

Wise Speech

Selected Proverbs 7/19/09 a.m.

ENGAGE: AOn a windswept hill in an English country churchyard stands a drab, gray slate tombstone. Bleak & unpretentious, it leans slightly to one side, beaten slick & thin by the blast of time. The quaint stone bears an epitaph not easily seen unless you stoop over & look closely. The faint etchings read: “Beneath this stone, a lump of clay, lies **Arabella Young**, who, on the twenty-fourth of May, **began to hold her tongue.**” [Charles Swindoll, *Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life*, 21.]

ILL: This reminds me of the restaurant in **Dana Point, California** that had a sign out front showing a woman with her head cut off. It was called, *The Quiet Woman*. [Cf. Swindoll, “Speech,” *Tardy Oxcart*, 530].

On one occasion someone said to John Wesley, “My talent is to speak my mind.” Wesley replied, “**That’s one talent God wouldn’t care a bit if you buried!**”

APPL: “True religion holds the tongue,” James tells us (cf. James 1:26). How’s your religion? Is it true or worthless? A person with **true religion, the wise person, controls the tongue**. Did you realize if your tongue is habitually unbridled, if unwholesome words are regularly coming out of your mouth that tear others down rather than building others up, you are deceiving yourself, your religion is worthless? This morning **we want to consider the power of the tongue—how can you bring blessing & build others up, rather than tearing others down?**

How powerful is the tongue! One has written [cf. James Hewett, *Illustrations Unlimited*, 175.]:

“The boneless tongue so small & weak Can crush & kill” declared the Greek;

“The tongue destroys a greater horde,” The Turk asserts, “than does the sword.”

The Persian proverb wisely said, “A lengthy tongue—an early death;”

Or sometimes takes this form instead, “Don’t let your tongue cut off your head.”

“The tongue can speak a word, whose speed” says the Chinese, “outstrips the steeds”

While Arab sages this impart: “The tongue=s great storehouse is the heart.”

From Hebrew wit the maxim sprung: “Though feet may slip, ne=er let the tongue;”

The sacred writer crowns the whole: “Who keeps his tongue, doth keep his soul.”

FOCUS & Set the Stage Biblically: We come today in our study of Proverbs to the power of the tongue. Your words, my words can **build others up or tear others down**. Our words can **make things clear or make things confusing**. Our words can be **helpful or hurtful**. If we use words wisely we can accomplish great things for God, but if we use words foolishly we can destroy great things. **The book of Proverbs makes reference to the power of speech some 90 times**. The tongue & related subjects are definitely one of the most frequently mentioned topics in the entire book.

How can you & I bring blessing to others with our speech? How can we build others up with our speech rather than be guilty of tearing others down? Some of you bear on your personhood the emotional scars from careless, hurtful words. “You’ll never amount to anything! You’re no good....”

PREVIEW: This morning we will consider three ways you & I can bring blessings to others with our words. Three commands that will help us build others up with our words rather than tear others down. **ANNOUNCE the passage:** The Bible tells us it is easier to control a horse than it is to control the tongue (cf. James 3:3-6). Every one of us have learned the hard way how our tongue seems to have a mind of its own, acting unpredictably in the most inopportune places. Just when we think we have our tongues under control, it proves us wrong. Now **for our Scripture reading this morning we are going to read a list of seven things (among many more things the Lord hates).** Three of these seven things Solomon says the Lord hates have to do with the tongue. We'll look at this reference a bit further later in the sermon but for now, please turn with me in your Bibles to **Proverbs 6:16–19 [p. 564].**

Trans: How can you bring blessing to others with your speech? How can we build others up with our speech rather than be guilty of tearing others down?

Bring God's blessing to others by speaking thoughtful words (Prov 15:28).

To be a source of blessing to others **speak thoughtful words.** In other words, **be careful what you say.** Solomon cautions us, "Think before you speak. Be cautious in how you respond to others. Think about what you are going to say before speaking." **Turn with me in your Bibles to Prov 15:28 (NKJV):** "The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil" (Prov 15:28 NKJV). Part of being a wise person, here called a righteous person, is to be cautious in how you respond to others. Study, plan, consider, think about how you should respond to someone. [Cf. יהגה? (*yehgeh*) means "to muse; to meditate; to consider; to study."] Solomon observes that the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things (cf. Prov 15:28b). Only the fool speaks in haste without contemplating the potential implications & ramifications of his words.

