

Pure Language Restored

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If you were here for my first sermon on the second day of the Feast of Tabernacles, you may remember that your feelings and your thoughts are energy. The energy of feelings and thoughts can be changed. If feelings or thoughts are negative energy, it can be changed to positive energy. And this energy translates or manifests itself into language and words.

Does language really matter? Television executives claim they are just "reflecting society," but they are shaping it as well, helping to mainstream the course, with confrontational attitudes embedded in gutter talk. Advertising does it, too.

Today, we see foul words coming from a foul culture. The fact that large corporations now feel free to try to cash in on the declining level of civility makes it more obvious. Increasingly, corporations are willing to get attention through aggressive, assaulting advertising. I used to work for Cover Girl products, years ago, and I was horrified to see that Ellen DeGeneres is now the spokesperson for Cover Girl products. A cover girl image was supposed to be the girl next door, and she is certainly not the girl next door that I remember.

If everyone paid attention to all of those narcissistic rule-breaking messages, the result would be total chaos. Ironically, these advertisements urge people to be exactly the type of people no one would want as an employee, boss, friend, brother, husband, or wife.

As part of society, companies do not really want a rule-breaking society, but they are so obsessed with making money that they are willing to push anarchistic propaganda. Whether it is individuals influencing society, or society influencing individuals, it is sometimes hard to decipher.

But the result is still the same. Today, we live in a culture that celebrates impulse over restraint, notoriety over achievement, law breaking over law keeping, and inflammatory expression over gentle civility.

Any society increasingly drawn to anti-social ideas would inevitably be torn by contradictions. We are a nation that weeps over our obvious social collapse, but that keeps celebrating the people who produce it. It seems like the worse you are as a person the more news time you get, and the more notoriety.

Where is this culture headed? It seems it is becoming increasingly foolish, idiotic and vicious. King Solomon minces no words when he exposes foolishness.

Proverbs 26:6-12 He who sends a message by the hand of a fool cuts off his own feet and drinks violence. Like the legs of the lame that hang limp is a proverb in the mouth of fools. Like one who binds a stone in a sling is he who gives honor to a fool. Like a thorn that goes into the hand of a drunkard is a proverb in the mouth of fools. The great God who formed everything gives the fool his hire and the transgressor his wages. As a dog returns to his own vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.

There you have a description and a summary of our society today.

You are very familiar with what the foolish leaders and academics of this present evil society are doing to the English language, I mentioned some of those in my first sermon:

Homosexual marriage is same-sex marriage.

Abortion became choice, a verbal maneuver that avoids describing a killing procedure by making it appear to be a simple matter of preference, instead of the murder that it truly is.

Euthanasia and assisted suicide are referred to as death with dignity.

Feelings precipitate thoughts, and thoughts precipitate words! In these politically correct words we see the true nature of their hearts and minds.

I mentioned in my first sermon about a book written by Karol K. Truman titled, *Feelings Buried Alive Never Die*, in which she writes about how our feelings and thoughts have "energy vibrations," which can be positive or negative.

And as I mentioned, although I do not agree with all of her conclusions, she presents some very interesting and helpful scientific findings, which illustrate that feelings, thoughts, and words can be self-fulfilling prophecies; or, in other words, the words that we use, use us!

It is important for us to be mindful of our feelings and thoughts, but we would also be wise to be conscious and aware of the words that we speak, because words have vibrational energy along with everything else, and we see that words have power. We see that evil words have power in influencing our society.

Words are spoken thoughts that are generated by our feelings. And the words we use, as well as the thoughts we think, register in our cells—in our DNA. There is a record kept of those thoughts.

For example, if a person is always saying, "I am sick and tired of. . ." he should not be surprised if he is tired a lot, or becomes sick. Also, we should be careful what we claim. If we are always calling the health condition our body is registering, "mine," then we are faithfully claiming it.

For example, by saying "my cancer," "my diabetes," "my bad eyes," "my sore throat," "my allergies," and so on, we actually lay claim to the manifestation of that which we are calling ours. It is amazing the effect that it has on the body, and this is documented scientifically. Instead, it is better to refer to the health condition we are experiencing as, "the cancer," "the problem with these eyes." Or, simply say, "This person is experiencing a sore throat." I have been trying to do this for several months, and it is tremendously hard not to lay claim to everything from tiredness to nervousness, or whatever.

