

Every Idle Word

Harmony M.B.C., August 8, 2009 (Morning)

Robert P. Myers

Mat. 12:36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

Mat. 12:37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

Ecc. 5:2 Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

Various statements about the number of words used per day by people claims a range of 2,000-25,000 for men and 7,000-50,000 for women. Taking the minimum for each of these, let's say that each person on earth speaks an average of 4,500 words per day. With that minimum estimate, and knowing that there are about 7.5 billion people in the world, of which about 5 billion are between the ages of 10-79; which would be the most talkative age of humans that we could hold them responsible for what they say (www.worldometers.info/population/). With these 5 billion people speaking an average of 4,500 words per day, there are approximately 22 trillion, 500 billion words spoken each day. To most of us these huge numbers are meaningless, but we know that these numbers are huge beyond our comprehension. Although today, with our national debt pushing toward \$21 trillion, that kind of number is beginning to be familiar to us.

With the untold number of words being spoken every day throughout the world, it is very sobering to think that the Lord has said that someone will be required to account for every one of those which are idle, or worthless. We could go on for hours about what are idle words. We know that all words I previously mentioned are not, yet we know that probably the majority of them are. But the real question for each of us this morning is not, "how many idle words are people around me speaking," but rather, "how many idle words am I speaking." With that question in mind, let's examine 5 things: 1) Three major categories of idle words, 4) How can we avoid multiplying idle words in our own selves? and 5) How is it that the Lord will justify or condemn men according to what they speak?

I want to remind everyone that when we talk about speaking words, we are also talking about writing and printing words. So, we want to remember that as we

think about biblical statements about words.

I. First Category of Idle Words:

❖ Taking the name of the Lord in vain

➤ **Exodus 20:7** Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

❖ Some people use the Lord's name in vain as blasphemy

➤ Blasphemy is to charge God with untrue things; and in a way these go beyond idle words. Yet they are idle words in the sense of the Greek; words that are useless. Our text statement by Christ is spoken after He points out that the Jews he is addressing have committed blasphemy.

❖ Some people use the Lord's name in vain as an exclamation.

➤ I believe that a huge amount of times this is done, such use can be classified as idle words because the use is what grammar calls an "interjection." That is, an exclamation of sorts.

❖ Everybody is familiar with the obvious kinds of words people use taking the name of the Lord in vain. There is one phrase that we hear on TV nowadays being used constantly on almost every kind of show and dozens of commercials and interviews. And most widely of all, it is used in all social media: "Oh my God," or in the abbreviated form OMG.

➤ There are others:

- Jesus
- Christ
- Jeez
- My Word
- Gracious
- For goodness sake
- Gosh: interjection; euphemism for God - used as a mild oath or to express surprise
- Dang : interj. Used to express dissatisfaction or annoyance. adv. & adj. Damn.
- Doggone: Euphemism for goddamn; an expression of anger or annoyance

II. Second Category of Idle Words - Gossiping

❖ Lev 19:16 "Thou shalt not go up and down *as* a talebearer among thy people...."

➤ Definition: a conversation that spreads personal information about other

- people; a report (often malicious) about the behavior of other people;
- ❖ Gossiping multiplies idle words because it often **develops** from people just sharing information **and grows** into inane and worthless chatter about things that have no relevance, no importance, no potential to build anyone up in the faith, and may often drift off into speculation about people and things.
 - It is likely that more idle words are spoken during gossip sessions than any other activity on earth
 - Diotrephes got into trouble with John the apostle by idol and malicious gossip in 3Jn 1:10 (What John said about Diotrephes) “Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doth, **prating** against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth *them* out of the church.”
 - Certain young widows got in trouble with Paul in **1Tim 5:13** **And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.**
 - (Note: gossip only became a commonly used term in the 19th century - the more commonly used term “tattler” was used during the 16th and 17th centuries when the bible was translated into English. The term prate, prating was a word describing an even more offensive form of gossiping in which the offender is spreading lies about somebody and berating them.)

III. Third Category of Idle Words - General idle words

- ❖ This class includes almost all “shooting the breeze” where no attempt to provide informative input or to improve things is intended.
- ❖ We all participate in this in some degree
- ❖ This category also includes obscene talking and dirty jokes (**Eph. 5:4**) (foolish talking and joking using words that are not proper)
- ❖ We now have internet assistance in multiplying idle words; email, instant messaging, facebook, twitter, myspace, blogs
 - Consider just Twitter: Every second, on average, around **6,000 tweets** are tweeted on Twitter (visualize them here), which corresponds to over 350,000 tweets sent per minute, **500 million** tweets per day and around 200 billion tweets per year.

IV. What can we do to reduce the number of idle words we will be responsible for?

- ❖ We can **care** - (some people don't care what they say; some people don't care enough...mostly, our faults concerning idle words is that we just don't care enough)
 - Caring requires both **sincerity about prevention and a desire to be helped**:
 - Sincerity about prevention: **Psalms 17:3** Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited *me* in the night; thou hast tried me, *and* shalt find nothing; I am purposed *that* my mouth shall not transgress.
 - **Desire to be helped**: (Job answers Eliphaz the Temanite) **Job 6:24** Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.
- ❖ **Think** - Concerning the need to choose our words: **Ecc. 5:2** Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.
- ❖ **Guard** - It requires **two armed guards** to accomplish controlling the tongue. They are:
 - **Your own commitment**: **Psalms 39:1** "...I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me."
 - **Contracting with God**: **Psalms 141:3** Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.

V. Looking now at Mat. 12:37 **For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.**

- ❖ **How is it that men will be justified or condemned by the words they have spoken?**
 - The answer is in Jesus words in **verse 34**: "...for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."
 - Christ will simply use the words that men speak to pass judgment on what was in their hearts.
 - We should remember that the Lord said, **Mat 15:18-19** **But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. 19** **For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:**