One who has learned to put God's Word into practice speaks carefully. One evidence of self-control is that one controls what one says. **Turn with me in your Bibles to Prov 17:27 (NKJV):** "He who has knowledge spares his words, & a man of understanding is of a calm spirit" (Prov 17:27 NKJV). Sometimes the less said the better. Speak carefully. "The truly wise person restrains his words, & the one who stays calm is discerning" (Prov 17:27 NET).

APPL: How many times have you been hurt or hurt others because you didn't think before you speak. **ILL:** As **William Norris** challenges us: If your lips would keep from slips, Five things observe with care: To whom you speak; of whom you speak; & how, & when, & where." [William Norris quoted by Swindoll in *Tardy Oxcart*, 574.]

To bring God's blessing to others by what you say **speak thoughtful words.** Think before you speak. Be cautious in how you respond to others. **Be cautious so you don't just react emotionally rather than respond thoughtfully.**

ILL: How important for us to think before we speak! In the book of Joshua (cf. chapter nine) we have the story of how the **Gibeonites** deceived the Israelite leaders by pretending to be from a-far-away land. They dressed up in old clothes & brought old moldy bread with them, telling the Israelite leaders that this bread had been fresh when they left home. Joshua & the leaders of the community responded by making a treaty with the Gibeonites. The result was that the Gibeonites became a source of ongoing conflict for the Israelites. **APPL:** For us, this is a reminder that for our words to be wise we need to be informed not just by the apparent facts of a situation, but also

by the knowledge of God. **How should God's character, purpose, will, & ways affect my decision?** From all outward appearances the story by the Gibeonites seemed believable. But the **Israelite leaders failed to look to God for wisdom in how they responded.** They relied on their own perception instead.

APPL (TEENS/Young Adults): For you that are thinking about the potential of marriage, **be careful that you do not gamble with God's purposes for your life.** Don't assess your prospective spouse like Israel assessed the Gibeonites. **Don't just look at outward appearances.** Don't be taken in by one who is a smooth talker. Don't rely solely on your reason & the external facts as the basis for entering into a vow. **Reflect thoughtfully & inquire deeply of God before speaking a vow meant to last a lifetime.**

This is where the counsel of parents & those around you who care for you can be helpful. Don't simply make a decision based on emotions. **Make this lifelong commitment informed by the knowledge of God**—His character, purpose, will, & ways. God says to all of us: "Before you speak words that will obligate you in any significant way, be sure you evaluate your position in light of the Bible." Give thought to God & His Word before you speak.

Speak thoughtful words. Be careful what you say. Solomon reminds us in several Proverbs, **"What you say affects what happens to you." Proper speech will result in blessing to you, as well as to others.** Slide: "A person will be satisfied with good from the fruit of his words, and the work of his hands will be rendered to him" (Prov 12:14 NET). [Blank Slide] By speaking words that are needed & appropriate for the situation you will find God & others providing what you need as well. Proper speech results in good things.

Not only does speaking appropriately bring blessing, **tight control over what you say prevents trouble.** Slide: "From the fruit of his speech a person eats good things, but the faithless desire the fruit of violence." ^{13:3} The one who guards his words guards his life, but whoever is talkative will come to ruin." (Prov 13:2-3 NET). "In the speech of a fool is a rod for his back, but the words of the wise protect them" (Prov 14:3 NET). "The mouth of a fool is his ruin, and his lips are a snare for his life" (Prov 18:7 NET). [Blank Slide] Tight control over what you say prevents trouble. Sometimes we are better to sleep on a situation that is troubling us, rather than emotionally reacting in the heat of the moment.

Speak thoughtful words because your words can bring healing or death. When you or I don't think before we speak we are like someone who thoughtlessly waves a sharp sword around a crowded room, we inflict damage on those around us. Slide: "Speaking recklessly is like the thrusts of a sword, but the words of the wise bring healing" (Prov 12:18 NET). [Blank Slide]

APPL: To our shame, all of us can remember times when we said things that pierced another person like a sword. Hopefully we can remember times when our words were agents of healing as well. **Be cautious in what you say because you can easily hurt others & yourself with your words.** (Cf. Prov 10:21; 12:6, 13, 25; 15:4; 16:24, 27; 26:28; cf. James 3:8B9). **Think before you speak because talking too much can bring ruin** (cf. Prov 10:14).