We use words regularly during the day that do not express what we mean to say. We mindlessly use words out of mere habit. So, we should decide to be more alert and vigilant in our speech and to say what we mean and mean what we say. This exercise will reveal how we talk as we really listen to ourselves. The goal is to be more succinct with the words that we use in our communication. I know that we all use words out of habit, and maybe even from our childhood, that we do not even know the meaning of anymore.

It really is quite interesting to notice the words people use in everyday life. "It nearly killed me," or "That just kills me." We certainly do not want to be killed by whatever we are referring to. "Please don't let it kill you." This is how silly our language has become. You have heard the expression, "I'm dying to see you." Should we be sure to reply, "Please don't die"? If we say this in reply to someone we may very well startle him, and he may ask himself, "Did I really say that, or did I really mean that?" So many things that we say seem to come from habit and our own unconsciousness.

We do not intend to say something we do not mean, such as, "It nearly killed me!" It is

just a figure of speech. When a person realizes he has said something like that usually he will smile, correct himself, and finish what he was communicating, and being a little more aware in his choice of words. I am sure many of you have experienced something similar. Actually, it is quite embarrassing to have someone bring to our attention our mindless words so we can be more aware of our own inner and outer communication.

At first, when we become mindful of the words that we speak, it helps to have someone point out our slips of the tongue—our incongruencies so to speak.

Have you ever noticed how people use so many negative words to express positive feelings in communicating? For example, when a person really wants something, they will habitually say, "I want it so badly, I can almost taste it!" Well, that is getting pretty close to sinning.

This could cause you to wonder if the negative cancels out the positive of the statement. Instead of using the word 'badly,' maybe a more concise way to say it is, "I want it so much."

Especially, as Christians, we should develop the habit of listening to what we say. And whenever you say, "I am this or that, or the other thing," be careful, aware, and mindful, because "I am" is extremely powerful in meaning. Be certain what you choose to manifest, or come into your life, be exactly what you desire when you say, "I am such and such."

Remember that when God answered Moses' question "What is [Your] name?" God reveals His name to be "Yahweh" (corresponding to the four Hebrew consonants YHWH).

Exodus 3:12-14 So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

The three occurrences of "I AM," in verse 14, all represent forms of the Hebrew verb that means, "to be," and in each case it is related to the divine name Yahweh, "the Lord"

in our English translations. The divine name Yahweh represents a range of meanings. Let me give you just four examples. It means that God is self-existent and therefore not dependent on anything else for His own existence; it means that God is the creator and sustainer of all that exists; it means that God is immutable in His being and character, and thus is not in the process of becoming something different from what He is (e.g., "the same yesterday and today and forever," Hebrews 13:8); and it means that God is eternal in His existence.

While each of these points is true of God, the main focus in this passage is on the Lord's promise to be with Moses and His people. The word translated "I AM" can also be understood and translated as, "I will be."

Given the context of verse 12, "I will certainly be with you," the name of Yahweh, "the Lord" is also a clear reminder of God's promises to His people and of His help for them to fulfill their calling. In each of these cases, the personal name of God, as revealed to Moses, expresses something essential about the attributes and character of God.

So, when the Lord referred to Himself as "I AM," He referred to His whole being and existence—the essential qualities, attributes and character of what He is. We are told to be like Him. Whenever you say, "I am this, that, or the other thing," be careful, aware and mindful because "I AM" is tremendously powerful in meaning.

If you could not comprehend what someone was discussing or talking about, instead of saying, "I am so stupid!" whether to yourself or aloud, say instead, "It's not like me to miss details like that," or, "I am usually smarter than that." We should try to change our negative speech to a positive approach. There are times when we need to use negative speech, but I am talking about in general conversation.

If we repeatedly say, "I don't understand, I don't understand," eventually we will become very confused when someone explains something to us. It becomes more and more difficult for us to understand new information.

You have heard of 'the power of suggestion.' We usually think of it in terms of one person trying to convince someone to do or to buy something, but we let our guard down when we are subliminally convincing ourselves of negative characteristics.

It is a rude awakening when a person realizes what he has been programming himself to do. Over time, saying, "I don't understand" registers inside us so strongly that our minds respond to what we keep telling ourselves! It is interesting how this principle affects us all. It affects our children too, and they grow up in a more negative family

mentality.

