

# REFLECTIONS

Cat Got Your  
Tongue?

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# Reflections

## REFLECTIOUS?

An old ploy, often used to embarrass, when one is found lacking an answer, or even a comeback, to a direct question or accusation, is to ask: *Cat got your tongue?* When a young boy or girl is asked if someone of the opposite gender is their special friend many times it results in a shy silence instead of an answer. This, in turn, is frequently followed by the dreaded; *Cat got your tongue?* This particular idiom seems to come from unknown origins, though many theories exist about its original source, but in spite of lacking a definitive point of origination, the idiom is still frequently used as a comment to someone who seems to be without speech at a time that would expect a verbal response or even a retort.

James in his epistle describes the tongue as the tiny little member that has great power to cause both cursing and blessing. He further states that no man can tame the tongue as we bless God, yet curse those who are created in His likeness. (James 3:1-12) There is a curious irony related to our use of the tongue in that we seem to easily slip into using the tongue as a means of judging and condemning but seem quite reluctant to use it in testifying of God's grace and His gift of life in Christ. It seems to find us claiming no words to use in testimony of His grace, yet we still seem quite fluent when criticizing others. So why the silence in witnessing of Christ? *Cat got our tongues?*

Jesus met with His disciples after His resurrection and gave them a charge that we apply to the church today as the "Great Commission". *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* (Matthew 28:20 NAS) With this command Jesus obligates all His disciples to spread the Gospel. This, of course, requires us to speak. *How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?* (Romans 10:14 NAS) Paul also speaks to Timothy and tells him.... *preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.* (2Timothy 4:2 NAS) Now lest we begin to panic because we have to

actually share our faith in Christ in order to be obedient, let's examine some additional references. *"But when they deliver you up, do not become anxious about how or what you will speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what you are to speak.* (Matthew 10:19 NAS) Jesus will give us the words to speak even when it is before those who would do us ill. *...but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."* (Acts 1:8 NAS) Jesus will give us the power to be His witnesses through His Holy Spirit.

It seems to be quite clear that we are called, and are even required, to speak as His witnesses, and that He will give us the words and the power to speak them. With that settled let's direct our attention to the misuse of the tongue.

What does God think about the things that we commonly say? Turning to the Scripture we read *..."And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment."* (Matthew 12:36 NAS)... *...<sup>7</sup> "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain. (Exodus 20:1 NAS) ..."Not what enters into the mouth defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man."* (Matthew 15:11 NAS) We are not only required to speak as His witnesses, we are also given the responsibility for all that we say, and especially when we speak God's name. It is no wonder that James calls the tongue an untamable fire. It boasts of great things but can also be a weapon of considerable effectiveness in hurting others and can also be used to vainly worship God. *..."This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me."* (Matthew 15:8 NAS)

How might things be different in our churches and in our nation today if the Church had been faithful over the recently past decades to speak up for God's Word and obediently witness to a sinful world. Perhaps the social ills of our society might not be so unconstrained had we, as God's children, carried the message of the Gospel to a lost and dying world. Is it too late to start? Certainly not! Everyone who comes into a relationship with Christ is one more won from the enemy and another soul saved in Christ for eternity. Let's purpose to be about our Father's business of spreading His Gospel and watching our tongues from day to day. Let's feed the cat his own food and not let him *"get our tongue."*

*Pastor Doug*