Now thinking before you speak means you consciously give a gentle response when a person reacts against you with anger. **Turn with me in your Bibles to Prov 15:1 (NKJV):** "*A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger*" (Prov 15:1 NKJV). "A soft answer" (Heb.) is a gentle response. In contrast a harsh answer stirs up anger.

ILL: Gideon, who became a judge in Israel, **illustrates the gentle response that turns away anger**. After God used Gideon & his three hundred men to win a decisive battle against the Midianites, the Ephraimites came to Gideon angry because they were not informed as they thought they should be. Slide: “The Ephraimites said to him, “Why have you done such a thing to us? You did not summon us when you went to fight the Midianites!” They argued vehemently with him. ^{8:2} He said to them, “Now what have I accomplished compared to you? Even Ephraim’s leftover grapes are better quality than Abiezer’s harvest! ^{8:3} It was to you that God handed over the Midianite generals, Oreb and Zeeb! What did I accomplish to rival that?” When he said this, they calmed down” (Judges 8:1-3 NET). [Blank Slide]

Gideon gives a gentle response to these men who are so angry with him. Using an agricultural metaphor Gideon argues that Ephraim’s mopping up operations, though seemingly like the inferior grapes that are missed initially by the harvesters or left for the poor, are actually more noteworthy than the military efforts of Gideon’s family [cf. NET notes on Judges 8:2] Gideon’s gentle response calms the Ephraimites down.

Trans: How can you bring blessing to others with your speech? Speak thoughtful words. You can also bring God’s blessing to others by speaking truthful words.

Bring God’s blessing to others by speaking truthful words (Prov 12:19).

In addition to thoughtful words, we are called to speak truthful words. The underlying difference between truthful & false speech is this. Truthful speech, because it is rooted in the very character of God Himself, is eternal. Once truth is spoken it does not change or decrease in value. But lies change & fade quickly. **Turn with me in your Bibles to Prov 12:19** (NKJV): “The truthful lip shall be established forever, But a lying tongue *is* but for a moment” (Prov 12:19 NKJV).

“Truthful lip” & “lying tongue” function as a figure of speech in which a part of the body is used for the whole person. In other words what Solomon is saying is this: “The one who tells the truth will endure forever, but the one who lies will last only for a moment” (Prov 12:19 NET).

Again & again in Proverbs God encourages us to be truthful (cf. Prov 4:24; 6:16B19; 12:19, 22; 13:5; 17:4, 7; 21:6, 28; 26:24B26, 28).

Anthony Selvaggio in his book *A Proverbs Driven Life* [pp. 34-36] notes that when the book of Proverbs was written, two types of untruthful speech were strictly forbidden in Israel. Both focused on the matter of personal reputation. **The first was false testimony**, which had primary application to legal matters. Civil contracts in that day were made verbally & in public, attested to by witnesses, thus making personal testimonies crucial. Criminal investigations were generally determined by oral testimony. Two or three witnesses agreeing with one another was considered conclusive. False testimony in court was therefore condemned even by the secular authorities, for it would cost a person his or her freedom . . . or life. (Cf. Prov 12:17; 14:5, 25; 19:5, 9, 28; 21:28; 24:28-29; 25:18.)

“The second type of untruthful speech forbidden in Israel was **slander & gossip**. Slander, by definition, is false information about someone else, while the rumors shared as gossip may be true or false. Yet the Bible classifies gossip as untruthful speech, & every bit as bad as slander, because it shares important characteristics of all false testimony. Most importantly, gossip is often based on lies, & is frequently motivated by a desire to harm another person.

APPL: “Gossip topples governments, wrecks marriages, ruins careers, busts reputations, causes heartaches, nightmares, indigestion, spawns suspicion, generates grief, dispatches innocent people to cry in their pillows. Even its name hisses. Office gossip, shop gossip, party gossip. It makes headlines & headaches. **Before you repeat a story, ask yourself: Is it true? Is it fair? Is it necessary? Is it kind? If not, shut up! Do not repeat & be quiet**” (cf. Swindoll).

Rumors are negative reports about other people based on uncertain evidence. They are spread to injure people, not to help them. Gossip may ultimately turn out to be true, but that does not free those who spread gossip to others from blame. If the gossip is true, then the report is being given to inappropriate people at an inappropriate time. [Cf. Tremper Longman, quoted by Selvaggio.]

