

## **Matt 12.22-37 – What do your words say about your heart?** Clint Le Page

Main Point – Your words about Jesus and to others reveal your heart, so we need heart renewal.

I confess that far too often my words, particularly to my family, reveal selfishness, a desire for my comfort or me to be in charge.

I confess I've spoken at times with grumpiness, a lack of self-control.

And I've been too quick to make excuses – whether tiredness, stress, or what other's did first.

To my wife and kids I've been too quick to speak, and too slow to listen.-----

And this reveals that my heart is still in need of renewal and change by God's Spirit.

Because as the Lord Jesus says today, our words reveal our heart.-----

What do your words reveal about your heart?-----

Today we see the words of Jesus' enemies reveal their hearts.

And Jesus warns that God will judge us all for our words.

But we'll also see that there is hope; for through King Jesus we can get forgiveness and a changed heart.-----

In Matthew 12 we've seen the Jewish leaders rejecting and opposing Jesus.

Last week we saw how Jesus' claim to be Lord of the Sabbath and his healing on the Sabbath, resulted in the **Pharisees** now planning to kill him (v14).

Jesus has continued to heal people and the Pharisees are still watching him.-----

The Pharisees were part of a group of Jewish religious leaders who were legal experts on the Jewish law & oral tradition.

And they prided themselves on their performance.

They saw themselves as separate from n' better than everyone else.

And people looked up to them as the super-holy ones.-----

But Jesus does not, for he knows their hearts.-----

In **v22** a demon had possessed and taken control of a man, n' made him unable to see and speak.

Can you imagine how horrible that would have been?

The powerlessness and oppression; unable to see or say anything.-----

And Jesus heals him.

Luke 11[v14] makes clear he did it by driving out the demon.-----

And the crowds are amazed and wonder, 'Could this be the Son of David?'-----

**Our first point is, Is Jesus the good king?**-----

The Jewish people are thinking of God's promise to King David, **2 Sam 7(SLIDE)**, that one day God would raise up a descendent of King David, who will rule over a kingdom forever.

This is the same Son of God and Messiah-King from **Psalms 2** who will rule over the nations, and his enemies.-----

Who is also the Servant of **Isa 42** from last week; who'll bring justice to people.-----

And he's the Daniel 7 'Son of Man' with all authority.-----

All those prophecies are fulfilled in Christ the King. That's his identity.

The crowds are right, Jesus' is the promised and powerful King.-----

From Jesus' incomparable and awesome authority, he even rules over evil spirits.---

But the Pharisees don't think he's from God.

They think he's demonic not Davidic.-----

Look at what they say in **24**, "This man drives out demons only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons."

Beelzebul is a modified form of Beelzebub, Lord of flies, a false god, in **2 Kings 1**.

But it has become a name for Satan, the ruler of demons.

The prince of the forces of evil.-----

Jesus just knows what they're thinking (don't forget that, God knows what you think), and he responds in **v25**.

Every kingdom divided against itself will be destroyed, no city or house divided against itself will stand.-----

The splits in the **Roman Empire** contributed to its downfall in the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

I thought of the Lord of the Rings, and the Steward of Gondor(**SLIDE**), sending his son Faramir off to certain death, and refusing to defend the city.-----

The White City, Minas Tirith was headed for destruction at that point.-----

We've seen it in Australian politics.

Since 2010, four prime ministers were overthrown from the inside.-----

Kids, you see it in sporting teams. If you don't work together you lose(**SLIDE**).-----

If Satan is divided from Satan, working against himself, his kingdom will not stand.

But Satan is not that stupid. He will not self-destruct.

He doesn't want to see people healed and restored.

He wants to hurt and afflict, turn people against God and bring them to death.-----

So No way is Jesus driving out demons by Satan's power.

Jesus brings God's Kingdom and plunders Satan's kingdom.-----

And the Jewish exorcists will prove the Pharisees wrong too, for even they testify it is God's work.-----

Is Jesus evil, and casting out demons by the power of a greater evil?-----

No, No way.

