

# The Gospel of Matthew

**Text:** Matthew 12:33-37

**Introduction:** Vs. 31-32 are the context that leads us into our text today concerning words and hearts. The word blasphemy can be translated “*evil speaking, railing against*” and has the usage of “*impious and reproachful speech injurious to divine majesty.*” For those of you who like word studies, it has a root word meaning from “*blax*” which means “*sluggish or stupid*” and “*pheme*” which means “*speech.*” In other words, it can mean stupid speech. Jesus said any sin or blasphemy can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit is unforgivable. How? Because the later is a determined form of unbelief no matter the facts, truth and evidence presented.

**APPLICATION:** A man who intentionally refuses to believe no matter the facts, as the Pharisees were doing, and in fact were uttering words that He was a chief demon in the kingdom of satan, was the epitome of blasphemy. Jesus begins this portion of our text by saying by the words men speak (the Pharisees) they will be held account for. The Pharisees had spoken about Jesus wrongly.

## POINT 1 - THE PARABLE (VS. 33)

The “either make” of the text is used figuratively. It has two meanings; physically creating or constructing something or metaphorically; evaluating, judging or making up one’s mind. Jesus’ general point here is to make up your mind about Me. Either I am evil and do evil work or I am good and do good work. The casting out of demons, healing of sickness are all signs of good work done by God, but you accuse me of doing good by satan’s work and that’s the ultimate form of unforgivable blasphemy.

**APPLICATION:** Jesus trapped the self righteous Pharisees in their perverted thinking. Much like today, when you know the truth of God, and yet resort to bizarre and odd positions regarding the truth. It doesn’t matter what you think of Jesus nor what they thought of Him. His works proved who He was, John 5:36, “**But the testimony which I have is greater than *the testimony of John*; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.**”

## POINT 2 - IT GETS PERSONAL (VS. 34)

Jesus applies this parable directly to the Pharisees. You are worse than a group of bad trees, and even worse than a brood of vipers. The fact is when you preach false things or say false things, when the truth is exposed, you are greatly offended. Jesus wasn’t in a popularity contest. The church today isn’t in a “seeker sensitive” mode nor should it arrange it’s worship to fit the style of the world.

Vipers were a general term for a variety of poisonous snakes. Vipers aren’t only deadly but deceptive. They hide and blend in with the trees and sticks. The mother viper lays a large number of eggs, and when they hatch the brood of little vipers scurry around like insects. Like a brood of vipers they traveled from place to place promoting their man-made traditions. Matthew 23:15, “**Woe**

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to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.” They were poisoning others with their false teaching.

The question to them was piercing. Jesus called them evil. He called them hypocrites. He asked a rhetorical question as if how could they speak good, and themselves being evil. Words matter. In fact, words define character. The phrase “being evil” defines the corrupt human nature and depraved heart. It can only produce evil. Unless there is a heart change, the corrupt evil speaking against God and His works will continue. David describes the beginning of human life, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity”<sup>1</sup>, and Jeremiah defines the human heart, “The heart is more deceitful than all else, and is desperately sick.”<sup>2</sup>

### POINT 3 - THE PRINCIPAL (VS. 34-35)

The simple fact is what is in the heart will come out in words. What a person is on the inside, his mouth will give evidence on the outside. James says a man who doesn’t stumble in his words is perfect, “For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.”<sup>3</sup> None of us are perfect. In fact, it was the evil hearts of the Pharisees that made them blaspheme the Holy Spirit. It was the evil heart of the Pharisees that sent them on a word tantrum of saying Jesus was the devil who cast out demons. It was their own words that exposes their evil hearts.

Let’s just unpack the truth of the heart. It represents the thoughts and will of man. The heart represents the character of man. It is the words that will truly reveal what’s in the heart. There’s no getting around this truth. When the mouth speaks, it’s only saying what’s in the heart. The abundance of what’s in there is coming out. Jesus dealt with this again in Matthew 15:18-19, “But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.”

The phrase “that which fills” translates a Greek pronoun which means, “*great abundance, fullness, or overflow.*” It has the idea of excess. Like a swollen river after heavy rains, the water overflows because the river is full. Eventually your heart is going to overflow with what’s in there, whether good or evil. The person who harbors ill will against someone will eventually express those feelings. The person who is filled with lustful thoughts will eventually express those with crude or suggestive remarks. The person who is persistently angry and hateful will eventually put those feelings to words. However, in the same way, someone who is filled with holiness and redemption, will have it overflow as well.

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<sup>1</sup> Psalms 51:5

<sup>2</sup> Jeremiah 17:9

<sup>3</sup> James 3:2

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**APPLICATION:** Whatever you absorb, dwell and intake into your life will fill your heart. It will eventually come out. What do you allow to consume you in your life?

A person's heart is the treasury of words, thoughts, ambitions, desires, loves, attitudes and loyalties. It is also known as the greatest little idol factory. The word treasure in vs. 35 comes from a Greek word where we get the word "thesaurus" which means a treasury of words. The truth is either your heart will have a outflow of evil or good. It cannot do both. Listen at the question in James 3:11, "Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water?"<sup>4</sup> It's not possible to have a bitter, lustful, hateful heart and produce good things. For the one who says they are a Christian, yet what comes forth from their mouth, will tell the true tale. You can stifle a boiling point only for so long.

**APPLICATION:** It is said in the computer world, whatever is entered into the computer is only what will come out. What you take in will come out.

### POINT 4 - THE PUNISHMENT (Vs. 36-37)

Because the words of men are an accurate gauge of the heart, they shall render an account for. Jesus says it by our words that we are justified or condemned. **NOTE:** salvation and condemnation are not produced by words or deeds, but they are manifest by them. Words and deeds are observable evidence of a person's spiritual condition. The point Jesus is making is that words aren't the basis for salvation or condemnation, but they are a reliable evidence of the reality of salvation.

Ephesians 2:10, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." These good works aren't works to be saved, they are a result of salvation. Romans 10:10 expresses the same truth, "for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

The ungodly will be held in account for their speech. Jesus doesn't limit this warning to just blasphemies, but to every careless (idle) word that is spoken. The immoral, vulgar, cruel or blasphemous words will be recorded. The Greek word for careless also means "*useless, barren, unproductive, or otherwise worthless.*" The Christians speech will reflect the transforming work of God. Even though we enter a sanctification process and sin will creep in, but the standard walk in his life will be one of gracious speech and kindness. Even the Psalmist recognized the unredeemed humans we still inhabit when he prayed in Psalms 141:3, "Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips."

For the unbeliever his words are often reflecting of lust, deceit, cursing, oppression, lying, destruction, vanity, flattery, foolishness, falsehood, pride, vulgarity, hatred, and gossip. These careless

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<sup>4</sup> ESV

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words, along with the hypocritical words, and the words about God being less than glorious or demeaning, will be held to account. And it by those words they will be condemned. The words they said about God not being holy or only being a figment of one's imagination, will be recalled.

**APPLICATION:** A person can get a good spiritual indication by the words he consistently speaks. In fact, it's a good judge of your heart when you stop to listen to your conversations.

A day of judgment is coming. For the unbeliever the Great White Throne will be the judgment place. Revelation 20:12, "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds." The word deed included what you have said. It included every careless word. You may say you didn't say that about God, and somehow, it will be shown that you did.

Do your words reflect a redeemed life or an unredeemed life?