

Sermon for February 9, 2020

BMZ Church

Series: TONGUE PIERCED

Text: Proverbs 18:21a; James 3:8-10; Matthew 15:11

Title: “The P.O.W.E.R of Words”

Introduction: Today we are starting a new worship series called “TONGUE PIERCED”. We will get to WHY that in just a few minutes, but first I wanted to do a quick QUIZ. Sociologists have long done studies on the power of words and there are a couple of lists out there that argue the most powerful phrases in the English language. I want you all to guess what four of them are ... and I’ll give you some hints in a minute.

IF you haven’t already, GRAB your MESSAGE NOTES ... *Take out your MESSAGE NOTES and CONNECTION card. You will see there are blanks to fill in ... Please take the time to do so. Grab a PEN and write down whatever else you think is important to you and your faith journey. After worship, drop off your CONNECTION CARD and take your MESSAGE NOTES home. Please Re-read the Scripture and the notes to keep growing and learning. For those of you on-line, you can go to our website, www.bmzchurch.org ... find the NOTES and follow along ... LET’S PRAY (turn off marked lights during prayer)!*

Okay, here is the QUIZ... find a spot in your NOTES ... #1 = What is the most POWERFUL 4-word PHRASE in the ENGLISH language? #2 = The most powerful 3-word phrase in the English language? #3 = The most powerful 2-word phrase in English? #4 = What is the most POWERFUL SINGLE WORD in English?

The ANSWERS are (some surveys): 4-word phrase = “*Once Upon a Time*” ... kind of mysterious and fills us with anticipation. 3-word phrase = “*I love you*”. 2-word phrase = “*I’m sorry!*” and the 1-word phrase considered powerful = “*I*” ... unless you are in marketing, in which case it’s “*YOU!*” How’d you do?

That was to get us thinking about HOW POWERFUL WORDS ARE! Words can be USED for POSITIVE or NEGATIVE ... and we will talk about that a lot.

Did you know the BIBLE has more than 400 VERSES relating to WORDS ... how we USE words, the POWER of words, where words ORIGINATE and how to CONTROL your TONGUE / WORDS?!

This worship series, “TONGUE PIERCED” is based on a verse from the Book of Proverbs, written mostly by Solomon ... the son of King David, the successor to the throne and the wisest man in the world. The verse is Proverbs 18:21 and it is our MEMORY VERSE for TODAY. Let’s say it out loud together ... **PROVERBS 18:21 = ²¹ *The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences.***¹

The tongue literally has the power to give LIFE ... INCREASE life and/or ADD VALUE to life, OR, it can give DEATH! In the Hebrew, means to bring death or DECAY or DESTROY. Let me ask: Do you AGREE with the WRITER of PROVERBS?

THINK ... What are some words that bring DECAY or DEATH in our lives: Words of CRITICISM / HATE / CONFLICT / GOSSIP, etc.

Now, think about some words that might give LIFE: words of love... Words of CELEBRATION / ENCOURAGEMENT / COMFORT / PEACE, etc.

How about your words? BRING LIFE or DEATH? Build UP or TEAR DOWN?

The goal of this SERIES: Each of us would become more conscious of the WORDS we USE and strive to use our WORDS to bring GLORY to GOD! “*To bring glory to God...*” Sounds like a neat religious phrase, but WHAT does it MEAN?

¹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Pr 18:21). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

Jesus said there were TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS: The first (1st) is to LOVE the LORD your God with ALL your HEART/SOUL/MIND and the second (2nd) is LOVE your NEIGHBOR as yourself. So, use your tongue, use WORDS to GLORIFY GOD means we use our words to show God LOVE and show other people LOVE. ***The “TONGUE PIERCED LIFESTYLE” = USE WORDS to LOVE GOD and OTHERS!***

We are going to talk about HOW we do that for the next few weeks. Essentially, we need to BE CAREFUL with our words... AND MANY are NOT CAREFUL. We DON'T THINK much about the IMPACT our words can have. BUT, what if we were? What if EVERY WORD we SPOKE were words that brought Glory to GOD?!

