Dear Open Door Family,

In spite of some late snow attempts at ruining our flowers - we now have greenery coming up all around. It is almost unstoppable. I already have dandelions, which means I need to weed or spray or do something before they send out seeds. We are also enjoying the flowers we planted last fall. There is a huge difference between flowers and weeds. It reminds me of these words Jesus spoke in Matthew.

Matthew 12:33-36 (NLT) <u>A tree is identified by its fruit</u>. If a tree is good, its fruit will be good. If a tree is bad, its fruit will be bad. [34] You brood of snakes! How could evil men like you speak what is good and right? For <u>whatever is in your heart determines what you say</u>. [35] A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. [36] And I tell you this, you must <u>give an account</u> on judgment day <u>for every idle word you speak</u>.

The religious leaders had accused Jesus of getting His power to cast out demons from Satan. In response to that Jesus said these words. A tree is RECOGNIZED by the fruit it produces. In other words the fruit in our lives shows what is actually going on inside of us spiritually. Jesus went on to say that the WORDS that they said came out of their hearts. He went on to warn them that they would give an account of every *idle, careless, or barren* word. I found the following Note very challenging: "Words are important. They come out of the heart. ...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, sometimes subtly, in ways even the speaker does not realize. Words must be used with care. Careless words are like loaded guns that are handled recklessly." Holman NT Commentary

**PRAYER:** O Lord, help me to think carefully as I speak. May the Words that come out of my mouth be a true reflection of my walk with You. May the Fruit in my life show that I am firmly planted in Your WORD.

Pastor Mark Kieft