

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Make my Mouth a Fountain of Life

(Jerry Fite)

Solomon affirms, “*The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life...*” (*Proverbs 10:11*). What a statement! God, the giver of all life, says that a human’s mouth is a source of life. But it is not just any human; it is the mouth of the righteous person that is the fountain of life.

We know God’s plan for being righteous before Him today is faith in Christ through the Gospel (*Romans 1:17, Philippians 3:9*); but in the context of Proverbs, we have insight into the essence of righteousness that becomes a fountain of life.

The “*fear of the Lord*” is an essential element. We read, “*the fear of Jehovah is a fountain of life, that one may depart from the snares of death*” (*Proverbs 14:27*). Secondly, “*The law of the wise is a fountain of life, that one may depart from the snares of death*” (*Proverbs 13:14*). How does the fear or reverence for God relate to true wisdom? “*The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding*” (*Proverbs 9:10*).

So, who is the righteous that can be a fountain of life through the mouth? It is the person who first fears the Lord by submitting to God’s Wisdom. Such a person, with true wisdom fixed firmly in the heart, becomes a fountain of life for others by verbally communicating God’s wisdom to others.

Proverbs also gives us specific help in understanding this Life that can flow from our mouth. “*The lips of the righteous feed many...*” (*Proverbs 10:21*). Life cannot exist without sustaining food. Our lips, offering God’s truth, can give spiritual food for life. The “*...tongue of the wise is health*” (*Proverbs 12:18*). Health is essential for life, and our tongue can be instrumental in restoring personal well-being. The connection with the tongue and life comes also in delivering others: “*The words of wicked are of lying in wait for blood; but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them*” (*Proverbs 12:6*). Feeding others, restoring health to others, and delivering others are all connected with life, and the righteous can provide such with their mouths.

However, be aware of what is contrasted with this life-giving tongue. The words of the wicked kill. People slander others with lies and false accusations in order to destroy them. Jezebel used lies to accomplish Naboth’s literal death (*1 Kings 21:13*). “*Base fellows*” or unprincipled men spoke those lies, with no upright person speaking the truth to deliver Naboth. Short of literal death, how many reputations have been ruined by false accusations through slanderous gossip?

While the tongue of the wise is health, notice what is contrasted with it: “*There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of the sword, but the*

tongue of the wise brings healing” (*Proverbs 12:18*). How often have parents pierced the hearts of children by reacting to situations with rash words? We react with frustration, not thinking the words lashing out of our mouths are cutting deeply into tender hearts of our “literal thinking” young.

As we begin a new year, focus on your mouth being a fountain of life. God reminds us that the mouth speaks out of “*abundance*” that fills “*the heart*” (*Matthew 12:34*). The good and evil both speak from such abundance. “*The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things; and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things*” (*Matthew 12:35*).

Good things will come out my mouth when I fill my heart with God’s teaching. Fearing God with reverence in my heart, while possessing His wisdom, I will be “slow to speak”, knowing that “the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God” (*James 1:19-20*). Filling my heart with the needs of others, instead of thinking selfishly of myself (*cf. Philippians 2:3-4*), my words will probably feed, heal, and deliver others. What a blessing you will be this year to your family, the church and the world if your mouth becomes a fountain of life.