APPL: Why do we put others down? Often to build up ourselves....

APPL: When you spread a negative report about someone else to people who are not part of the solution you injure the other person rather than help him or her. **Gossip & slander destroys relationships & causes division.** Slide: “A perverse person spreads dissension, and a gossip separates the closest friends (Prov 16:28 NET). [BLANK SLIDE] “Gossip can destroy not only a reputation, but entire communities. Under some conditions, a single spark of gossip can quickly engulf a church in the flames of rumor & speculation. At other times, like something smoldering under the surface, the damage may occur more slowly, but be every bit as real.” Cf. Selvaggio, 36.

An outwardly religious person may avoid filth & lying, but fall easily to slander. **John Calvin**, himself often the victim of such speech, wrote: “When people shed their grosser sins, they are extremely vulnerable to contract this complaint. A man will steer clear of adultery, of stealing, of drunkenness, in fact he will be a shining light of outward religious observance—and yet will [take pleasure] in destroying the character of others; under the pretext of zeal . . . but it is a lust of vilification [--a strong desire to make malicious & abusive statements about somebody, rather than seeking to help build them up]. This explains . . . the bloated pharisaical pride that feeds indulgently on a general diet of smear & censure.” [Adapted from K. Hughes, *James*, 81, quoting Calvin.]

APPL: Gossip can be appealing to us. Just look at the sales of tabloids available at the checkout counter of grocery stores, or how often the juicy details of someone’s shortcomings are passed on in person or through the media. Two proverbs remind us of the appeal of gossip. Slide: “The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down into the person’s innermost being” (Prov 18:8 NET). “The words of a gossip are like delicious morsels; they go down into a person’s innermost being” (Prov 26:22 NET). [Blank Slide]

APPL: Solomon tells us: **RESIST the natural human tendency to listen eagerly to gossip.** The gossip or slander greedily absorbed by you or me is also prone to be remembered & passed on at a later time. So, resist the natural tendency to listen eagerly to gossip. Instead of responding with delight in the one who shares delicious tidbits of real or supposed dirt about others **what should you do? Hold the person accountable who is sharing gossip or slander with you. Ask: Have you approached this person about what you see as their shortcomings? Have you gone & talked to the person about this? If you are not part of the solution refuse to listen.** However appealing gossip may be, gossip is worse for us than junk food. That juicy bit of

gossip you consume goes deep inside you. **Gossip brings a spiritual poison that strikes at the core of your being.** To avoid the poisonous power of gossip refuse to consume it.

APPL: Rather than delighting in receiving & spreading gossip, avoid it. Slide: “Where there is no wood, a fire goes out, & where there is no gossip, contention ceases” (Prov 26:20 NET). [Blank Slide] Watch what you say. Refuse to be the next link in the gossip chain. Refuse to be the next bit of fuel that builds the flame higher. **Stop gossip by bridling your tongue. Watch what you say.**

ILL: I appreciate the counsel Swindoll gives here when he states: “Perhaps like me you’ve received a phone call from someone who says, ‘**I want to tell you about so-and-so.**’ And I’ll say, ‘Wait a minute. May I quote you?’ There’s usually a long pause. & then they’ll say, ‘Well, I’m not sure that would be a good idea.’ Invariably my answer would be, ‘Then I’m not interested in hearing what you have to say. If you’re not interested in putting your name on it, if you’re not interested in being there when we confront the individual, I’m not interested in listening to what you’ve got to say.’ **Gossip & rumor have ruined many a soul, haven’t they?”** Swindoll, *Tardy Oxcart*, 575.

As we noted in our Scripture reading, three of the seven characteristics Solomon notes the Lord hates deal with our speech. **The Lord hates deceptive speech. Turn with me in your Bibles to Prov 6:16-19 (NKJV):** “These six *things* the Lord hates, Yes, seven *are* an abomination to Him: **17 A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, 18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, 19 A false witness who speaks lies, & one who sows discord among brethren**” (Prov 6:16-19 NKJV). While the list of what God hates is not exhaustive here, two of the seven actions Solomon states God hates directly involve lying. “A lying tongue & a false witness who speaks lies.” The Lord hates perjury & a lying witness.

