

# Speech, A Mirror Into The Soul

## Introduction

1. If I want to know what information is stored in my computer I can produce a list of its contents on a monitor or print them on a piece of paper. What came out of the computer would indicate what was in it.
2. We are familiar with the concept that what comes out of our bodies can be used to test and diagnose the condition of our internal organs - blood, exhaled air, urine ...
3. The Scriptures indicate that we have such a diagnostic test to look at the condition of our souls (Mt 12:31-37).

## I. The Test And Its Application (Mt 12:31-37).

### A. Evidence that there is such a test (12:33-35).

#### 1. Immediate context:

- a. Jesus had cast out the demon from a deaf blind man which had caused the people to wonder whether He could be the son of David. The Pharisees sought to neutralise this thinking by raising doubts concerning the source of His power (21-24).
- b. Various arguments showing the fallacy of this thinking concluding with the real source of His power (25-29).
- c. The impossibility of neutrality in this warfare between the two kingdoms (30).
- d. A warning concerning the state of mind of the Pharisees to which we will return to give closer attention (31-32).

#### 2. We will pick up our text from this warning (33-35) where the availability of this test is evident.

#### a. Immediate application.

- 1) The Pharisees challenged to look into their own souls (33). They had said that the tree is bad - well look at the fruit!
- 2) The test used to explain the venomous attitude of the Pharisees (34-35).

#### b. We have the same challenge to look into our own souls.

### B. The unforgivable sin of vs. 31-32.

#### 1. Some may agonise as to whether they have committed this. Is it -

- a. An act of cruelty against a departed relative?
- b. A lecherous and adulterous relationship carried on behind the back of my husband wife?
- c. That attitude of envy and jealousy which poisoned my relationship with my brother or sister?
- d. That past life of dishonesty or cruelty?

#### 2. It was none of these. This warning was against words (32).

#### 3. The importance of words.

- a. Why words? They are a criteria, but not the only criteria, of judgment (36-37).
- b. They are an index of the contents of the heart which generated them "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (34).
- c. This is evident of the Pharisees whose words triggered Jesus' warning.

C. Words as a measure of the souls of the Pharisees.

1. They had just seen Jesus perform such an astonishing miracle that the multitudes were amazed and said "Could this be the Son of David?" (23).
2. Yet rather than acknowledge the involvement of the Holy Spirit, they claimed that He did it through the power of Beelzebub (24). In so speaking they showed:
  - a. An intransigence of spirit. There is no greater evidence that Jesus could have provided that he came in opposition to Satan and yet they misrepresented this to argue that Jesus was in league with him.
  - b. A determination to both reject Jesus and even to set up obstacles between their fellow Jews and Jesus.

**II. The Condition Of The Soul As Revealed By Various Sins Of Speech**

A. Lies.

1. Notice that "all liars" will have their part in the second death (Rev 21:8).
2. As we look at the historical reasons that caused men to lie we can understand why!
  - a. Fear - Abraham (Gen 12:10-20, 12-13).
  - b. Covetousness - Gehazi (2 Ki 5:1-27).
  - c. To heighten social status (Ac 5:1-11).
  - d. To impress others - the chief captain, Claudius Lysias (comp. Ac 23:26-27 with 21:30-33 & 22:26-29).
3. Lies fall into three broad categories: Those told to –
  - a. Achieve perceived advantages.
  - b. Avoid certain consequences whether shame, repercussions, or anticipated events. White lies or fibs fall into this group. They appear harmless but they demonstrate a lack of faith that God will deal with the situation adequately.
  - c. Get one's own way and if this necessitates lying to the local council, tax office, school, parents, neighbours, friends then so be it. Lies of this nature show a lack of respect for authority or the welfare of others.

B. Profanity.

1. At a verbal level this involves using God's name frivolously, lightly, or disrespectfully.
2. Why do we hear profanity so commonly - because faith in God is so uncommon!
3. God's name stands for His being, His person. Therefore if we fail to set His name apart and treat it reverently, it reveals a heart which has not set Him apart.
4. As I understand it the Jews would not say the Name "Jehovah" but would substitute the Lord.
5. Today's generation has gone to the opposite extreme. God's name is used in jest, as an expression of surprise or ignorance and in outbursts of frustration or anger. Is this true of you?

C. Backbiting (evil speaking), slander, false accusations, tale-bearing, angry words.

1. Those who do such cannot be trusted with our name- we would think of them as a gossip.
2. What they say may or may not be true; it doesn't matter; all are condemned (Rom 1:28-32; 2 Tim 3:1-5).
3. It is vandalism, malice, hatred and comes close to murder (1 Jn 3:15).

5. This does not mean that there is never a time when evil should be reported, such as when the Church or other individuals might be harmed or compromised. However the gossip should first be approached and only after that should further steps be taken.

D. Murmuring and railing.

1. It is condemned and reveals a discontented and disgruntled heart (1 Cor 10:10; Num 14:2).
2. Murmuring is an onomatopoeic word and describes an indistinct, subdued, continuous complaining about things over which only God has control.
3. This is why it is wrong to murmur about the weather or prevailing economic conditions.
4. Railing/reviling is related to murmuring in that it brings out into the open our discontent with those in authority over us so that it is expressed in harsh and bitter language.
5. The seriousness with which God regards such is demonstrated by the instruction found in 1 Cor 5:11.

Why? Those who hold positions of authority occupy offices ordained by God (Rom 13:1-2).

E. Things of which it is a shame to speak (Eph 5:3-12).

**Concluding Remarks:**

1. We must, of course, recognise the limitations of the idea that speech is a mirror to the soul. It is certainly true of our own souls but we must exercise caution when applying the principle to others (1 Cor 2:10).
2. The restraints which filter our language are often removed by anaesthetics so that things are said which would not otherwise have been revealed.
3. If the constraints from your lips were suddenly loosed and the contents of your heart revealed would you be ashamed of what it harboured? Sooner or later this examination will take place (Heb 4:12). Then we will stand before the judgement seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:10) and then the words of Mt 12:36-37 will take effect.