



The Power of Words

Leader Guide

Note to Leader: Many additional references could have been chosen to illustrate the three segments on “The Power of God’s Word, The Promise of the Word Made Flesh, The Potential of Our Words.” Because of the large number of citations listed, you may want to ask or assign readers to report to the large group with a short answer to one or more references.

Note, Too: This study may be divided into three sessions by combining the opening prayer with one of the three segments, followed by one or more of the closing paragraphs. This would allow for more thorough answers and greater depth of discussion, and perhaps a choice from “As Time Allows.”

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.

Answers will vary, but may include: My word! I’d like a word with you. I had to choose my words carefully. I keep my word. Put in a good word for me. In a word ...

This study involves a lot of words and several references. Inspired to share His Gospel and trusting the Power of God’s Word, we can develop the Potential of Our Words in order to speak the Good News of eternal life found in the Promise of The Word Made Flesh.

The Power of God’s Word

God speaks. ¹*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ...* ³*And God said, “Let there be” ... and there was ...* (Genesis 1). God’s powerful words are quoted within Scripture, as well as making up a portion of the whole of God’s Word. How do the following passages illustrate the power of God and His Word? _____

Genesis 3:14-19 God shows His power in the judgment and punishment of sin. **Tempted by the serpent, Adam and Eve have disobeyed by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God speaks to the serpent, Adam, and Eve; pronouncing judgment and punishment for disobedience — sending them into a fallen world and ending in death. He also points to a Savior in verse 15.**

¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

¹⁶ To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.”

¹⁷ And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Exodus 4:10-15 God’s power includes making mouths; teaming Aaron with Moses; teaching them what to do. **When the Lord asks Moses to bring His people out of Egypt, he is reluctant to serve as speaker because of his slow speech. God reminds him that He is the maker of mouths [and our abilities]. God enables Moses to serve with teaming — Moses speaking to Aaron and Aaron to the listeners. God promises to teach both of them what to do.**

¹⁰ But Moses said to the LORD, “Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.” ¹¹ Then the LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?” ¹² Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.” ¹³ But he said, “Oh, my Lord, please send someone else.” ¹⁴ Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses and he said, “Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. ¹⁵ You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do.”

Exodus 20:1-19 and 32:15-16 God uses His power as the author and deliverer of the Law. **God gives Moses the Ten Commandments, which He authored and engraved on the front and back of two stone tablets! God’s power, shown in thick cloud, thunder, lightning, and the sound of trumpet, makes the people fear for their lives. As he speaks with God on Mount Sinai, Moses is directed repeatedly to take God’s message to the people of Israel (example: 19:1-6), that they might become His treasured possession, a holy nation.**

²⁰ ¹ And God spoke all these words, saying, ² “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³ “You shall have no other gods before me. ⁴ “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. ⁷ “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. ⁸ “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. ¹² “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. ¹³ “You shall not murder. ¹⁴ “You shall not commit adultery. ¹⁵ “You shall not steal. ¹⁶ “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. ¹⁷ “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.” ¹⁸ Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off ¹⁹ and said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.”

³² ¹⁵ Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets that were written on both sides; on the front and on the back they were written. ¹⁶ The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.

1 Samuel 3:10, 19-4:1 Through His power, God calls Samuel as a prophet. **God calls Samuel, who responds that he is listening, and God establishes him as prophet to Israel.** ¹⁰ And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant hears.” ¹⁹ And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. ²⁰ And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the LORD. ²¹ And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD. ⁴ ¹ And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

Psalms 89:1-4 By His power, God keeps His covenant through many generations and is steadfast in His love. **God keeps his covenant through generations — in spite of human failures — and is steadfast in**

His love. The Psalmist looks toward God's greater Son, Jesus Christ, the promised descendant of David (2 Samuel 7:12-16; 23:2). ¹ I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations. ² For I said, "Steadfast love will be built up forever; in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness." ³ You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: 4 I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations."

Proverbs 6:16-19 God shows His power by hating sin and punishing it. Solomon lists seven sins God hates. Three involve directly the act of speaking and the other four may, at times, include it.

¹⁶ There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: ¹⁷ haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, ¹⁸ a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, ¹⁹ a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.