WHAT would it BE LIKE if everybody at your place of WORK used words that showed LOVE to other people? What would it look like if everyone in your FAMILY always spoke words that BUILT UP and GLORIFIED God? What if everyone in our CHURCH used words to BRING LIFE instead of DEATH?

That's where we are headed! Let's START with 3 TRUTHS about our WORDS:
THREE TRUTHS ABOUT OUR WORDS:

Truth #1 = Words are a GIFT FROM GOD

We believe we are created in God's image by God ... God created us to talk (some of us take it to the limit!). But God was the one who created us and gave us speech / words as communication tools. AND ... We believe God SPOKE FIRST (Genesis 1). God SPOKE the WORLD into EXISTENCE! The ROCKS / TREES / OCEANS / RIVERS / ANIMALS / BIRDS ... EVERY Living CREATURE and HUMANS!

When God GIVES us something, our job is to CARE FOR it GOD'S WAY! With MONEY, we're supposed to TITHE back 1/10 of what we earn to God! That's "STEWARDSHIP". God gives us GIFTS and TALENTS and we are to USE what we've been given BY GOD to GLORIFY GOD. We are "STEWARDS" of what is already God's... this world, etc.

And, God gave us WORDS and SPEECH to COMMUNICATE. God WANTS US to be good "STEWARDS" of our words and use them for God and God's Kingdom.

Truth #2 = Words BUILD UP or TEAR DOWN

I HOPE we can AGREE on this. In just a few words, someone can WALK UP and make you FEEL GREAT or TERRIBLE. Just a FEW SECONDS ... just a FEW WORDS; and they change the mood. I know people ... if I can get around them for a FEW MINUTES, I will be ENCOURAGED, because they KNOW HOW to USE WORDS to BUILD UP! Remember the saying, "*Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names/words will never hurt me!*"? If you graduated 3rd Grade, you know that's a LIE! NAMES and WORDS HURT WORSE than STICKS!

Words can HURT / CUT YOU / TEAR you DOWN. Think: When was the last time you were CRITICIZED? REMEMBER? When was the last time someone said something HARSH to you? I'm guessing you all have something going through your heads right now ... HARD to FORGET!

More about that in upcoming weeks. The 3rd TRUTH is LESS OBVIOUS:

Truth #3 = QUALITY OF LIFE is Determined by QUALITY OF WORDS

This TRUTH is the CORE PURPOSE of this WORSHIP SERIES! We all want our "QUALITY of LIFE" to be GOOD ... The NEW YOU! Did you know WORDS are a GREAT DETERMINING FACTOR for "Quality of Life"?

Example: You understand, the words you speak OUT LOUD and IN your MIND TO and ABOUT a person can IMPROVE or DIMINISH the QUALITY of a relationship. NEGATIVE words TEAR DOWN the relationship. POSITIVE words BUILD UP, right?

SAME holds true with our SPIRITUAL LIFE! HOW we COMMUNICATE with God (PRAYER) can either GROW our FAITH LIFE or CAUSE IT to DIMINISH.

The QUALITY of MY LIFE is determined by the QUALITY of MY WORDS!

A STUDY was done on VIOLENT PRISONERS. Researchers found prisoners' VOCABULARY was about 1/5 (20%) of the AVERAGE PERSON in the U.S. The psychologist noted, DUE to their LIMITED VOCABULARY, they had NO other WAY to EXPRESS themselves except through VIOLENT ACTS. QUALITY of LIFE is DETERMINED by the QUALITY of our WORDS...

So, IF WORDS are a GIFT from God, that can BUILD UP or TEAR DOWN and the QUALITY of MY LIFE is DETERMINED by the QUALITY of MY WORDS, then HOW do we HARNESS / CORRAL the POWER of our WORDS? GLAD you ASKED!