Jesus drives out demons by the Spirit of God, **v28**.

And he drives them out because he is stronger than them, and stronger than Satan.

I thought of Hulk being stronger than Loki, (**SLIDE**) or Superman in Justice League being stronger than the evil Steppenwolf.-----

Jesus is stronger than the devil.-----

Jesus can only save people from Satan's clutches, because he is stronger.

King Jesus has tied up Satan, and that's why he can plunder his house.-----

And this matters, cos while we may not be dealing with demon possession, you n' I still face evil.-----

Paul in **Eph 6 (SLIDE)** says, our real battle is not against flesh and blood people.

Our real fight is against the cosmic powers of darkness and the evil spiritual forces.

You might be fighting with your parents or children, frustrated that you live alone n' your friends aren't caring for you, you might be angry at the Premier or Prime Minister, or wanting to just not get out of bed cos you can't face whoever.-----

But our real battle is not against them, it is against evil, against Satan, who wants you to dive into sin, and anger, despair and bitterness and faithlessness.-----

Remember Jesus is stronger. Come to Jesus in prayer for strength.-----

He can help you.-----

Who is Jesus? What's his identity?----

He is not evil, he is good.

He is the promised Messiah King who rules over all, even over evil.

He is stronger than evil, stronger than the prince of demons, Satan himself.

And he's come to set people free, to save and strengthen.-----

And you must pick sides.

**Our next point is, Be very careful how you respond to him.-----**

Jesus has been saying, there's a struggle, it's Satan vs me, and I'm winning.

I'm freeing people from Satan's grip, cos I'm mightier than the strong man.----

Now you've gotta decide what you think of me.

**v30**, 'Anyone who is not with me is against me, and anyone who does not gather with me scatters.'

Jesus is saying to them and you and I, You can't be neutral, you can't sit on the fence when it comes to me.

Either you're with me and you're doing my work; or you're against me and scattering.  
It's one or the other.-----

So which are you? With Jesus, or against him?-----

A decision must be made.-----

And if you're not for him, then you are against him.

If you fail to defend Jesus, you oppose him.

If you fail to trust in Jesus as Saviour, you're not saved.

If you don't listen to n' follow him as Lord, you're his enemy.

If you're not helping others to enter his kingdom, you're scattering.-----

But there's hope.-----

'Therefore, I tell you,[Jesus says] people will be forgiven every sin and blasphemy,

but the blasphemy against<sup>al</sup> the Spirit will not be forgiven'.-----

Many people fear that they have committed this unforgiveable sin.

But heaps of people fail to see or believe Jesus is the Saviour & Lord.

People make mistakes about his identity, and sin greatly.

Picture a **70 yo drunkard**, who has lived a life of sexual immorality, lying, stealing, foul language, blasphemy n' ungodliness.----

Do you realise that he is just as forgiveable as the 7 year old who has done nothing worse than normal childhood naughtiness and selfishness?-----

And the prostitute is just as forgiveable as you or I, or the nice person with their hidden pride, greed, and selfishness.-----

All those things can be forgiven.

It is absolutely amazing that God forgives anyone, any one of us.-----

But if you say n' believe that the good things Jesus did were evil and came from evil.

If you say Jesus' miracles were from Satan and not the Spirit of God, then you blaspheme the Spirit and you will not be forgiven.

You call what he's done evil, and you will not be forgiven, not now, not ever.-----

It's not just saying some words, but a conviction in your heart.

And the Pharisees were guilty of that, and they were in trouble.-----

Maybe past the point of no return.-----

It's ironic that the Pharisees, meaning the 'separated ones', who thought they were separate from everyone n' devoted to God, were separated most of all from God and the Messiah.----

To assert Satan did the Son of God's deeds, will make you unforgiveable.-----

I'm thankful I don't think I've met a person who's done this.

The good news is, for every other sin we commit, for all of us, we can be forgiven.---

For as we'll remember in the Lord's Supper shortly, the King Jesus would go to the cross and die, to obtain our forgiveness.

