Dear Open Door Family,

I will never forget the phone call. It was over 30 years ago now. I was a young pastor facing some difficult problems and trying desperately to say and do the right thing. But the minute I said it I knew I had blown it. No, I did not swear or curse. I did not say something untrue. What I did was say something true in a very ungracious way. I said something that came out of my own desire to protect some one else but it caused serious consequences. That event made me realize the truth of the statement *"Words Mean Things"*. The things we say have power and the way we say them has impact. Even when we speak the Truth we can do it in ways that wound and are harmful. Sometimes it is the Truth itself that wounds and godly friends may say hard things to us seeking our good and growth in godliness (Prov. 27:6). But many times it is the way that we speak the Truth that harms others. One of the best reminders of this difficult balance comes from the apostle John who tells us that Jesus came from the Father full of GRACE and TRUTH. Remember that *Words Mean Things* as we look at these verses.

Matthew 12:35-36 *(NIV) The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. [36] But I tell you that men will have to* ***give account*** *on the Day of Judgment for EVERY CARELESS WORD they have SPOKEN.*

Psalm 19:14 *(NIV) May the WORDS of my MOUTH and the MEDITATION of my HEART be* ***pleasing in your sight,*** *O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.*

Where do our words come from? They come from our hearts and our thoughts. We speak from the depths of what we have stored up inside. These verses in Matthew remind us that ALL the things that we say are things for which we must answer some day to God. I love the challenge in the Holman N. T. Commentary: "*Words are so easy to produce that we can forget how powerful they are. They have great potential for building up as well as tearing down. They can be used to advance God's kingdom, or to attack it... Words must be used with care. Careless words are like loaded guns that are handled recklessly."* That is why it is important for us to remember *Words Mean Things - Words Have Impact*. How we say something is critically important. We must not use the excuse that because something is True we can say it carelessly without any thought to how those words may be received. For someday we will ANSWER to God for every word carelessly or recklessly spoken. That is why David's prayer in Psalm 19 is a great way to start each day. May my Words and Heart be focused on You, O Lord God.

PRAYER: Lord, please help me today to accept the responsibility of speaking Words in ways that honor You. May I learn to speak the TRUTH, but in ways that demonstrate Your Grace. Lord, may my heart and mind be fixed on You and may the Words I speak reflect You to others.

Pastor Mark Kieft

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