

Interactive lesson



picture from <https://depositphotos.com/stock-photos/gossip.html?offset=200>

What does it look like is going on here?

<Let them respond>

Do you think the three in back are saying nice things about the one in front? <Let them respond>

What do the things a person says about others tell you about that person? <Let them respond>

Do you trust someone who gossips? <Let them respond>

What do you think Jesus would say about this situation? <Let them respond>

How or where else might people gossip?

<Let them respond; highlight social media>

There was a phrase I learned in Quality Control for pharmaceuticals: “Garbage in, garbage out.” It meant that if our starting materials were contaminated, the whole batch would be ruined. How does what we say/do affect our relationships? <Let them respond>

How can we encourage better behavior both in ourselves and others? <Let them respond>

May God’s love and wisdom guide each of us in all that we do.

Gospel lesson

We continue in Mark this week with Jesus debunking some of {the disciples' material-world misconceptions} about His role as Messiah.



background picture cropped from personal photo

Mark 8:27-38

(NRSV)

²⁷ Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?"

²⁸ And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."

²⁹ He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."

³⁰ And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

³¹ Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

³² He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

³³ But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

³⁴ He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

³⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.

³⁶ For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?

³⁷ Indeed, what can they give in return for their life?

³⁸ Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

The word of God for the people of God

<Hymn "Lord, I Want to Be a Christian" UMH #402>

Message: Taming the Tongue



picture from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/doers-of-the-word/sixteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/sixteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Gracious God, You are the source of all wisdom.

As we take time now to further consider today's scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may live and speak according to Your ways rather than hurtful, selfish desires; and thus make the world a better place for all. Amen.



We resume the “Doers of the Word” series today with “Taming the Tongue:”

“[G]ossip...James wants to help us tame the tongue. It's true that we don't take this one all that seriously, but we've all experienced the sting of the tongue as we were growing up, and

even as adults. We all know what it is to bear the brunt of rumors or misrepresentations or words spoken in anger. And just as likely we know what it is to watch our words bring pain to another, intentional or not...The fruit we produce with our words reveals our hearts.”



representative picture from
<https://www.tripadvisor.com/LocationPhotoDirectLink-q60898-d445123-i266244973-SwanCoachHouse-AtlantaGeorgia.html>

When I was in high school, my mom brought home a picture of her work group from a luncheon they had had. She named the ones she was closest with; I saw one unnamed woman with long hair and asked about her. Although I do not recall any of their names, I do remember my mother making a catty comment about her, saying that women over thirty should not have long hair - it “did not look professional” or some such.

I was taken aback, dismayed because I loved having long hair and had no intention of ever cutting it short again. I also thought the way my mother spoke about that woman showed a nasty side to my mom that I did not like to see. I realized she was probably jealous of her coworker, and my respect for my mom dropped a little bit - by a hair, if you like.

Partly because of that experience, I try to avoid saying negative things about other people. Yet sometimes I find myself blurting out things that I probably should not say, especially when considering the people I am with and how they feel about it in addition to how the subject of my comment feels.

Apparently I am not the only one who does this:



And it goes back waaay further than the Reformation. Today's psalm mentioned how we do not understand our own errors. Proverbs talked about how people ignore the Wisdom of God to their own detriment. James wrote about how the tongue is a restless evil, full of poison, and how out of the same mouth comes both blessing and cursing – but this ought not to be so.

Think about what we spoke about earlier, how you feel about someone who says mean things about someone else behind their back. Are you going to trust them to say nice things about you? How are others to believe the love we proclaim about God if we do not live it before them?

In the Gospel, Jesus asked what people were saying about Him. Did you notice that none of the disciples mentioned anything negative about Jesus? They loved Him and possibly only heard the good said about Him. Peter proclaimed Jesus the most awesome person he could imagine - the Messiah.

But that does not mean they understood His role. Jesus immediately told the disciples not to tell anyone He was the Messiah, because He knew they had a very inaccurate picture of what He was to be.



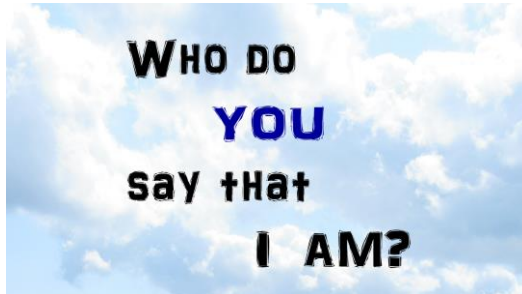
picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/Lumo-peter-confession/>

When Jesus explained what being the Messiah meant, Peter pulled Him aside as if to explain the role to Him. Jesus would have none of that. Jesus was doing God's work, not Peter's. It was not about the Hebrews getting their kingdom back as a world power.

