

**Matthew 12:33-37:** Either make the tree good & its fruit good, or make the tree bad & its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. <sup>34</sup> You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. <sup>35</sup> The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, & the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. <sup>36</sup> I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, <sup>37</sup> for by your words you will be justified, & by your words you will be condemned.

**Intro:** Last Lord's Day, we saw Jesus continue to love & heal, & He warned about a terrifying sin: the unforgivable sin. The context of this sin was the Pharisees (religious leaders full of Scripture knowledge who should know better) accusing Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Satan. This is a sign of their thoughtful, willful, & self-conscious rejection of Jesus & the work of the Holy Spirit. Their hearts are hard; they hate God; they totally reject the work of God's Spirit & are planning how to kill Jesus Christ! They have bad hearts! God really cares about the heart (1<sup>st</sup> & greatest commandment): all of our behavior & words flow from our hearts.

### **1. Good Trees Produce Good Fruit, Bad Trees Produce Bad Fruit**

**Matthew 12:33:** Either make the tree good & its fruit good, or make the tree bad & its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit.

**a. Jesus speaks about good and bad trees:** The character of the tree, the health of the tree, the tree, at the core of what it is, will determine whether the fruit the tree produces is good or bad. Good, healthy trees produce good fruit. Bad, sick trees produce bad fruit.

**Counseling Class Illustration:** If you have a bad, dying tree that produces no fruit, what good does it do to get a bunch of good apples or oranges and duck tape them up to the branches of the dying tree?

No! The tree has to be made good. It has to be made healthy from the inside out. It has to be transformed!

**b. Only God can make good trees out of bad trees: Ezekiel 36:24-27, 30:** I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. <sup>25</sup> I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. <sup>26</sup> And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules . . . <sup>30</sup> I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant . . . .

**Matthew Henry:** Unless the heart be transformed, the life will never be thoroughly reformed.

**c. Jesus is applying this truth to Himself: Ligon Duncan:** What is Jesus saying there? Look, either approve Me and My deeds or condemn Me and My deeds but don't say His deeds are good but He is from the evil one. Don't play that game, Pharisees. Either say that what I am doing is wicked and manifests a wicked heart or confess with all these that I am doing the will of the One who sent Me. But, don't say that I am a man that goes about doing good in the name of God but I'm essentially evil. The Lord Jesus is challenging them to take stock of His actions and see what His actions tell them about His heart.

### **2. The Strong Warning Words Of Jesus**

**Matthew 12:34:** You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil?

**a. Jesus and others in Scripture often speak in the strongest of terms (animal names!):**

Jesus (Luke 13:32): Go and tell that fox, "Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course."

Jesus (Mat 23:33): You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?

Jesus (Mat 7:15): Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves

Jesus (Mat 7:6): Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

Jesus (Matthew 16:23): Get behind me, Satan!

John (Revelation 22:15): Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

Paul (Titus 1:12-13): One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." This testimony is true.

Paul (Philippians 3:2): Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.

Paul (1 Corinthians 15:32): If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained?

Peter (2 Peter 2:12): But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction

Jude (Jude 1:10): But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively.

**b. How can you speak good, when you are evil? Jeremiah 13:23:** Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then also you can do good who are accustomed to do evil.

**Rom. 8:7:** the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot

**Ephesians 2:1:** you were dead in the trespasses and sins GOSPEL!

### **3. The Heart Is The Root Or Source Or Spring Of All Our Words And Actions**

**Matthew 12:34-35:** For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. <sup>35</sup> The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, & the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.

**a. The heart is the center of who you are:** Our minds (thoughts), our emotions, our wills, our deepest longings and desires, what produces our devotion and loyalty – our whole inner being – our heart is what defines us the most! Our heart is who we are at our very core – the center of who we are!

**b. The words you speak are the evidence of what's in your heart:** Your words are a window into your heart. Your words reveal what you think, what you believe, what you feel, your deepest longings and desires, where your most serious devotion and loyalties are found: your words reveal the center & core of who you are.

**c. Good people have good treasure and produce what is good: V. 35:** The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good; Their hearts correspond to the good treasure. And when you are full of good treasure, good treasure comes out of you! It overflows toward others in thoughts, feelings, deeds, and words.

**Someone:** If you have a cup full of sweet water, and you shake the cup, what kind of water comes out? Sweet! If you have a cup full of bitter water, and you shake the cup, what kind of water comes out? Bitter!

**d. Evil people have evil treasure and produce what is evil: V. 35:** the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil; Their hearts correspond to evil treasure. And when you are full of evil treasure, evil treasure comes out of you! It overflows toward others in thoughts, feelings, deeds, and words.

**Matthew 15:18-20:** But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. <sup>19</sup> For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. <sup>20</sup> These are what defile a person. (Gov. Official: Jesus was silent on homosexuality. No – here! And all the Bible!)

**e. The Pharisees spoke evil words about Jesus and the Holy Spirit:** They were calling Jesus' work, which He did by the Holy Spirit of God, the work of Satan. This is utterly evil! The words you speak about Jesus are the most important words you will ever speak! Do you call on Him? Do you confess Him? Do you get Him right?! Do you delight in Him!