Scientists have found that every word has a vibratory energy; therefore it has power that has the potential to alter us. And depending on the positivity or the negativity of the word or words that leaves our mouth will have an effect for truth or for error, for good or for bad, for light or for darkness.

Which side do we want to represent on a daily and hourly basis?

In a real sense, when we use words to express ourselves that do not convey the message of our true intent, we are lying. We are being untruthful, false, and deceitful as lying is defined in the dictionary and in Scripture.

Our mind's intelligence knows when truth is not honored and spoken. Conflict and imbalance occurs in the electrical system of our body when we use words to express ourselves that do not actually mean what we are saying and truly feeling. There is a disruption in our minds and our thoughts. We literally short-circuit the electrical energy in our body and its messages become garbled and confused and unsettled. Again, this is documented scientifically; there is nothing mystical or far eastern about it.

How do we as human beings face the challenge of expressing our true feelings verbally and non-verbally? According to the book, *The Day America Told the Truth*, by James Patterson and Peter Kim, 91 percent—nine out of ten—of Americans lie regularly.

Where do we, as individuals, fall statistically? Are we one of the 91% or the 9%? Each person must answer this question for himself. But, how truthful are we going to be when we do answer?

A further breakdown of the authors' statistics indicates that, 86% of the people lie to their parents; 75% of the people lie to their friends; 73% of the people lie to their siblings; 69% of the people lie to their lovers; 61% of the people lie to their boss; and 59% of the people lie to their children.

So, how serious is this? One scripture says it all:

Revelation 21:8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

These statistics indicate a very serious deterioration of the moral fiber of America. What happened to integrity? Has it become a word without meaning? You can see how important it is to become more vigilant where our true feelings, thoughts, and words are concerned. In this same vein, the offensive and shocking words used in movies and on the airwaves today should cause us not only great concern, but to be horrified and actually to cringe when we hear those things.

Thoughts create thought fields that can be very powerful, for the good or for bad. And, before we say a word, we have a thought, fleeting though it may be. The thought may be a desire leading to temptation.

James 1:14-18 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

Satan is called the great deceiver, and he has deceived himself. That is an interesting way to think about it, so when we lie we started by deceiving ourselves.

When thoughts are expressed in words, the thought becomes even more powerful because the thought has also been released as an audible vibration, which then creates a compound effect on our thoughts.

When this energy has been released out there in the ethers of the air, does it have an effect on humankind? Absolutely! How important then, is the quality of our words?

People used to express themselves adequately without resorting to sordid and foul language. Oh, how we long for life under the government of God where there will be purer thoughts and purer words during that reign. The manifestation of thoughts into words drives the culture of society; evil thoughts become evil words to produce an evil culture.

The following biblical references remind us of how important it is to be mindful of each word we speak:

Proverbs 12:17-19, 22 He who speaks truth declares righteousness, but a false witness, deceit. There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise promotes health. The truthful lip shall be established forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment. Lying lips are an

abomination to the Lord, but those who deal truthfully are His delight.

Words are important, and they do have power.

Proverbs 13:2-3 A man shall eat well by the fruit of his mouth, but the soul of the unfaithful feeds on violence. He who guards his mouth preserves his life, but he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction.

We can get from that the more words we speak the more opportunity or the more likelihood we are going to say something that is either foolish, silly, worthless, or useless.

Proverbs 18:7-8, 21 A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul. The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body. . . . Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

We see there a small sampling of how important it is for our words to be based on truth.

Sadly though, most people are driven by their feelings. Feelings precipitate thoughts. Thoughts precipitate words; but 'truth' rather than feelings must precipitate thoughts and words. The result: righteous thoughts become righteous words to produce a righteous culture, "He who speaks truth declares righteousness.'

If we understood, if we were fully and genuinely aware of the far reaching consequences of the words that we use, and that they have on and in our lives, as well as the lives of those we come in contact with, we would certainly, beyond question, want to change any negative or evil thoughts and words to positive ones.

At this point, I am going to change direction slightly and give some practical application principles regarding thoughts, words and pure language.

Proverbs 15:1-2 A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.

The word 'please' is a word that helps us show respect. It is such a simple word, and we begin teaching it to our children at an early age. But, it is amazing in this society how little it is used. It sets our minds in a more constructive attitude, and helps us to deal with others in a more positive and beneficial way.