How often do we get into trouble, trying to tell someone we love what we think they should do, without actually hearing them out or understanding their full situation? Did they ask for our advice?

Like Peter, we may have the best of intentions, but we are not in control of their lives (nor should we try to be, unless we are their legal caregivers or

guardians). We need to control our ourselves and trust in God, instead of {trying to control others, trusting in ourselves, and trying to act as God}.



*background picture cropped
from personal photo*

This is especially important as we call ourselves Christian. People look to us, at what we do, to see what Jesus was all about. Who do we say that Jesus is, through our daily words and actions?

Are we proclaiming God's love for the world to see? Often, it feels more like we are in Peter's shoes, trying to do good and getting yelled at for causing problems. We struggle to honor God with our words and actions.

Yet God helps us. As proclaimed in the psalm, God's directions revive the soul and provide wisdom. Proverbs speaks of the knowledge God provides to us through the scriptures, built upon with our reason, our tradition, and our experience.

As a living example for us, Jesus foretold how He would die and come back to save us. There is nothing in this world more important than loving God and loving one another!

So be mindful of what you say. Be nice. Build up others. Help them to build up others too.

Just as a teacher helps a student to try new things, to learn, to do better in the future, the Holy Spirit is with us as we bumble through life. Trust God, emulate Jesus, and let the Holy Spirit work through you for a better world.

Let us now respond with **A Modern Affirmation** UMH #885

Pastor:

Where the Spirit of the Lord is,
there is the one true church, apostolic and universal,
whose holy faith let us now declare:

Pastor and People:

We believe in God the Father,
infinite in wisdom, power, and love,
whose mercy is over all his works,
and whose will is ever directed to his children's
good.

We believe in Jesus Christ,
Son of God and Son of man,
the gift of the Father's unfailing grace,
the ground of our hope,
and the promise of our deliverance from sin and
death.

We believe in the Holy Spirit
as the divine presence in our lives,

whereby we are kept in perpetual remembrance
of the truth of Christ,
and find strength and help in time of need.

We believe that this faith should manifest itself
in the service of love
as set forth in the example of our blessed Lord,
to the end
that the kingdom of God may come upon the earth.

Amen.

<Doxology>

<Prayer of Dedication and Pastoral Prayer>

Let us pray:

Loving God, Jesus taught us “where your treasure is,
there your heart will be also.”

We offer our gifts to you knowing they are part of our
treasure, and we do so with the hope that our hearts,
our actions, and the words of our tongues will
likewise follow.

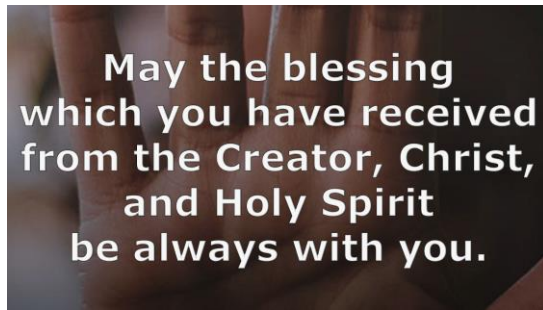
We acknowledge that the tongues that praise you are
often the ones that hurt you, when we use them to
diminish or discount one of your precious children.
Guide our hearts, minds, and tongues to the words that
bring you joy, and our gifts to restore the world.

- Help us, Lord, with healing touch and comfort for:
 - Paul Carson - continued prostate issues
 - Sarah Hite - cousin died
 - -
 - -
 - -
 - -
 - -
 - Covid - latest outbreaks, vaccine issues worldwide
 - Places devastated by natural disasters - wildfires, hurricanes
- Thanks for
 - -
 - -
- Hold those who cannot be with us in Your loving embrace until we see them again.
 - Family far off
 - Travelers
- Send Your Spirit to address world/social problems
 - end bigotry, dismantle racism, reform systems persist
 - bring world peace
- Guide our Leaders - local, state, federal, international, and especially of Your church.

All these things we pray as You taught us to pray,
<Lord's Prayer>

<Hymn "They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love" TFWS #2223>

<Benediction>



background picture adapted from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/doers-of-the-word/sixteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/sixteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-graphics>

As we leave this place of sanctuary, may the blessing which you have received from the Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit always be with you.

And throughout your daily life, may the words of your mouth and the meditation of your heart be acceptable in God's sight.

Amen.