

The POWER of WORDS

BY SHARON RAPP, BIBLE STUDY EDITOR

Opening Prayer: May the Spirit's pow'r unceasing Bring to life the hidden grain, Daily in our hearts increasing, Bearing fruit that shall remain. So in Scripture, song, and story, Savior, may Your voice be heard. Till our eyes behold Your glory Give us ears to hear Your Word. Amen. (LSB #584, verse 2)

The definition of "word" provided by *yourdictionary.com* is "a letter or group of letters that has meaning when spoken or written". Many English expressions include word(s): *I give you my word! I'm at a loss for words! We had words!* With a partner or the large group, make a quick list of other expressions using word/s that you recall. Then, if you are willing, describe an experience you have had that illustrates one of them.

This study involves a lot of words and a number of references which have been chosen to inspire our sharing of the Gospel. Trusting in God's promises, we are to tell the Good News of salvation and eternal life found in the Word Made Flesh, faithfully speaking the powerful Word of God.

The Power of God's Word

GOD SPEAKS. *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And God said, "Let there be" and there was ...* (Genesis 1:1,3). God's powerful words of creation are quoted within Scripture. How do the following passages illustrate the power of God and His Word?

- Genesis 3:14-19 _____
- Exodus 20:1-19; 32:15-16 _____
- Psalms 89:1-4 _____
- Isaiah 49:5-6 _____
- Jeremiah 1:4-9 _____
- Matthew 4:1-11 _____
- Galatians 3:23-29 _____
- Hebrews 4:12 _____
- 1 John 5:4, 6b, 11 _____
- Revelation 5:9-13 _____

What does Job wish for in **Job 19:23-25**? _____

What is its irony? _____

Describe the assurance that he, and we, want to share with others. _____

As was true for Job, we may not know how, when or whom our words may influence. We do know that God's Word will not return void: *so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose* (Isaiah 55:11). The Word of God's faithfulness and love — His gift of salvation and eternal life in His Son — that we have to share is true and powerful. He will hear our prayer for confidence in speaking it.

The Promise of The Word Made Flesh

THE SON OF GOD SPEAKS. John begins his Gospel with a prologue describing the Son of Man: *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ* (John 1:14, 17). To whom does Christ speak in these verses? _____

How would you describe His use of words in each Scripture passage?

- Matthew 3:13-17 _____
- Mark 14:22-24 _____
- Luke 7:44-50 _____
- Luke 24:44-47 _____
- John 5:24 _____
- John 10:14-18 _____
- John 17:9b-20 _____
- Acts 1:8 _____

The account of Jesus' first miracle is found in **John 2:1-11**. Note His mother Mary's brief words. What does Mary tell the servants and what might this indicate about her? _____

What is the promise in Jesus' response? _____

How do the servants respond to Jesus? _____

How do you think they reacted when the "water" is called "good wine"? _____

What is the purpose of the water jars and what significance might we draw from water and wine? _____

What is the outcome in verse 11? _____

What encouragement may we draw for our own witness? _____

"We have the most important mission on earth. We share the Good News of Jesus Christ with the world. We have the only cure for the eternal illness that infects every human being on the face of our planet. Only through faith in Jesus Christ can any human being in any place on earth receive God's love, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life. We have the Great Commission to teach all nations, a matter of eternal life and death" (*The Lutheran Study Bible (TLSB)*, page 1810). Christ promises the disciples in Matthew 10:19b-20 *do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.*

The Potential of Our Words

THE CHILDREN OF GOD SPEAK. While Father, Son, and Holy Spirit always speak truth, we choose what we say. Each of the following verses refers to one or more of the ways we employ words. Identify and list wise and unwise choices.

Romans 10:10 _____

Philippians 2:14 _____

Ephesians 4:25, 29-32 _____

Ephesians 5:18b-21 _____

Philippians 2:14 _____

Colossians 4:2-6 _____

1 Peter 2:9-10 _____

1 Peter 3:15 _____

Paul and Silas were inspired to share the Gospel in a Philippian jail. Read **Acts 16:25-34**. What behaviors are taking place in verses 25-27? _____

What is unusual about the prisoners' response? _____

The jailer's? _____

What is the outcome in verses 33-34? What can we learn about sharing His Gospel? _____

Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise! (Revelation 5:12 NIV). Think of it! We humans use words to "hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest"* God's Word (in a multitude of languages), including quoting the words of the Word made flesh — and we are commissioned by Him in Matthew 28:19-20 to share the Gospel promise of everlasting life! What wonderful ways to use our words!

As Time Allows

- Research, with the help of a concordance, the words *speak, tell, and/or invite*.
- Study one or more of the divine services for references to the actions above.
- Scan the "Mission and Witness" section of the hymnal. Select a hymn or verse to memorize.
- Revisit in depth the creation, the fall, and God's provision in Genesis 3.
- Choose a patriarch or prophet who used words to tell others about God. Follow the situation, the outcome, and discuss what the study teaches you.

Closing Prayer: O almighty Father, lead us to Your Word, that we may find healing of heart, soul, and mind in the Gospel of Jesus. Be near us as we read for ourselves that Jesus has indeed died and has risen again for us. Keep us steadfast in Your grace and mercy, that we may spread Your love to those who haven't heard the Good News and to those who have heard but have forgotten it. Let us do all we can to win souls for You, that they may go out and do the same. In Jesus' most holy name, we pray. Amen. (Linda Flechsig)**

Closing Hymn: Say or sing together one or more verses of "Spread the Reign of God the Lord" (LSB #830; LW #321) or "Spread, Oh, Spread, Thou Mighty Word" (TLH #507).

**"The Collect of the Word," TLSB, Inside Cover
***"Lead Us to Your Word," TLSB, Opposite Inside Cover

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