Why does the Lord hate deceptive speech? The Lord hates deceptive speech because it is destructive. Only pain & ruin come from deception. Slide: “A lying tongue hates those crushed by it, & a flattering mouth works ruin” (Prov 26:28 NET). [Blank Slide] Why do people tell lies to hurt others? Solomon observes that one reason people tell lies to hurt others is **because of the hatred they have toward those they are hurting.** These feelings of hatred help the deceiver justify what he or she says about people. Lies & deceit bring ruin on other people, but it ultimately brings ruin back on the deceptive person as well. People who tell lies to hurt other people often pretend to be friends, but showing friendliness while concealing hatred makes a person a liar. Slide: “The one who conceals hatred utters lies, & the one who spreads slander is certainly a fool” (Prov 10:18 NET). [Blank Slide] The person who spreads false & damaging statements about others is a fool because it not only destroys others but comes back on him or her as well.

God wants our words & actions to be reliable. In fact God delights in the person whose words & actions are reliable. SLIDE: “The Lord abhors a person who lies, but those who deal truthfully are his delight” (Prov 12:22 NET). [BLANK SLIDE] Let’s please the Lord by acting truthfully & faithfully.

To please God hate anything that is false. SLIDE: “The righteous person hates anything false, but the wicked person acts in shameful disgrace” Prov 13:5 NET). [BLANK SLIDE]

Like all sin, lying may appear profitable in the short run, but that fantasy will not endure. God warns us that trying to get material advantage by lying will ultimately not profit us. SLIDE:

“Making a fortune by a lying tongue is like a vapor driven back and forth; they seek death” (Prov 21:6 NET). [BLANK SLIDE] In other words, ill-gotten gains will vanish into thin air, & lead to your destruction. ILL: Just ask Bernie Madoff, as he prepares to spend the rest of his life in prison.

TRANS: How can you bring blessing to others with your speech? Speak thoughtful words. Speak truthful words. & also to bring blessing to others speak timely words.

Bring God’s blessing to others by speaking timely words (Prov 15:23).

To speak wise words our words must not only be thoughtfully chosen & truthful, they also must be well-timed. To speak the right words at the right time brings joy & blessing to both to yourself as well as the one you are speaking to. SLIDE: “A person has joy in giving an appropriate answer, & a word at the right time – how good it is!” (Prov 15:23 NET). [BLANK SLIDE]

To bring God’s blessing with your words, not only choose your words thoughtfully & be truthful, but also seek God’s help to give the right words at the right time. Be sensitive to circumstances. Ask God for help to understand the appropriateness of what you should say based on what the other person needs.

Let’s seek to give the right words at the right time. Solomon reminds us in Ecclesiastes chapter 3: SLIDE: “For everything there is an appointed time, & an appropriate time for every activity on earth: . . . A time to weep, & a time to laugh; a time to mourn, & a time to dance. . . . A time to keep silent, & a time to speak” (Eccl 3:1, 4, 7 NET). [BLANK SLIDE] Solomon’s point is that God has a fitting time for every activity He calls us to do. Our responsibility is to discern the right times for the right actions. When we do the right action according to God’s time, the result is “beautiful” [cf. J. S. Wright quoted by Constable in his Expository notes, “Eccl 3:2-8.]

ILL: There is a time to speak & a time to be silent, as one lady learned when she approached John Wesley after he spoke. Once while **John Wesley** was preaching he noticed a lady in the audience who was known for her critical attitude. All through the service she sat & stared at his new tie. When the meeting ended, she came up to him & said **very sharply**, “Mr. Wesley, the strings on your bow tie are much too long. It’s an offense to me!” John Wesley asked if any of the ladies present happened to have a pair of scissors in their purse. When the scissors were handed to him, Mr. Wesley gave them to his critic & said, “Please trim the streamers of my bowtie to your liking, ma’am.” After the lady clipped them off near the collar, Wesley said, “Are you sure they are all right now?” “Yes, that’s much better,” the lady exclaimed.

THEN Wesley said, “Now let me have those shears, those scissors, please. I’m sure you wouldn’t mind if I also give you a bit of correction. **I must tell you, madam, YOUR TONGUE is an offense to me—IT’S TOO LONG! Please stick it out . . . I’d like to cut some off!**” [Cf. K. Hughes, James, 81-82.] Had any tongues you’d like to cut off?!

