as we a fire a flame came upon them tongues tongues of fire and sat on everyone and the Holy Spirit the very

Spirit of Christ came upon them and the wonder of it is this that these who were so sinful in so many ways they became the true ministers of the gospel and they began to preach with power through the tongue through the mouth through the voice the foolishness of preaching it pleased God to save them that believe 3,000 souls on that day of Pentecost millions of souls since have been saved by the foolishness of preaching by the tongue by the lip by the voice by the speech of the preacher and one thing we can say about every preacher and certainly included the one before you this evening that every preacher needs to come under those solemn words that we have read about the tongue the unruly member and every preacher needs to pray the psalm the psalmist prayer of 141 and yet the treasure is in earth and vessel that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us you just take

[30 : 36] Isaiah's case when he was called when he had that great revelation given him in the sixth chapter of the prophecy there as he contemplated the glory of God how did it come home to him woe is me for I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips for mine eyes have seen the king the lord of hosts then flew one of the seraphim unto me having a lion's pole in his hand which he had taken with arms from off the altar and he laid it upon my mouth and said lo this hath touched thy lips and thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin is purged the gospel isn't preached by angels the prophets were angels they were men

Isaiah was a sinner Jeremiah was a sinner Paul was a sinner Peter was a sinner the greatest preachers that have ever have lived ever since have been sinners and all have needed the living come this hath touched thy lips thy iniquity is taken away here am I send me that's the first observation I would make then proceeding from the contemplation of signs fallen lip tongue mouth and voice and words and then to see the holiness of Christ in such sharp contrast and recognize that he who thus suffered bled and died his voice is not silence but still through the lips of his servants anointed yet purged yet yet still in and of themselves fallible creatures but it feed thoth by the foolishness of preaching you just sit for a moment and consider what you owe to preaching

I don't mean to me but I mean just think about how you've been blessed how you've been helped how the Lord has spoken a word in season to you and where did it come oh I don't discount the reading of scripture no it's very wonderful I don't discount other means but generally speaking preaching the ministry of the gospel the tongue the lid small wonder then that the preacher has to pray oh Lord open thou my lips but mine thou shall show forth thy praise but let us go a little further it's not only in the ministry of the word but also in the testimony of those that hear you take Romans chapter 10 as a classic example of what

I'm saying here if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead thou shalt be saved you see the word is not even in thy mouth and in thy heart the word of faith which we preach a profession of faith a testimony you take psalm 40 where we read of the man that was lifted up out of the horrible pit and the mire clay what was his testimony he brought me up also out of a horrible pit out of the mire clay and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings and he put a new psalm in my mouth and nature never put it there did it it didn't come from the source by which the tongue of fallen nature sat on fire there was a fire there the fire of love divine and he said he put a new song in my mouth even praise unto our

God many shall see it and fear and shall trust in the Lord the Lord Jesus said to one whom he wonderfully saved go home and tell thy friends go home and tell thy friends then will I tell to sinners round one of your saviors I have found remember Bunyan and the women that were talking he overheard their conversation that wasn't the language of the world that was the language of Zion you see if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus oh Lord open thou my lips that my mouth might show forth thy brain it is said of some of those places where true revival was experienced during the 18th century that the people gave up all their terrible habits of drunkenness and everything including bad language and the people went about their work kiddy minster the case in point where oh his name gone in the minute the godly man laboured there and the people sang songs as they went about their work and talked together of the things of

[36 : 55] God in their everyday conversation their lips were opened the power of the tongue was overcome the tongue can no maintain but God can tame it Christ can tame it the Holy Spirit can tame it can check it and indeed put a new song in the man and then of course there's a language of prayer in there a language of prayer oh Lord open now my lips of my mouth show so forth thy praise God is in heaven thou art upon the earth therefore let thy word be feared and it are sinful and sin stained dare such as we address the majesty of heaven the heavens are not clean in his sight much less man whom he has made and yet wonderfully the very this unruly member this part of us that can be set on fire of hell and cause such damage mischief and hurt can in turn be acceptable before a holy