HOW can we use our words to BUILD UP, to LOVE PEOPLE, LOVE and GLORIFY GOD? Here's **FIVE WAYS TO HARNESS THE POWER OF WORDS: P = Practice PRAISING Every MORNING**

WHAT'S your MORNING ROUTINE? Shower, dress, eat breakfast, listen to music, watch the news / SportsCenter, run out the door? It's been said the FIRST HOUR of our day SETS the TONE for the REST of the day ... Like a RUDDER on a BOAT: it's SMALL, but it will SET DIRECTION for our DAY.

So, IF the FIRST MINUTES of the day are IMPORTANT and our WORDS DETERMINE our "QUALITY of LIFE", what are the FIRST WORDS out of your MOUTH in the MORNING? Are you one of those MORNING PEOPLE, all HAPPY when you wake up and the FIRST WORDS are— "*Good Morning, Lord!*"? OR, do you wake up saying, "*Good Lord, it's morning!*"?

Here's MY CHALLENGE for the DURATION of this series—hopefully it will become HABIT—make PRAISE a PART of your MORNING ROUTINE! What is PRAISE? Simple DEFINITION = THANKING GOD for WHO He IS! For all the CHARACTERISTICS we know of God ... God is LOVING, PATIENT, KIND and full of GRACE (getting what we don't deserve!). This is NOT Thanksgiving = thanking God for what God has GIVEN or BLESSED us with. NO, it's about WHO God is!

I don't know about you, but I NEED a FORGIVING GOD! A GOD who FORGIVES, FORGETS and CHALLENGES ME to DO the SAME! God WORTHY of my PRAISE! **PSALM 145:2 = ² I will praise you every day; yes, I will praise you forever.**
² Hebrew TRANSLATION = EVERY – DAY – FOREVER! UNDERLINE THOSE!

This is the FIRST WAY to Harness the Power of Words. **IF you make this part of your life, it will CHANGE your life ...** Start EVERY DAY with PRAISE to GOD! "*God, thanks for being a LOVING / FORGIVING GOD!*" The 2nd way to HARNESS... **O = Offer WORDS of ENCOURAGEMENT Daily**

Just like we are to Praise God Every Morning, we need to FIND WAYS to offer WORDS of ENCOURAGEMENT DAILY! EVERY PERSON you meet, EVERY DAY, wants to be ENCOURAGED! IF we are going to GLORIFY GOD, we need to ENCOURAGE GOD'S KIDS!

Do you remember the last TIME somebody ENCOURAGED YOU? It affects us! WORDS of ENCOURAGEMENT LAST! They STICK WITH US for a long time!

I remember when we moved to Neenah between my 4th and 5th grade year, I did not know anyone in my class! I felt really self-conscious and didn't know if I would be accepted by all these new kids. BUT, within the first few days of school, I heard from a couple of the guys that the cutest girl in the class, Suzie Davis, thought I was cute! Man, GAME OVER! Because of that encouragement, I was able to build some friendships.

Think about it. If we are supposed to BUILD people UP with our WORDS, what better way than to ENCOURAGE someone? It is NOT HARD in this world to FIND someone who NEEDS ENCOURAGEMENT! If you're MARRIED, you have a BUILT-IN LAB PARTNER—ENCOURAGE your spouse DAILY! GOOD PRACTICE!

So, PRAISE God in the AM, ENCOURAGE Others Daily, and #3 =

W = Work to REMOVE All CURSING

This one's DIFFICULT ... and, we'll spend a whole Sunday on this! In a couple weeks, we will be rated PG-13 ... BUT, IF we're going to HARNESS the POWER of our WORDS, this one is included... Now, please understand this is a PLACE of GRACE. We're a CHURCH of IMPERFECT PEOPLE. We know HABITS BUILD over a long period of time and they're HARD to BREAK, so IF you SLIP, we're NOT going to give you THE LOOK ... RIGHT EVERYBODY?

