

The Most Important Words

Psalm 5

Give ear to my words, O Lord;
consider my groaning.
Give attention to the sound of my cry,
my King and my God,
for to you do I pray.
O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice;
in the morning I prepare
a sacrifice for you and watch.

For you are not a God who delights in wickedness;
evil may not dwell with you.
The boastful shall not stand before your eyes;
you hate all evildoers.
You destroy those who speak lies;
the Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love,
will enter your house.
I will bow down toward your holy temple
in the fear of you.

**Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness
because of my enemies;
make your way straight before me.**

For there is no truth in their mouth;
their inmost self is destruction;
their throat is an open grave;
they flatter with their tongue.
Make them bear their guilt, O God;
let them fall by their own counsels;
because of the abundance of their transgressions

cast them out,
for they have rebelled against you.

But let all who take refuge in you rejoice;
let them ever sing for joy,
and spread your protection over them,
that those who love your name may exult in you.
For you bless the righteous, O Lord;
you cover him with favor as with a shield.

This psalm talks a lot about words and speaking. Good words, bad words. Words of groaning and crying out. Boastful words, flattery, and lies. Throats that are an open grave (what an image!), and those that sing for joy. Have you ever thought about how many words you speak every day? Many people are counting how many steps they take these days - what if there was a *Fitbit* for your mouth?

But unlike walking, more important than *how much* you say is *what* you say. This psalm speaks very strongly against those who are boastful, speak evil, and lie. And David knows how easy it is to become like our enemies. When spoken to harshly to respond harshly. When hurt to hurt back. Have you ever done that? I have. Often before I even know it! How easily the words just erupt out of my mouth before my brain even engages. And I see the hurt I have caused, and wish I could take those words back. But I can't. You too?

So David asks for help. Help to speak as he should. *Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness because of my enemies* (so I don't become like them!); *make your way straight before me* (so that I go that way).

So what should we speak? What are the most important words we could say?

Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Read this story (Luke 18:9-14) for an example of that.

That's what David is doing in this psalm. He speaks of *entering the house of the Lord* and *bowing down in fear of the Lord*. These are words of humbling, of asking forgiveness, of asking for help. When we do that we are speaking the truth. Both the truth about ourselves, that we are sinners and have sinned (in this psalm, especially with our words), and the truth about God, **that He is the forgiver of sinners**. When we speak those words we are *taking refuge in God* and His promises to us in Jesus. And with such words and faith, God is well pleased.

How do those words help?

Well, when you want to erupt with hurtful words or respond to harsh words with harsh words, say instead: *Lord, have mercy on ME, a sinner*. That puts us in the right place, under our Lord's care, instead of lording our rightness or power or revenge over others. And receiving forgiveness ourselves then enables us to not lash back but to forgive them.

This is to take refuge in the Lord and will give us joy and peace. The joy we might get with vengeful or hurtful words won't last and won't give us peace - we'll be waiting for what words will be coming back our way. Joy and peace that last come from the Lord. He will repay the wicked, we don't need to. He will *cover us with His favor as with a shield*; we are secure in Him.

Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

If you had a *Fitbit* for your mouth, it would then read: **Goal attained!**

Lord, help me to speak only words that are true, words that help, words that forgive. Help me to take refuge in You and not in what I can do, and give me that joy and peace that only You can give. Amen.