Isaiah 49:5-6 God uses His power as He commissions His people to spread His Word. In Isaiah 6:6-9a, God gives Isaiah the gift of His forgiveness in the seraphim's touch of a burning coal to his mouth. Guilt taken away and sin atoned, Isaiah receives God's commission: ⁸ *And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me."* ^{9a} *And he [God] said, "Go, and say to this people ..."* God, reflecting on Isaiah's service to Israel and his dependence on God's strength, here widens the mission call of salvation to all nations. ⁵ And now the LORD says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him; and that Israel might be gathered to him—for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD, and my God has become my strength—⁶ he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

Jeremiah 1:4-9 God's power is evident in His presence with His servants, youthful and/or slow to speak, and puts His words in their mouths. God appoints Jeremiah prophet to the nations. When the young man is hesitant, God says youth and not knowing how to speak are not limiting factors. The Lord will be with him to deliver him, and puts His words in Jeremiah's mouth. God also knows us from our formation in the womb and He will be with us, too, as we tell His story. ⁴ Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁵ "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." ⁶ Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth." ⁷ But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. ⁸ Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD." ⁹ Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth."

Matthew 4:1-11 The Word of God is more powerful than the devil. The Son of God quotes Scripture to defeat the devil and Satan leaves.

¹ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴ But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple ⁶ and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "'He will command his angels concerning you,' and "'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" ⁷ Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

Galatians 3:23-29 God's power is evident in His invitation to eternal life for all people through Baptism. We are children of God, of Abraham, and through baptism and faith, heirs of Christ. ²⁴ So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Hebrews 4:12 God's power is seen in the Word of God, which is living and active; sharp and piercing; discerning and inspired by God. *David declares in 2 Samuel 23:2, **The Spirit of the Lord speaks by me; his word is on my tongue.** The Word of the Lord will stand forever (Isaiah 40:8) and Peter assures in 1 Peter 1:21 that Scripture is inspired: ²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. ¹² For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

1 John 5:4, 6b, 11 The power of our faith from God overcomes the world and our fears. *The Spirit testifies that God has given us eternal life in His Son. If we are fearful about sharing this testimony, we can pray for help and God will provide what we need: ²⁴ Before they [my people] call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear. ⁴ For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ^{6b} And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ¹¹ And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

Revelation 5:9-13 God's power is everlasting. From the first book of Scripture to the last, God remains faithful and forgiving, even when His people sin. *Because of Christ's death and resurrection, we — and all nations — who have been redeemed by Baptism and faith in His Son, our Savior, have the promise of Heaven.*

⁹ And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, ¹⁰ and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth." ¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" ¹³ And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

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? _____

***Irony:** His words are written and inscribed in a book — 42 chapters of the Old Testament, and he is still telling God's story! **Assurance:** my Redeemer lives. ²³ "Oh that my words were written! Oh that they were inscribed in a book! ²⁴ Oh that with an iron pen and lead they were engraved in the rock forever! ²⁵ For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.*

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: ¹⁴ *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. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (1:14, 17).* To whom does Christ speak in these verses? How would you describe His use of words in each?

Matthew 3:13-17 To John the Baptist, who felt unworthy and was reluctant to baptize Jesus, and perhaps to others around who had come to be baptized. *Jesus persuades John; affirms His identity with sinners. Though He Himself was sinless, He fulfills all righteousness. The Holy Trinity is revealed.*

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¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he [John] consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

Mark 14:22-24 To the disciples in the upper room, instituting The Lord's Supper. He establishes the communion of which we partake today: the bread (His body) and the wine (His blood). ²² And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." ²³ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. ²⁴ And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.

Luke 7:44-50 To Simon (a Pharisee), those at table, and a sinful woman. Jesus is compassionate; shows mercy; is inclusive in defending and praising the sinful woman's anointing of His feet; forgives her sins; comments on her faith and salvation; sends her away in peace. ⁴⁴ Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon [and those at table], "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷ Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little." ⁴⁸ And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." ⁴⁹ Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" ⁵⁰ And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Luke 23:42-43 To the thief on the cross. This sinner recognizes Jesus' innocence and asks for mercy. Jesus speaks words of absolution and promises Paradise. ⁴² And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." ⁴³ And he said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Luke 24:44-47 To the disciples, following His resurrection. He affirms that everything about Himself in the Law, Prophets and Psalms must be fulfilled; opens their minds to understand the Scriptures; speaks of His death and resurrection; counsels that the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed to all nations.

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

John 5:24 To the disciples and the Jewish leaders. Jesus explains that coming to saving faith is the beginning of eternal life. ²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

John 10:14-18 Jesus, likely in the temple area, is with His disciples, has just healed a blind man, and responds to Pharisees near Him. Jesus describes Himself as the Good Shepherd who knows His own. He voluntarily lays down His life for His sheep; this authority and charge are from His Father.

¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."

John 14:1-3, 15-17 To the disciples, in the upper room where they were celebrating Passover. Jesus promises to return and take the faithful to be with Him in heaven and to send the Holy Spirit (Comforter/ Advocate/Counselor) to dwell within.

¹⁴ "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

¹⁵ "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

John 17:9b-20 Prayer to His Father for, and in the presence of, His disciples. He asks that they be kept from the evil one; sanctified in the truth; not of this world though sent into the world; and, that they have His joy fulfilled in themselves. (Through Baptism and the Word, He is also praying for us — those who believe through their word.)^{9b} I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.¹³ But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.¹⁴ I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.²⁰ “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word.

Acts 1:8 To the apostles just prior to the Ascension. Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to all who hear the Word of Christ and believe in Him and charges them/us to be bold witnesses in every area of their/our lives.⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

The account of Jesus’ first miracle is found in **John 2:1-11**. Note His mother Mary’s brief words.¹On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.² Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples.³ When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.”⁴ And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.”⁵ His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”⁶ Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons.⁷ Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim.⁸ And he said to them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.” So they took it.⁹ When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom¹⁰ and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.”¹¹ This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

What does Mary tell the servants and what might this indicate about her? _____ **Answers may vary. She instructs them to do what Jesus says. She has confidence, both in coming to Jesus and in her words to the servants, that He can remedy the situation.**

What is the promise in Jesus’ response? _____ **He knows His time — death for our sins and resurrection — is coming.**

How do the servants respond to Jesus? _____ **They do as He says and fill 6 stone water jars, holding 20-30 gallons each with water. Then, as He directs, they draw some out and take it to the master of the feast — who suggests the groom has saved the best wine till last.**

How do you think they react when the “water” is called “good wine”? _____ **Answers will vary, but may include: surprise; disbelief; amazement; awe; confusion; bewilderment.**

What is the purpose of the water jars and what significance might we draw from water and wine? _____ **Answers will vary, but may include both Baptism and Communion.**

What is the outcome in verse 11? _____ **Jesus manifests His glory and His disciples believe in Him.**

What encouragement may we draw for our own witness? _____ **Answers may vary, but include: Bringing Christ to others does not always require an abundance of words. Our actions, such as compassionate serving and/or inviting to a service or event, also influence.**

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 (TLSB, page 1810). Christ promises the disciples in Matthew 10:19b-20: ¹⁹ *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.* ²⁰ *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 Bible verses refers to one or more of the ways we employ words. Identify and list wise and unwise choices. _____

Proverbs 15:1 ¹ A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Luke 3:14a ^{14a} “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, ...

Romans 10:10 ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

Philippians 2:14 ¹⁴ Do everything without complaining or arguing. (NIV)

Ephesians 4:25, 29-32 ²⁵ Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

²⁹ Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Ephesians 5:18b-21 ^{18b} ... but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Colossians 4:2-6 ² Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. ³ At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— ⁴ that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. ⁵ Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. ⁶ Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

1 Peter 2:9-10 ⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

1 Peter 3:15 ¹⁵ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

Paul and Silas were inspired to share the Gospel in a Philippian jail. Read Acts 16:25-34.

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, ²⁶ and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. ²⁷ When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸ But Paul cried with a loud voice, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.” ²⁹ And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ Then he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹ And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” ³² And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³ And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. ³⁴ Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

What behaviors are taking place in verses 25-27? _____ Paul and Silas are praying and singing hymns. The prisoners are listening. An earthquake shakes the foundations of the prison, doors are opened, and bonds are unfastened.

What is unusual about the prisoners' response? _____ They remain in place; none escape.

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The Power of Words Bible Study Leader Guide

The jailer's? _____ He awakes and is about to kill himself until Paul interrupts him.
What is the outcome in verses 33-34? _____ Trembling in fear, he brings Paul and Silas out and asks what to do to be saved. They speak the word of the Lord to him and all in his house. He cares for their wounds; he and his family are baptized; they set food before them; he rejoices with his household in his belief.
What can we learn about sharing His Gospel? _____ Answers will vary, but may include: praying and singing hymns are ways of telling of God's salvation, as is doing the right thing.

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 *speaking, telling, 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 1-3.
- Choose a patriarch or prophet who used words to tell others about God. Journal the situation, the outcome and 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).

*Grace to receive the Word,” *Lutheran Service Book*

**Opposite inside cover *The Lutheran Study Bible*

Scripture references in purple are not listed in the printed study; they are for the Leader to use when needed.