

SERIES: "LIVE LIKE YOU WERE DYING"

MESSAGE: SPEAK SWEETER

TEXT: Hebrews 3:13

DATE: APRIL 6, 2008

## Speak Sweeter **Hebrews 3:13**

### Introduction

- A. As we continue this challenging thought of living each day as if it were our last let me ask you, how did you do this week in terms of "no regrets". Were you able to ...
  - 1. Slow Down Your Pace of Life
  - 2. Rethink What You are Pursuing
  - 3. Focus on Relationships
- B. For the next four weeks we are going to finish by focusing on four specific tasks mentioned in the song.
  - 1. Speak Sweeter
  - 2. Love Deeper
  - 3. Give Forgiveness
  - 4. Embrace Eternity
- C. Let me focus your attention on the words of Hebrews 3:13

***"But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called TODAY, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness."***

- 1. It's funny how certain words mean different things based on the generation in which they are used.
  - 2. In our current society teens, especially male teens, are challenged to be "hard". Being viewed as "soft" leads to a miserable life of being picked on and abused.
  - 3. It's ironic that the writer of Hebrews warns us not to become, "hardened".
  - 4. It also tells us that we become "hardened by sins deceitfulness".
- D. One of the most amazing and powerful gifts God gives us is the gift of a "voice". A VOICE allows us, through the use of sound waves, to be able to express our deepest thoughts and emotions.
  - 1. It is interesting that in John, Jesus is called the WORD.

2. In Hebrews 1, the writer says God used to speak through the prophet, but that now He has SPOKEN through His son.
  3. Jesus became God's WORD of LIFE.
- E. Words are Powerful
1. Proverbs 16:24 – *“Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.”*
  2. Proverbs 18:21 – *“The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”*
  3. Words make such an impact.
    - a. 30 second commercials in the Super Bowl sell for millions of dollars.
    - b. The President has a press secretary to carefully choose just the right words.
    - c. Words can inspire, motivate, challenge and affirm or they can cut, wound and intimidate.
  4. Marlee Matlin – Dancing with Stars was told by Judge Bruno that she really needed to learn to tell a story with her hands. She is deaf, if there has ever been a contestant that could tell a story with her hands it is Marlee Matlin.
- F. All of us who are here today could give testimony to the power of words.
1. Most of us have been incredibly hurt at some point by the verbal lashing of words from someone important to us such as a parent or teacher or coach.
  2. Most of us have also received a verbal blessing from someone important. Which one feels better?

### **APPRECIATE People ...fill them up**

- A. It should be easy for us to appreciate people. Wouldn't it be great if we had an easy button for appreciation.
- B. When your cup is filled to over-flowing it is easier to fill others up.
1. Ps.23:5 – *You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*
  2. 2 Cor. 8:2 - *Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.*
  3. 2 Cor. 9:12 - *This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.*

C. Luke 17:12-18 – Where are the other 9? Only 10% were thankful even of Jesus.

**“Thanks” to people who SERVE you**

- Police, Fire, EMS, Doctors, Nurses, Waiters, Bus Boys

**“Thanks” to people who SHAPE you**

- Teachers (Church & School)

- Parents

## **ENCOURAGE People ... build them up**

A. Remember our passage from Hebrews 3:13 - ***“But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called TODAY, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.”***

B. There is another passage a little later in Hebrews - ***Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*** 10:25

C. One of the best ways we can “speak sweeter” is by encouraging others with what we say. That word “encourage” is given as a command 59 times in the Bible.

D. Do you remember the old story about the husband who comes in and finds his wife sitting at the kitchen table crying? He asks her what in the world is wrong and she reluctantly tells him she is crying because he never tells her he loves her. To which he callously responds, *“I told you twenty years ago when I married you and if I ever change my mind I’ll let you know.”*

E. We live in a world where people are beat up and put down.

1. We all remember the childhood saying, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.”

2. If you believe that then no one has ever called you, *“fat, or stupid, or ugly, or slow, or useless.”*

3. Years ago on the sitcom Cheers, Norm was asked how his doing was going. He responded, “It’s a dog-eat-dog world and I’m wearing ‘Milk-Bone’ boxers.”

F. Do you remember the words to the song “Home Home on the Range.”

1. *Home, Home on the Range. Where the deer and the antelope play. Where seldom is heard a discouraging word and the skies are not cloudy all day.*
2. It is safe to say we don't live on the range any more. Our days seem to be filled with one discouraging word after another.
3. Ron Davidson's 6<sup>th</sup> Music Teacher –
  - a. Ron has a tenor voice but tried to sing deep bass voice at choir auditions and was told he would never be a singer.
  - b. Ron has been a professional musician for 40 years and trained hundreds of the best musicians around.
4. Dave Hamlin's Mission Teacher –
  - a. Dave missed a final because he was at the hospital all night with a teen age girl in a severe car wreck and was told he would never make it in ministry because he cared more about people than he did study.
  - b. Dave has been in ministry for 24 years since being told he would never be successful.

G. My grandfather used to fill his pockets with candy every Sunday before he would go to church. He taught an elementary boys Sunday School class at Southland until he was eighty, the kids all knew him as the candy man.

1. He was like a live "Pez-Candy" dispenser.
2. Let me suggest that this week you make a conscious choice to be a "Blessing Dispencer".
3. Write down a name right now and send at least one note of encouragement this week.
4. Some of you need to say thank you today before you leave this building to someone who has been a huge encouragement in your life.

## **PRAY for People ... lift them up**

A. We "speak sweeter" when we ...

1. Encourage them by building them up
2. Appreciate them by filling them up
3. Pray for them by lifting them up

Heb. 4:16 *Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

Ephesians 6: 18 *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*

- B. Let me give you some suggestions on “lifting others up” in prayer.
1. Pray with an open mind to God.
    - a. Far too many times we feel that we have the appropriate answer for our prayers already we worked out and our prayer is simply asking God to bless that or send that answer.
    - b. But when Jesus taught his disciples how to pray, he taught them to pray ... “Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, **thy will be done**, on earth as it is in heaven.”
      - i. God’s will is always done in heaven.
      - ii. We need to pray that it will happen here.
  2. Pray immediately.
    - a. Be honest have you ever told someone you would pray for them and then forgotten too.
    - b. I love to listen to my wife pray. She prays in such a way that makes me feel that heaven opens up and God is sitting in front of me nodding his head.
      - i. She prays simply.
      - ii. She prays confidently.
      - iii. She prays immediately.
- C. I know that the “sweetest words” ever uttered are prayers to the Father for others.
- a. Write down the name of someone you want to pray for this week.
  - b. I don’t want to give you the chance to forget, so as Jill plays quietly let’s pray for that person right now!

### **Bottom Line:**

“The tongue has the power of life and death ...” Prov.18:21

**Prayer: “God help me to give life this week!”**