We have to be careful not to damage others, especially children, with harsh comments that brand them with a characteristic (like carelessness) that may not be true. All children are careless, but if we are constantly telling them day after day how careless they are they will begin to take that on as a characteristic. Comments to children such as: "You're a problem child," which I heard someone say once to their child, and it stuck in that child's mind for the rest of his life. Or, "How could you be so stupid?" or, "You're worthless," can be devastating to a child. It may be that the parent has not trained the child sufficiently, and they are the ones in error.

It would be so much more effective and helpful to gently and courteously say, "Please go and get the broom and dust pan and clean up the mess; and please be more careful the next time." The next time however may take firmer measures, but never mean, harsh, and cruel words.

I am a firm believer in spanking, it is absolutely necessary, and it has been proven that by anybody who is honest. This society is not honest and so they do not believe in spanking, they have their other ways. I am not saying that we should not correct our children, I am just saying that we should do it in love, whether it be words or some other way.

In this way, the child is not branded as totally inept, instead we express faith in their ability to solve the problem and be more careful. God wants problem-solvers in His Kingdom, and Christian parents are teaching their children, or should be, to use wisdom, not to abuse subordinates.

A very common mistake in communicating frustration is the use of words like 'always' and 'never.' We hear such words overused almost everywhere. "You always do that!" or "You never help me!"

The danger with such statements is in creating a false or exaggerated reality. The person we are accusing probably at times does do what we want, but we tend to expect too much from people. Comments like, "You never. . ." starts to program a false reality in the accuser's mind. This, in turn, discourages the accused person from doing anything if the accuser so carelessly forgets the beneficial things he or she has done. Then that can be damaging throughout his whole life.

A soft answer turns away wrath. How about: "Would you help me, please?" Or, "I sure would appreciate it if you would help me." Or, "Would you mind helping me, please?" I know that this sounds extremely basic, not just the milk of the word, but maybe it is the formula of the word. But we do forget about these things so often, and really it is a matter of common courtesy in a lot of cases.

We are more likely to spew out a few offhanded or harsh words when we are tired or emotionally upset. That does happen sometimes at the Feast, even though we are greatly blessed here, we can get run down, tired, and sick, and sometimes the harsh words come out. Maybe your wife asks, "I need your help." Instead of a harsh "Not now!" the gentle comment might be: "Would you mind giving me a few minutes to finish this first?" or, "Is it alright with you if we do that a little later?" Or, "please wait a few minutes." These are all positive statements, not with a negative, nasty turn to it.

It is important to explain your present feelings without putting someone down in the process. And, this is a good way to leave the door open for positive help later. Rather than responding to someone's mistake with a demeaning put-down, we can show disapproval, but still be respectful. We must be respectful to one another, and treat one another the way that we want to be treated.

There is no excuse for losing control and speaking to a spiritual brother or sister that way. It makes the screeching adult sound like a child without self-control throwing a temper-tantrum. We should ask ourselves if there would ever be a time when we would like demeaning words spoken to us in such a way.

It takes a great deal of time to heal old wounds. Once the damage is done, sometimes it can never be healed in this lifetime. Those offenses are quite often carried all the way to a person's death. People we have offended want to be sure that we have really changed before they are willing to trust us again. If others respond with cutting words, resist the urge to reply angrily. Show concern for the feelings of others. In time, others will show more courtesy, respect, and care for you.

The key to saying helpful rather than harmful words to others is to always show respect. As always, we can rely on the example of Jesus Christ as our pattern.

I Peter 2:21-23 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;

If anyone had the right to respond harshly to His attackers, it certainly was Jesus Christ! But although He had the right, He had the love, self-control, and respect for human life not to answer that way.

Proverbs 12:25 Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, but a good word makes it glad.

By having a positive approach to life, and treating each other in a positive way, and making positive statements to them, we can actually lift someone out of depression. We know, by observing the world, that depression can even lead to the extreme of suicide. We never know when our encouragement, and our good words, are going to actually have an impact that will, in a sense, save a person's life, maybe not to the point of suicide but at least encourage them for that day and maybe for that week. We know that it is easy to get depressed in the world that we live in.

There are many powerful warnings in Scripture about the consequences of our words. James writes strongly about the uncontrolled tongue. He establishes the general principle that small things can cause great results; then more specifically he applies this to the power of the tongue to destroy.

James 3:1-4:12 covers the topic of the sin of dissension in the community. This section has an AB pattern. The 'A' in this pattern that we will see in here is 'danger of the tongue,' while 'B' is the solution, which is "wisdom from above." That last danger of the tongue is covered in James 4:1-10.