We do NOT BELIEVE IF you SWEAR, God LOVES you LESS. Scripture teaches there is NOTHING you can DO to cause God to LOVE you MORE or LESS! NOT what we are TALKING ABOUT when we talk about REMOVING CURSING.

We ARE talking about is being OBEDIENT and becoming MORE like JESUS over time. Here's what I know ... it is a CHARACTERISTIC of people who are CLOSE to JESUS to USE more PURE SPEECH. They are NOT characterized by CUSSING.

This is true throughout history... 1904-5 = There was a REVIVAL in Wales... over 100,000 people gave their lives to Christ in Wales over a 6-month period. Revival was passed to Welsh communities in America in 1905. BUT this created PROBLEMS. In the MINES, the MEN WORKED with HORSES that PULLED the COAL TRUCKS... here's what happened: ***“Stoppages occurred in the coal mines as a result of this revival. Not due to the unpleasantness between management and workers, but because so many foul-mouthed miners became converted and stopped using foul language that the horses that hauled the coal trucks into the mines could no longer understand what was being said to them.”***

These MEN were AFFECTED by their RELATIONSHIP with Christ so much, it CHANGED their LANGUAGE from CURSING to PRAISE! Poor confused horses...

Here's what James says about cursing... **JAMES 3:7-10 = ⁷ People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, ⁸ but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹ Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. ¹⁰ And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right!³**

So, CURSING is like TAKING a little POISON each DAY ... NOT going to KILL you, but NOT going to HELP you either. Remember our GOAL is to have better QUALITY of LIFE and BRING GLORY to GOD!

Okay—PRAISE God, ENCOURAGE others, STOP CURSING... #4 =

³ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible, New Living Translation* (Jas 3:7–10). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

E = Exercise LISTENING Over TALKING

Part of the “Tongue Pierced Lifestyle” is NOT ONLY to KNOW WHAT to SAY and WHEN to SAY IT, but also to know WHEN to SAY NOTHING at ALL!

My DAD used to tell me there was a reason God gave us TWO EARS and just ONE MOUTH. Maybe we should LISTEN TWICE as MUCH as we SPEAK!

There are great quotes on this... **Mark Twain:** *“It is better to keep your mouth closed and let people think that you are a fool, than to open it and remove all doubt.”* **Sally Berger:** *“You never saw a fish on a wall with its mouth shut.”* We don’t get in nearly as much trouble if we keep our mouth shut. My favorite = *“A small mind and a big mouth are usually found in the same place.”*

We learn by listening and that’s part of this “Tongue Pierced” process. The BIBLE AGREES ... **Proverbs 12:15 = ¹⁵ Fools think their own way is right, but the wise listen to others.** ⁴ We’ll keep practicing HOW to HARNESS the POWER of WORDS for the NEXT FEW WEEKS. That takes us to the LAST WAY to do this...

R = Release My WHOLE LIFE to GOD

This is the CENTRAL ISSUE when it comes to living a “Tongue Pierced” life! Are we WILLING to RELEASE our ENTIRE LIVES to GOD? The Bible is CLEAR there is a DIRECT CONNECTION between our WORDS and our HEARTS. If we have IMPURE HEARTS, we speak IMPURE WORDS. PURE Hearts are FULL of PRAISE and ENCOURAGEMENT! MY MOM used to say that what came OUT of your MOUTH was what was IN your HEART—WORDS just REVEAL WHO WE ARE!

This comes back to a CENTRAL TEACHING of Jesus from Matthew 15 ... and Jesus speaks more around it, so I encourage you to READ some of Matthew 15 on your own (Next Steps!). Here it is ... **Matthew 15:11 = ¹¹ It’s not what goes into your mouth that defiles you; you are defiled by the words that come out of your mouth.** ⁵ See? What comes OUT of your MOUTH reveals what is IN your HEART!

