



A Word to the Wise:

Purifying that speech

By Tatenda Kangwende

"Yea, at that time, I will change the speech of the people to a pure speech, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord and serve Him with one consent."(Zephaniah 3:9 R.S.V)

The Bible powerfully prophesies of an approaching epoch which will dawn on the earth after that Christ would have returned in divine power and glory to successfully claim and possess the Kingdoms of this world as those of both Himself and His Father (Revelation 11:15-18). At that time, through the work and power of His Holy Spirit, God will swiftly and surely move to unify and purify the world's languages. The end result? Namely a holy tongue which will bring out the best in language, which will entail humanity reaching unprecedented heights of thought, civilization, development and enhancement, coupled with and culminating in the exaltation of the Creator (Zephaniah 3:9,13). What a glorious new day and era that will be! Truly, just the thought of such a future almost spontaneously animates one to kneel down and pray to the Father, *"O Lord, let Thy Kingdom come."*

Purifying one's speech now

Alas, that day is not yet, but it is sure to come as prophesied. Nevertheless, that prophetic scripture of Zephaniah 3 (when mused upon long and intently enough) yields the price-

less gem of a call to action (for all who will heed) to positively begin now and in earnest to purify their speech. The blessed result of such action is that God will be glorified and others wonderfully edified.

What practical pointers may be applied in helping to purify one's speech? Feel free to consider and apply the following:

1. Think it through: When thought goes into what is to be uttered, the result is usually speech that is pure and acceptable before all. As the Psalmist sincerely prayed, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer."(Psalm 19:14; R.S.V.)

So then, nevermind about the possibly awkward silence which carefully thinking things through may cause in a conversation; for one will be sure glad that they did.

2. Make it worth its salt: "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer every one." Pithily penned Paul the apostle in Colossians 4:6 (R.S.V). In one loose sense, one could correctly deduce that what he was essentially noting was that whatever is to be uttered by one should at least (in a manner of speaking) be "worth its salt" or while.

What is eventually uttered should not be bland or otherwise frivolous; and so with that out goes all the excessive slang, vulgarity, negative gossip, gross exaggeration, rude sarcasm, prevarications, pointed and unending criticism, garrulity, and all other forms of "trash talk". Instead, speech that is worth its salt is that which imbues one with purer and more noble thoughts, furnishes one with more concrete courses of action to take, shines a light on possibilities, attractive alternatives and/or anything else which adds to a more valuable or flavourful outlook on life.

3. Proper presentation pays off: Speech is a tightly integrated product which consists of both its actual content as well as the manner in and through which it (namely the content itself) is presented. Proper presentation helps one get the point across that much better/effectively. One should thus be sure to match body language – namely non-verbal aspects such as audibility, intonation, tone, gestures and so forth- with the content which is to be spoken. As the Bible itself wisely and correctly notes, *"A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."* And, *"A gentle tongue is a tree of life."* (Proverbs 15:1, 4; R.S.V) Thus, one should not only think on what is to be said, but also on how it is to be said; so ensuring that speech is only made when all is in congruence.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for the marvellous gift of speech. Please provide guidance such that it is used to help, heal, inspire and otherwise richly bless others and thus proudly glorify You. This request is prayed with faith and thanksgiving to You both in and through the mighty Name of the soon-coming King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.