James 3:1-10 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. 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. Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! 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; and it is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the

tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

It is absolutely impossible for a human, with human reasoning, to conquer the tongue. The power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ in us, is the only way to tame it. But, we have to make the effort, and God will give us the power.

This saying in verse 10 is something like that of Proverbs 18:21, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue. . . ."

At this point, I am going to change direction again, and talk about one language, one speech, and the restoration of a pure language.

How important is the proper use of language? A pure language will be spoken beginning with the second coming of Christ, when He sets up the Kingdom of God on earth.

Looking ahead to the Millennium, God says He will re-establish a pure language that exists already—it is the language God already speaks, it is the life God already lives, it is the culture God's Kingdom already has, and has had for eternity.

Zephaniah 3:9 "For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the LOORD, to serve Him with one accord."

This pure language is a language God Himself will restore and will be taught in the Millennium, and its rules and principles upheld. As co-rulers with Christ part of our job will be to teach and uphold this pure language. Remember this pure language can also be translated loosely a 'pure culture.'

The word "pure" comes from the Hebrew word "barar" which indicates clarification or brightness. It can mean polished, or purged as well. Thus we have a pure, clearly concise, sparkling language with vain and idol thoughts and words purged from it. So it does not just deal with speech, but it also involves thoughts.

The people of the earth will together call on the name of the Eternal and worship Him. The word "then," in verse 9, refers to the time after the judgment mentioned in the previous verses in Zephaniah.

Before the scattering of the people at the Tower of Babel, the world was unified by one language; but it was a world of rebellious people. Although it was one language, it was not one godly culture, their thoughts were not righteous.

Genesis 11:1-9 Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

God divided the tongues at Babel because as they continued to understand one another, and increase in secular knowledge with one another, eventually they would have reached a destructive unity. This is what we are looking at very soon in our world today. You can translate any language very quickly today, so people can communicate easily. So in this sense this world does have one language, or the ability to communicate in one language.

At Babel there were seventy languages; today there are almost seven thousand. The definition of a single language is to some extent arbitrary, because one of those languages two people in the entire world speak. But in the world to come, all will agree with one mind to call upon God's name.

The language that had become impure through the use of idol worship and taking the name of the Lord God in vain will become purified. That is a major part of what makes this world's language impure. The key is that they are involved in idol worship, and they take the name of the LOORD God in vain.

The foundation of pure language is found in God's third commandment.

Exodus 20:7 "You shall not take the name of the LOORD your God in vain, for the LOORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."

If we claim to be Christians but we are not living as Christians, we are taking God's name in vain. If a person breaks this commandment, he has committed a very serious and great sin against God. If not genuinely repented of, it is "a sin unto death."

This command not only prohibits direct misuse of God's name, but also the indirect misuse through euphemisms, and other terms of vulgarity and disrespect that dishonor both God and man, such as racial slurs and obscenities.

The apostle Paul expressed the proper motivation that should be behind what we say. We should say things that benefit others.

Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

That not only applies to other adults, but to our children.

Barnes Notes comments on this verse in this way:

The Greek word '*sapros*' rendered "corrupt" means bad, decayed, rotten, and is applied to putrid vegetable or animal substances. Then it is applied to a tree that is of a useless character, which produces no good fruit. Then it is used in a moral sense, as our word "corrupt" is, to denote that which is depraved, evil, contaminating, and may denote here anything that is obscene, offensive, or that tends to corrupt others.

So even an attempt to convince others to cause a member of God's church to stumble is corrupt.

Terms of pagan origin will also be eliminated from the pure language of the Kingdom of God. Pagan terminology promotes antichrist concepts and thoughts. Languages today are filled with these expressions, reflecting mankind's rejection of God and the worship of false gods for almost six thousand years. We have to be very careful reading our children children's books because they are loaded with 'New Age' imagery and words.

There are also many, many writings in this world that we should be careful of. Many are very subtle in the way that they program us with evil thoughts, or perverse religions.

There are also words that describe evil that will be dropped from thoughts, words, and the pure language. These words will drop out of use because they are no longer needed, or because their meaning has been forgotten. Words such as: war, divorce, and rape. This will not be completely accomplished until after the Great White Throne Judgment period, when we are all in God's Family, and sin has ended.

