



Ministry Toolkit: MOUTH

Sunday 10th November 2024

Acts 4:23-31

Without words this world would not have been formed. Without words God could not speak to you. Without speaking you would never have heard the gospel. Without speaking neither will anyone else. Your mouth, your words, everything you say matters...more than you realise.

Your ministry toolkit does not need the right script or a loud enough microphone but the right words from your mouth.

1 Now let us go to the early church to see how they overcame the first serious obstacle to the growth and future of the church. Acts 4:29-31,

Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word,³⁰ by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.”

³¹ And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

Previous to this the apostles had been told to no more speak in the Name of Jesus. So their pray may seem odd to us. Why not find some clever way of getting around this edict? Why not develop a sign language ministry? Why not invent a take on Pictionary and draw it instead?

2 Because that’s not the Way of The Maker. He spoke and everything was created. He spoke to Adam, He spoke to Abraham, He spoke to Moses, He spoke to David, He spoke to Ruth, He spoke through His prophets Isaiah, Daniel, Amos. He spoke to the crowds through His Son and through the blood of Jesus in Hebrews 12:24,

3 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than *that of* Abel.

4 And then it is followed in the next verse (25) with these words,

See that you do not refuse Him who speaks.

5

Let's look over this prayer and see what it was the church prayed for in the shadows of the threats, ringing fresh in their ears. Firstly, verse 29,

Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word

6

The prayer was not to shut down the treats or silence those who voiced those threats. They knew they would have trouble in this world – it's one of the less-liked promises of Jesus from John 16:33,

In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world

Jesus promise of trouble and tribulation is immediately followed by, don't let that bother you it's already been taken care of; I have already won that battle. And that's why they didn't pray a prayer to win a battle that's already been won. And you shouldn't either.

7

As believers, you are 'more than conquerors'. That feeling of being wearied by the battles of this life, are just feelings, that need confronting with the words of God.

8

Now the second thing to notice is they did not pray for boldness to go back and take on the authorities. **They prayed for the simplest thing in that moment that would allow their mission to continue.** That they would (continue) to speak God's word with boldness. **In other words, Lord, do not let us quit, but keep our mouths open, come what may.**

The devil loves a church that has stopped speaking. He will jump for hellish joy every time he gets a Christian to shut up speaking God's word about Jesus.

9

Now let's not overlook what is spoken in verse 30,

by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.

10

This is what follows – signs and wonders. The same pattern established in Mark 16:15,

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

11

The gospel is God's word of good news to this world. Then see what follows in verse 17-18,

And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

This is God's pattern; this is God's way – proclaim God's word, THEN see Him send the signs and wonders.

Moses was sent to go and tell Pharaoh to let my people go, then followed the signs and wonders. God did not produce the signs and wonders and then send Moses in to explain them to Pharaoh. Later, Joseph arrived after the event of Pharaoh's dreams. Why? Because Joseph had been put in prison. When you lock up God's word the world (yes, and even believers) struggle in the darkness. That's why God was so insistent with Moses and that His words would be spoken to Pharaoh.

12

John spoke in the desert of the coming Messiah. What happened next – three years of signs and wonders from the hands of the Healer. A witness has not been called to give commentary but to testify. Jesus has already called you to testify. If you choose to neglect or lock up God's word, your friends, your family, and your neighbours will continue to suffer in darkness. Even the church, the very bride of Christ, can struggle in the darkness because she has shut up proclaiming the word of God. This is just as Paul describes to Timothy in 2

13

Timothy 4:2-4,

Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

14

You see the instruction is the same – you speak with your mouth, the word of God.

³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

That time has now come, when people only want hear what pleases their ears. They would rather be in a church where they hearts remain unchallenged by

God's word and they would rather be entertained by clever words and fascinating stories.

15

So what comes out of your mouth matters. James calls us to address this directly in 3:10-11,

Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. ¹¹ Does a spring send forth fresh *water* and bitter from the same opening?

16

In closing let us remember what happened after the believers had prayed in Acts 4:31,

And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

Your mouth is of such importance in the work of the gospel anything less than this prayer and anything short of these results will not change the hearts of those around you. When you have prayed are buildings shaken, are you filled once more fully with His Holy Spirit? If these things are so then you find yourself speaking the word of God with boldness. You will leave a mark on peoples' lives that tells them these words must be acted upon.

17

So how should we go on from here?

1. Lift up your circumstances in prayer
2. Ask God to send boldness upon you
3. Read and meditate on the word day and night
4. Never give in to them asking you to shut about Jesus
5. Keep up God's order – speak first
6. Be confident in what God alone has said
7. Trust God in the outcomes