

August 29, 2010
"Pray for My Mouth"
Ephesians 6:19-24

I. Every mouth NEEDS PRAYER –

1. Our mouths are not naturally lovely –

"Their throat *is* an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps *is* under their lips";¹⁴ "Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness." (Romans 3:13-14 NKJ)

- A. "an open tomb" filled with death / they stink of corruption
- B. "practiced deceit" – deception, lies
- C. "poison of asps" deadly poisonous snakes
- D. "full of cursing and bitterness" FULL!

2. Even Christian mouths can be monstrous –

I have preached a sermon on James 3 called "King Kong VS The TONGUE" The TONGUE WON!

Our tongues are dreadful monsters:

- A. The tongue's destructive power is greatly underrated – James 3:3-5
- B. It's destructive powers are extremely uncontrollable and it's destruction highly irreversible –

Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!⁶ And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature;... (James 3:5-6 NKJ)

- C. It's pedigree is from the pit of Hell –
"and it is set on fire by hell. (James 3:6 NKJ)
- D. It is most untamable – James 3:7-8
- E. Highly unpredictable – James 3:9-10
- F. It is dreadfully unnatural – James 3:11-12

O for a thousand tongues? How about praying for strength to handle ONE TONGUE!

II. Preachers (including Paul) especially need prayer for their mouths –

and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. (Ephesians 6:19-20 NKJ)

1. Paul needed prayer for his mouth because he was NOT naturally eloquent –

I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.⁴ And my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,⁵ that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. (1 Corinthians 2:3-5 NKJ)

His power was spiritual

A. Paul was not alone in not being eloquent –

Then Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I *am* slow of speech and slow of tongue."¹¹ So the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? *Have not I, the LORD?* (Exodus 4:10-11 NKJ)

B. Jeremiah was similar –

Then said I: "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I cannot speak, for I *am* a youth."⁷ But the LORD said to me: "Do not say, 'I *am* a youth,' For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak. (Jeremiah 1:6-7 NKJ)

Many fear speaking more than they fear death!

According to *The Book of Lists*, the fear of public speaking ranks number one in the minds of the majority of people.

I imagine this was the case even for Paul, if he spoke with fear to the Corinthians, how much more might he be afraid in prison?

2. Paul asked for / needed prayer for his mouth because he knew

the dreadful importance of his message –

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!" ¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" ¹⁷ So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:14-17 NKJ)

having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, (1 Peter 1:23 NKJ)

3. Preachers / Teachers need prayer for their mouths as we will be especially judged in regard to what we say. Especially in our preaching / teaching capacity –

My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. ² For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he *is* a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. (James 3:1-2 NKJ)

III. Note the great priority Paul gives to preaching the gospel in his prayers and prayer requests –

1. He prays for utterance, he asks his friends to pray he has a bold mouth, he does not pray for freedom from prison –

A. This prayer would not have been wrong: Peter had been freed from prison through Christian prayers –

Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. ⁶ And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison. ⁷ Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by *him*, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains fell off *his* hands. ⁸ Then the angel said to him, "Gird yourself and tie on your sandals"; and so he did. And he said to him, "Put on your garment and follow me." (Acts 12:5-8 NKJ)

B. Paul himself had been miraculously freed –

But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ 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 chains were loosed. ²⁷ And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. ²⁸ But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." ²⁹ Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹ So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." ³² Then 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* stripes. And immediately he and all his *family* were baptized. ³⁴ Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household. (Acts 16:25-34 NKJ)

Yet, this was not a priority in his mind or heart

Note in the conclusion of this letter Paul sends his greeting and personal information through Tychicus "a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord"

Paul's personal situation was important enough he sent someone to communicate this to his friends ---

He concludes like this –

Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen. (Ephesians 6:23-24 NKJ)

Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible. (Ephesians 6:23-24 ESV)