Zephaniah 3:9 "For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one accord.

We see there really the main reason of having a pure language, and having to learn it, and wanting to learn it.

God will cleanse the nations, formerly perverted by the blasphemy of serving idols, for true worship. As a result, the nations, turning to reverential trust in God, will call on the name of the LORD and will evidence their dependence on Him by their united service (shoulder to shoulder).

Zephaniah predicted that the nations would be renewed both morally and spiritually. The purifying of the lips of the peoples may not necessarily mean that they will speak a new language, as the King James Version, or as it seems to imply by its translation "a pure language." But just to give you an example of the various meanings of this term, "a pure language," here are a few of the other translations:

Zephaniah 3:9 (KJV) For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.

Zephaniah 3:9 (ESV) "For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord.

Zephaniah 3:9 (NIV) "Then will I purify the lips of the peoples, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord and serve him shoulder to shoulder.

A pure language, or pure speech, or pure lips presupposes the purification of the heart, and it is impossible to have pure lips without that purification.

One last example, this time from a paraphrase:

Zephaniah 3:9 (AMP) For then [changing their impure language] I will give to the people a clear and pure speech from pure lips, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one unanimous consent and one united shoulder [bearing the yoke of the Lord].

Contrary to what they had before, "the people," literally, "the peoples," meaning the nations of the earth, would be given "a pure language." Literally it reads, "a purified lip."

A change in their impure language indicates the replacement of once-defiled speech. That 'one impure language' or 'lip' was in rebellion against God. Now it will be again of "one lip," and that "one lip" will be "purified." The purity is of faith and of life, "that they may call upon the name of the Lord," not as they called before on idols, but that every tongue should confess the one true God, in whose name they were baptized. This is purity of faith.

"To serve Him with one consent," literally, with one shoulder, evenly, steadfastly, not unequally yoked, but all with united strength, bearing Christ's easy benevolent yoke and "one another's burdens, fulfilling the law of Christ." This is purity of life.

A pure language involves and requires purity of faith and works. A good 'fruit of the lips' is the "sacrifice of praise".

Hebrews 13:15-16 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Giving thanks, doing good, and sharing, are spiritual sacrifices that are necessary for a pure language. We not only speak language verbally and openly, but we also speak it in our minds and our thoughts. When we are thinking, we are thinking in English, or we are thinking in French, or whatever the language we are used to.

God gave back one pure speech when, on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came down in fiery tongues upon the apostles, teaching them and guiding them "into the whole truth," and to "speak to everyone in his own tongue, wherein he was born, the wonderful works of God".

When the Holy Spirit was given to the church, the beginning teaching of the pure language of God began. The church is empowered by the Holy Spirit with God's language, with God's way of life. We are already learning that pure language, we are learning to think in that pure language.

From then on there was to be a higher unity than that of outward language, because speech is not the outer sound, but the thoughts that it conveys and embodies. The inward thought is the motivation of the words. The outward confusion of Babel was to hinder oneness with evil and a worse confusion. There will not be confusion in that pure language.

One's lips represent what one says (the words spoken by the lips) and thinks, which in turn reflect one's inner life. Here in Isaiah 6, we read a flashback to the day of Isaiah's calling.

Isaiah 6:1-7 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!" And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts." Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged."

The symbolism of the lips being touched by a live fiery coal purifies the lips of its impurities, but it also purifies the mind and the thoughts. It kills disease. This represents the forgiveness of sin—that sin is totally removed. The purification by the live fiery coal is also referring to Isaiah's receipt of the Holy Spirit. It was at that time that Isaiah also began to receive that pure language.

This is similar to what happened in Acts 2:3-4, where it says, "divided tongues, as of fire. . . and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." Paul tells us that this same spirit calls us, and that we are to walk worthy of our calling. Just as Isaiah received the

understanding of that new language at his calling and conversion, so do we.

Ephesians 4:1-6 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

At Pentecost, the unity restored was oneness of heart and mind, produced by one Spirit, whose gift is the one faith and the one hope of our calling, in the one Lord, in whom we are one, grafted into the one body, by our baptism. This is absolutely necessary to be part of the pure language of the Kingdom of God.

At this point, I want to shift gears and talk about the relationship of the heart and mind to the mouth, lips, and words.

Today, we associate the mind with the brain. In Scripture, the brain and the head provide us with a number of descriptions of the mind and its functions. But in the Bible there seems to be no awareness of the brain as the center of consciousness, thought, or will.