God oh God be merciful to me a sinner Lord help me the language of this wonderful town have mercy upon me oh God according to thy loving kindness I like psalm 17 perhaps in this respect hear the right oh Lord attend unto my cry give ear unto my prayer that goeth not out of faint lips that is margin without lips of deceit it's a terrible thing to be a praying hypocrite to say one thing with the lip and know that there's something else in the heart but where the Holy Spirit has been it where where conscience has been revealed and where the sense of need is real and the holiness of God is realised and living faith is in exercise the prayer will go up out of unfaint lips oh

Lord open thou my lips and my mouth thou shalt forth thy prayer the preacher needs this prayer the people of God need this prayer that they may bear witness faithfully and tell of what Christ has done for them and then of course there's that wonderful fellowship referred to toward the end of Malachi's prophecy where they that feared the Lord spake often one to another and this was not idle gossip this was not backbiting this was not talking about one another but to one another they that feared the Lord spake often one to another and the Lord hearkened and heard it and the book of remembrance was written before him I believe this is being recorded tonight here in this building it's being recorded somewhere else and every word that you speak and every word that

I speak is being recorded not on a man made machine but in the infallible mind and memory of a holy heart searching God what did he hear in your conversation whether it's in chapel or whether it's at home could it be said that a book of remembrance was written before him for them for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name is your conversation something that you will be ashamed of when you get to heaven oh the mercy is if you're in Christ it will be blotted out by his precious blood or will it be recorded as it were written down in heaven the Lord hearkened and he heard it he listened and he heard that which was acceptable to him who were talking they that feared the

Lord and spake often one to another I believe that this lies in the heart of church fellowship they that feared the Lord spake often one to another and the Lord hearkened and heard it and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord I do not know a great deal no man knows how we shall be occupied in eternity but I cannot help but feel that some of these things will be recorded recorded for them for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name for saying what has been recorded in heaven concerning our conversations one with another oh Lord open thou my lips that my mouth might show for thy praise and then finally there is of course praise itself

[43 : 13] God says I create the fruit of the lips what is the fruit of the lips the sacrifice of praise a new song in my men even praises unto our God oh for a heart to praise my God a heart from sin set free oh to be delivered from the moving and the silent heart not merely to praise him externally but to praise him from the heart oh Lord open thou my lips so my mouth shall show forth thy praise you know I believe that singing is an essential part of worship I don't think it's just something to stretch your legs between the prayer and the sermon I believe it is an essential part of the service of

God why were the psalms written they were written to be sung they were written that the people of God should make melody in their hearts unto the Lord speaking to one another in psalms and hymns we had a sermon on that once didn't we psalms and hymns and spiritual songs making melody in your heart unto the Lord someone once said that he viewed modern evangelism as turning the house of God into some sort of a holy music hall well I can understand what he meant by that a place of worship was never meant to be a place of entertainment to appeal to the natural mind but my friend it is a place where the people of God should unite to praise their God from the heart and with the voice and I believe

God is pleased to hear the praising of his people the Lord Jesus says himself I refer again to Hebrews chapter 2 where he says I will sing praise in the midst of the church I will sing praise unto thee if the Holy Spirit moves your heart then you will sing with the spirit and you will sing praises unto that one and your song will be that new song unto him that loved us and watched us from our sins in his own blood think of it then we've come quite away this evening haven't we we've looked at the degradation the terrible character of the fallen human tongue by thy lips thou shalt be justified by thy lips thou shalt be condemned out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh then what proceeds from thy mouth what things are heard from thy lips set a watch oh lord before my lips yes indeed but more than that oh lord open thou my lips and my mouth shall show forth thy prayer may we ever be brought to consider the dangers of the tongue but may we also consider the right uses of the tongue may the lord help us with our lips as the prophet puts it to render or offer the cards of our lips and to praise him as we all the best of our praises here below will be nothing compared to the praises of eternity what a choir there is there what a word of them to things to join in may the lord be blessed amen to you