He would suffer the punishment and judgement for our sins.

Our selfish and thoughtless words, our disobedience n' evil deeds.

Anything and everything else can be forgiven – and don't we thank God for that!

Jesus paid for it all.

So for anyone who turns to him and trusts in him, there is forgiveness.-----

God won't remember or count our sins against us.

He will welcome you into his family, adopt you as his child, and pour the riches of his grace upon you.-----

Do you know that forgiveness?-----

In 2010 **Yenny(SLIDE)** was a student at La Trobe who worshipped romantic desires and sought security in having a man.

When men let her down she turned to the occult, and to clairvoyance, palm-reading, witchcraft, horoscopes and fortune-tellers, yearning for guidance. But she felt like an evil presence was following her.

At uni Yenny developed a friendship with a Christian, and she eventually prayed to receive Christ into her heart. But she wasn't sincere in asking forgiveness and continued to mess with the dark side.

After a relationship breakup she was on the point of suicide and had an encounter with Jesus. In her crying and sorrow she cried out to God and felt Jesus embrace her. She said, 'I finally grasped the reason Jesus died for me on the cross for me. What followed was a sense of genuine joy.'

Soon after her Christian friends helped her see the occult was actually against God, and was told, 'Yenny you're tampering with demonic spirits'. And she threw out her books, candles and stones. She said, 'I'd invested so much into something that was anti-God and I could feel the anger of the demons.'

But Christ came into her life and has changed her in many ways. She said, 'I used to take pleasure in seeing others in pain, now I want to comfort them. With the Lord in my life I feel safer than I ever did with the occult.'-----

Friends, Jesus is stronger than evil. He frees people from Satan and forgives sin. How will you respond to him?-----

I hope in faith.-----

And how you've responded to Jesus will show itself in your words.

Our words reveal our heart.----

**Point 3, your words reveal your heart.**-----

Back in ch 7 [v16-19], Jesus had said you'll recognise the false teachers by their fruit. A bad tree produces bad fruit.

Jesus returns to that and says, **v33**, if the tree's bad or rotten; the fruit will be bad, rotten.

A bad tree produces bad fruit.-----**(SLIDE)**

You might have an apple tree in your backyard that just produces yuck or rotten apples.

And you can't fix it by ripping off those apples and stapling good apples to it.

Soon enough, the tree will show itself in its fruit.-----

You might put on a show when you're with Christians, and control your tongue, but those who know you well n' live with you, see the real you, don't they?-----

You only get good apples from a good tree.

Same with people.----- Same with the Pharisees.-----

Jesus calls them a 'brood of vipers', poisonous snakes.

They are evil, and speak evil.

**'For the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart'**.-----

**Paul Tripp** is the speaker in our Marriage and Parenting Courses this year **(SLIDE)**.

And Tripp shares a story about when he was a boy, at his Mum's extended-family reunions, with people who didn't get along, sitting on different tables.

And each time there'd be lots of food and too much wine, and it got wild.

Paul's Mum and Dad taught the kids to say Hi to everyone but they'd leave before it got too bad.

One Saturday, his Mum got into an evangelistic conversation with one of her brothers, meanwhile another uncle was with Paul and his brother, saying sexually perverse things about women.-----

When his Mum discovered this she ran down stairs and grabbed Paul and his brother, and yanked them to the car.

And before she drove away she turned and said to her boys,

'I want to say something about what just happened and I don't want you to ever forget it.'

Paul hasn't.

'There's nothing that comes out of the mouth of a drunk, that wasn't there in the first place'.--

The alcohol didn't create the sexual perversion.

That man was thinking those thoughts when sober.

What alcohol did was loosen the lips.