For us today, the processes of "the mind" are frequently associated with an organ that brings to mind the emotions, and it is called the heart. English translations of the Bible vary in the extent to which they preserve the word "heart", rather than substitute a word or image associated with the mind.

In the Bible, heart encompasses more than what we mean by mind, for which there is no word in biblical Hebrew. The heart is the center of the being, where the will, affections, thoughts, purposes, and imagination reside.

Human emotions are more frequently associated with the lower organs. In general, the Bible places the psychological focus one step lower in the anatomy than do most popular modern languages. So, human emotions, which include the 'feelings,' are thought of as coming from a different organ of the body than the heart or mind.

In the Greek New Testament, the word mind, which is "nous," is usually used in reference to the cognitive, rational, and purposeful aspects of a person, as well as other

aspects such as heart, opinion, understanding, or reflection.

The overlap between "mind" and "heart" is evident in Philippians 4:7, "the peace of God. . . will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Or in II Corinthians 3:14-15, Paul can speak of the Israelites, whose "minds are made dull because a veil covers their hearts."

Jesus Christ expresses the most powerful warning spoken about our words.

Matthew 12:34-36 Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

Notice here that Jesus Christ did use a negative statement towards these people, but He always followed it up with something positive.

With respect to having a pure language or lips, the Bible is concerned with the right attitude of heart. The human heart, made dysfunctional by sin, must be broken or crushed.

Psalms 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise.

For the psalmist it is symbolic of a person's humility and repentance, and is synonymous with "a broken spirit." A "hard" or "stony" heart does not submit to the will of God. A "fat" or "uncircumcised" heart fails to respond to God's will.

Isaiah 6:7-10 And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged." Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' "Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return and be healed."

The 'heart' in Hebrew describes the seat and function of the reason. It includes everything that we ascribe to the head and the brain-power of: perception, reason, understanding, insight, thought, consciousness, memory, knowledge, reflection, judgment, sense of direction, and discernment.

God knows the heart of each one of us, and is not deceived by outward appearance. The godly, rightly pray that God would search and know their heart and make it clean. In contrast, the wicked, those who have willfully sinned against God's ways, need a "new heart," with God's law "written on the heart," which only God can do.

From these descriptions it is clear that something related to what we would call the "mind" is meant, and it includes human affections and aspirations. The heart as the spring of all desires must be guarded.

Proverbs 4:23-24 Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and put perverse lips far from you.

Jesus says it is the pure in heart who shall "see God," and Paul writes that it is through Christ dwelling in the heart, by faith, that the saints are able to comprehend the love of God, and you could say the way of life of God as well.

Despite the vast capability of the human mind to search out wisdom and the scheme of things, the depths of God's mind remains unsearchable by any human being.

Isaiah 55:8-9 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

In contrast with God, whose mind does not change, the human mind can be inconsistent and go limping between two different opinions. Even when faced with the revelation of God's mighty power and will, our minds can be overshadowed with doubts, dulled or blinded by Satan, the "god of this age."

Our minds are sometimes subject to troubling thoughts and confusion. But a mind that steadfastly trusts in God will experience "perfect peace." This is what the entire world desires—peace. We must guard and control our thoughts and choose our words very

carefully.

Proverbs 21:23 says, "Whoever guards his mouth and tongue, keeps His soul from troubles." This really is not a light-hearted subject at all, it is a very important one and it affects us all. It is as if the mind that is resistant to the knowledge of God is subjected to a spiritual disease. God gives over such minds to the full effects of a depraved or worthless mind that engages in beastly behavior.

Even those who strive to keep God's ways find themselves engaged in a struggle, and the only solution is found in Jesus Christ, the true image of God, who through the Spirit brings deliverance from the fleshly mind of death and creates a mind of life and peace. There is no peace in the words of this world. There is, however, in using the Word of God.

This is a transformation that Paul calls the 'renewing of the mind,' or 'having the mind of Christ.' Those who have experienced this transformation can be called on to be perfectly united in mind, thought, words, and language. At least we are certainly working towards that goal.

The pure language God promises to restore is already being restored in the church. In fact, it already exists because it is the words God already speaks, that He already lives; it is the whole culture of God's Kingdom.

May your thoughts and words be pure, and your actions be works of faith, done in sincerity and truth!