So, what’s been coming OUT of your mouth? Is it GLORIFYING to GOD? Do your WORDS REVEAL God is truly in CONTROL of your life?

The most POWERFUL way we can HARNESS the POWER of our WORDS is to GIVE our WHOLE LIVES OVER to GOD. IF you are NOT experiencing the QUALITY of LIFE you hope for, maybe it’s TIME to GIVE your life to CHRIST. Looks like this: ***Put Jesus in the DRIVER’S SEAT of your life. Let Him show you what His dreams are for your life and show you how to live life BETTER! Putting Jesus in the driver’s seat is hard ... I know. We all want to be back seat drivers, if not trying to scooch into the front seat and move Jesus out of the way! In a few minutes, I’m going to PRAY. Maybe it’s time for you to give up control and let God lead for awhile!***

Hey, would you grab your “Connection Card” again, please? I want to challenge you to mark on the back of that card what “Next Steps” you decided to take. We just went through 5 WAYS to HARNESS the POWER of your WORDS ... would you please PICK TWO of those to WORK on THIS WEEK? That’s two besides “Praising God Every Morning”! Maybe memorize a verse from Proverbs or READ from Matthew...

If you enjoyed worship today and feel like you got something out of it; I challenge you to bring a friend next week!

Let’s Pray!

(Give Control over to Jesus...)

⁴ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Pr 12:15). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
⁵ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Mt 15:11). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

Next Steps: Memorize Proverbs 18:21

- Sign Me Up for GG# _____
- Corral my words in the following areas (circle all that apply):
P O W E R
- Commit to be a part of the rest of this series, as much as possible.
- Read Matthew 15:1-20

Hosting (Closing)

HEY, it has been a GREAT DAY here at BMZ... Glad you've been here with us!
In a moment, we are going to

- RECEIVE the OFFERING so please take this time
- to finish COMPLETING any information
- Or NEXT STEPS on your CONNECTION CARD (**FULLY FILLED OUT!!**)
- AND when our ushers come around to RECEIVE our OFFERING
- You can drop that card in the offering basket. YEP ... BOTH in the SAME BASKET!!

IF you are a First-Time Guest with us today

- We are so glad that you joined us ... And we have a GIFT for you. It's a book called "**UNSHAKABLE**" and it's at the BACK TABLE / By the DOORS...
- all you need to do is DROP your COMPLETED Connection Card
- in the OFFERING PLATE / BASKET WITH your OFFERING when it's passed. YEP ... BOTH in the SAME BASKET!

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As our ushers GET READY to come forward

- I just want to remind you that ... STEWARDSHIP is DISCIPLESHIP ... we RECEIVE an OFFERING EVERY Sunday BECAUSE it's BIBLICAL ... AND, it HELPS us GROW in our FAITH!
- STEWARDSHIP VERSE ... **John 10:10 = ¹⁰ The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. ⁶**
- FIRST of our EARNINGS go back to the ONE who Blessed us in the 1st place! That's why WE/I do Automated Giving! I get paid ... the TITHE comes OUT FIRST!
- God's plan for BUILDING His Church was through TITHING and GIVING of the FOLLOWERS ... Share the GOOD NEWS! To REFRESH OTHERS!
- As Developing Followers of Jesus Christ, WE need to KNOW what the BIBLE says about GIVING ... NOT just what we THINK it should say.
- **MONEY is a HEART ISSUE.** And, GOD wants what is BEST for your HEART! Listen, if GOD LOVES US so much that HE is willing to GIVE UP His OWN SON FOR US, WHY would GOD LEAD us ASTRAY in FINANCES?!
USHERS ...
- Next Week: "**THE ART of CONFRONTATION!**"

"Truth without Grace is Fundamentalism (Brutality). Grace without Truth is Sentimentalism (Hypocrisy)."
Special thanks to Andy Stanley, Nelson Searcy, and R.A. Pegram for outlines and ideas for this worship series.