**Philip Schaff:** This Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon; without science and learning, He shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of schools, He spoke such words of life as were never spoken before or since and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line, He set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, and songs of praise, than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times.

**James Allan Francis:** Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another obscure village, where He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty, and then for three years He was an itinerant preacher . . . He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put his foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place where He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself . . . While still a young man, the tide of public opinion turned against Him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth while He was dying—and that was his coat. When he was dead He was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend. Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone and today He is the centerpiece of the human race and the leader of the column of progress. I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever were built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned, put together have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that One Solitary Life.

#### **4. The Day Of Judgment**

**Matthew 12:36-37:** I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, <sup>37</sup> for by your words you will be justified, & by your words you will be condemned.

**a. God really cares about our hearts, and therefore, He really cares about the words that we speak because our words reveal what's in our hearts:** They are like a mirror that reflects what is truly in our hearts.

- **Ephesians 5:4:** Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.

- **Colossians 3:8-9:** But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices

- **Colossians 3:17:** And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

- **James 1:19:** Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger

- **James 3:1-12:** Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. <sup>2</sup> For we all stumble in many ways, and if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. <sup>3</sup> If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. <sup>4</sup> Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. <sup>5</sup> So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! <sup>6</sup> And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. <sup>7</sup> For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, <sup>8</sup> but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup> With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. <sup>10</sup> From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. <sup>11</sup> Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? <sup>12</sup> Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

**b. On the day of judgment, we will give an account for every careless word we speak:** Be careful little mouth what you say! We will give an account for every thoughtless, random, angry, word on the day of judgment.

**c. For by your words you will be justified (proved to be true), & by your words you will be condemned:** Not that you are justified by words (justification is by faith alone), but our words reveal or give evidence that we are truly justified!

**Daniel Doriani:** Jesus does not mean that if we say a certain number of bad words, we go to hell, and that if we say a certain number of good words, we go to heaven. God does not find us guilty or innocent, when we meet him, on the basis of our works in a narrow sense. When Jesus says we will be held accountable for careless words, he means the words we use when we are hardly paying attention to their effect. They are casual, unplanned words. They count because they reveal the heart. Once I was with a pastor when his daughter slammed a car door on his finger. He did not curse – although that kind of pain can elicit cursing. He said, “Open the door as rapidly as possible.” Afterward the father did not yell at his child, nor, I noticed, did the child quiver as if she expected trouble. She apologized. He said it was mostly his fault, but it might be nice if she looked before she slammed the door next time, and that was the end of the matter. Such words revealed a good heart.

**Moses: Numbers 20:7-12:** the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>8</sup> "Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water. So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle." <sup>9</sup> And Moses took the staff from before the LORD, as he commanded him. <sup>10</sup> Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, "**Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?**" <sup>11</sup> And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock. <sup>12</sup> And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them."

**Jay Sklar:** Moses focuses the peoples' attention on himself and Aaron, not the Lord.

**Psalm 106:32-33:** They angered him at the waters of Meribah, and it went ill with Moses on their account, <sup>33</sup> for they made his spirit bitter, and he spoke rashly with his lips.

**Abraham:** Lied about his wife Sarah

**Isaac:** Lied about his wife Rebekah

**Jacob:** Lied about who he was to Isaac to get Esau's blessing

**David:** Wrote evil, murderous words that got Uriah, one of his mighty, loyal men, killed

**Peter:** Jesus called him Satan once; Don't wash my feet!; Denied Jesus three times with swearing and cursing

**Moses: Matthew 17:1-3:** And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. <sup>2</sup> And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. <sup>3</sup> And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.

**Hebrews 11:23-28:** By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. <sup>24</sup> By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, <sup>25</sup> choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. <sup>26</sup> He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. <sup>27</sup> By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. <sup>28</sup> By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them.

**Romans 10:9-13:** because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. <sup>11</sup> For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. <sup>13</sup> For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Jesus is the greatest tree Who produces the greatest, most perfect fruit! He speaks only & always what is good & perfect & holy! He's the great treasure Who brings forth only what is good & best! Yet there was a day of judgment for Him, not for His sins (He had none!) but for our sins. He was counted the bad tree that we were while He died on that tree! He was counted the evil treasure that we were. He gave an account for every careless word we've spoken & bore God's wrath on the mercy tree so that we might be saved & find mercy in Him! And He rose!

Christ Jesus Is The Greatest Tree  
His Fruit's The Best You'll Ever See  
His Heart's Abundant Purity  
And All He Speaks Is Truth Decree  
He's Good And Filled With Treasures Free  
And Saves The Bad And Evil We  
Who've Sinned The Vilest In Degree  
With Careless Words None Could Foresee  
But Christ Went On A Saving Spree

He Bore God's Wrath Upon That Tree  
He Died And Rose Our Jubilee  
He Casts Our Sins Into The Sea  
By Faith Alone We'll Righteous Be  
He Grants New Hearts That Bow The Knee  
To Him Forever Speak With Glee  
Those Words That Please The One In Three  
For God's Our Joy Guarantee!