APPL: God help each of us give an appropriate word at the right time. For example when you believe a word of correction is needed, here are two points to keep in mind about the timeliness of a corrective word. **First, is it better to remain silent?** Solomon cautions us that sometimes the less said the better. Or, if we do need to speak, **say no more than is necessary**, since when

words abound, we usually sin. SLIDE: “When words abound, transgression is inevitable, but the one who restrains his words is wise” (Prov 10:19 NET). [BLANK SLIDE]

So if you believe a word of correction or reproof is needed ask: Is it better to remain silent?

Second, Do I have the right to speak? Have I earned the right in the eyes of the person I am reproofing to speak to him or her? Here are some factors to consider. **Is this person spiritually mature?** A word of correction is more likely to be received if the recipient is spiritually mature. **Does this person perceive me to be spiritually mature?** A word of correction is more likely to be received if the giver is seen as spiritually mature. Another question you might ask is this: **Do I have an established relationship of trust with this person?** A word of correction is also more likely to be received if the giver & receiver have an established relationship of trust. **Have you sought permission to give a word of correction?** A word of correction is more likely to be received if the giver has sought permission to present it. Also a word of correction is more likely to be received if it has been asked for. [Cf. Selvaggio, 31-32.]

ILL: I’ve shared this before but it bears repeating. I appreciate the approach **Gene Getz** uses when he needs to confront a leader. Gene uses this approach: “John, I would like to share with you something that I am often guilty of doing myself, & I would hope you would have the same freedom to approach me when you see me do such & such.” Gene says it’s interesting that those whom he has confronted in this way have used the same gentleness with him.

All of us need to recognize that *timely advice & valid criticism* are precious, beautiful, & rare (see also 15:23; 26:7, 9), & should be welcome. SLIDE: Timely advice is lovely, like golden apples in a silver basket.¹² To one who listens, valid criticism is like a gold earring or other gold jewelry” (Prov 25:11-12 NLT). [BLANK SLIDE]

Conclusion:

How can you bring blessing to others with your speech? Speak thoughtful words. Speak truthful words. Speak timely words.

Why does God care so much about how we use words? God wants you & me to use what we say to build others up. What is God’s goal for our words? SLIDE: “You must let no unwholesome word come out of your mouth, (rather let it be thoughtful) but only what is beneficial (let it be true) for the building up of the one in need, (let it be timely) that it may give grace to those who hear” (Eph 4:29 NET & annotated). [BLANK SLIDE]

God says to you & me: A true test of your religion is not your ability to speak, but rather your ability to control your tongue. An out-of-control tongue suggests bogus religious devotion, no matter how well your devotion might be carried out.

What can we do? Let’s commit to honoring God with our words. **Let’s be thoughtful, truthful & timely** in what we say. Let no unwholesome word come out of your mouth, but only what is beneficial for the building up of the one in need, that it may give grace to those who hear. Honor God with your words, so that God might increasingly give those to whom you speak the grace needed to live in a way pleasing to God.

Salvation: To be a blessing & experience the blessings of a godly tongue demands a godly heart. Jesus says to you & me: “Your mouth speaks from what fills your heart” (cf. Matt 12:34). Or as the late J. Vernon McGee used to put it: “*What is in the well of the heart will come up through the bucket of the mouth.*” Our tongue only speaks what our heart treasures. **What does your**

tongue reveal about your heart? Do your words give confirmation that your religion is genuine?

As a believer we still struggle & fail at times with our words. At times unwholesome words come out of our mouths. Not all our words are beneficial. When we sin God calls us to agree with Him about our sin. Have you confessed to God any wrong words that have come out of your mouth? **Do you need to go back & ask forgiveness for someone you've wronged with your tongue? Is there someone you've not been truthful with?**

What words does God want to hear coming from your mouth? For some of you it may be that your unbridled tongue reveals your faith is not genuine? For any of you that are not certain of your salvation I invite you to put your trust in Jesus Christ today.

Salvation prayer: "Dear God, I know that I am a sinner. Nothing that I am or do makes me deserving of heaven. I believe Jesus Christ died for me & rose from the grave. Right now I trust Jesus Christ alone as my Savior. I am not trusting in my good life, my best efforts, my baptism, or my church membership to take me to heaven. **I am trusting Christ alone to save me.** Thank you for the forgiveness & everlasting life I now have. Help me to live a life from this day forward that says "thank you" for what You have just given me. In Jesus' name. Amen."