And when the lips got loose, guess what? Out came the heart.-----

And Tripp rightly says, If this is true, which it is, you cannot just focus on regulating, managing or controlling behaviour, not yours, not your kids.  
 The heart is the causal core of your personhood.  
 The heart is your control system, the ruler and driver of your words and behaviour.---  
 What you and I say comes from our heart.  
 Good words n' good things will only come from you if the storeroom and treasure in you is good  
 It's true for Jesus, true for you and I.  
 What you say to your family, friends, your husband or wife, comes from your heart.  
 And as I shared at the start, I and all of us, can be selfish, angry, controlling, hurtful with our words.  
 Because of the sin in our hearts.-----  
 So what Jesus says next is scary.  
 Look at **v36**, 'I tell you that on the day of judgment people will have to account for every careless<sup>®</sup> word they speak.'-----  
 All your words you've ever spoken, to your siblings, your parents, your spouse, your children; to your friends, n' enemies, all our words typed, God will make us justify.  
 Every careless, course, unhelpful, unloving word.-----  
 And you know what?  
 If it depends on me and my words, I know I'm guilty.  
 I've spoken careless, hurtful, grumbling, selfish and sinful words, more times than I can count.-----  
 Have you?-----  
 And if you, or I or anyone stands before God and are judged on our words and performance, we will all be found guilty, all be condemned.  
 We deserve judgement and hell.-----  
 But there is one who never sinned with his words.  
 From his good heart, Christ only and always spoke good words.  
 Only Jesus was without sin.  
 And he, HE was the one who gave himself as our sacrifice and substitute.-----  
 Only by trusting in his sacrificial death for us in our place can we be forgiven and not condemned.  
 But if we've trusted in him, there is now NO condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.-----  
 And so if I stand before God one day and he says, 'Clinton why should I let you into my heaven?'  
 I cannot speak of my good words and actions.  
 I can only say, I trust in Jesus, my great deliver, my Saviour n' my King.-----  
 Only trust in Christ acquits us, justifies us.-----  
 Is he your Saviour too?-----

And when we trust in Jesus, and receive the Spirit, we are given **new hearts**.  
 The promise of the new covenant in **Ezek 36** says this(**SLIDE**)  
 'I will cleanse you from all your impurities and all your idols. <sup>26</sup> I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone<sup>®</sup> and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> I will place my Spirit within you and cause you to follow my statutes...'

So God will forgive and cleanse us of our sins.  
 He will give us a new heart, which is receptive to God, which will love God.  
 And by God's Spirit we have a new desire and strength to do what God says.-----  
 In the language of **Romans 2**[29] our hearts have been circumcised by the Spirit, so we're no longer dead in sin, but set free to live God's way.-----  
 It won't be perfect. As new covenant believers we will still sin with our words.  
 But we can obey our Lord Jesus in new and real ways.-----  
 And by the work of the Spirit in us, over time we can make progress.

Progress as our hearts are sanctified and changed to love God and others.  
 Progress in speaking words which build up in love, not tear down in selfishness.----  
 So if you've put your faith in Jesus as your Saviour and Lord, then you've been given a new heart, and from that you can produce good fruit.-----

I got saddened and discouraged, even frustrated hearing that lockdown is going on for many weeks to come.

I know there's hope, but I know it's hard, for so many of you.-----

And if you're stuck at home with your spouse or family, or others, I ask, what words will come forth from your mouth today; this week?-----

And What will the words you speak say about your heart?-----

When you speak to the boss who frustrates you, your housemate or who ignores you, or the friend you call to touch base with, what words will you speak?-----

Even in lockdown, our lips are not locked, the words we can type in a message are not chained.-----

You might live alone, or feel alone, but Who can you build up with your words?-----

Maybe there's someone you can share Christ with so you can gather with him?-----

Will you speak words in prayer to God, seeking his help to be self-controlled and loving and Christ-like?-----

Instead of using your words to curse or cut down, Christ calls you to use them to encourage and edify.-----

And do it so that God is glorified for the way he changes hearts.-----

What do your words say about your heart?-----

The King Jesus, he is good. He is stronger than evil, stronger than Satan, and even strong enough by his Spirit to change hearts, your heart n' mine.-----

So come to him in faith, and speak good words, that glorify him.

Let's pray