

Words and Silence

Scripture Reading — Ephesians 4:29; James 3:2-12

*Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues.
Proverbs 17:28 —*

Karl Kraus, a writer and journalist, said, “It is better not to express what one means, than to express what one does not mean.” Kraus echoes the words of our text from Proverbs. Silence is sometimes the best course of action. Silence can keep us from looking like a fool.

What Proverbs is pointing to is that using words can be tricky, regardless of how wise we are. We can use words thoughtlessly. They can cause much damage, some of which can't be undone. Words demand our utmost care.

Ephesians 4:29 indicates that I have a responsibility for what people hear in my words.

It's not enough for me just to say what I think in order to get it off my chest. I need to say it in a way that is helpful for others, and in a way that they can understand. If I am not ready for that, then maybe I should say less and listen more.

Jesus says in Matthew 12:37, “By your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” That's because words are not just about me. They are about my relationship with others.

Sometimes for the sake of relationship it is wisest just to keep quiet. I need to be reminded of that from time to time.

Prayer

*Lord, we know how words can make a difference in the way people see us. I'm sorry for the ways I have misused words to hurt rather than build relationships. Help me to use words wisely.
Amen.*

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