

Kingdom Perspectives in Proverbs: Words

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[0:00] Good morning, everyone. Mike is continuing our study of Proverbs today, so I'm going to read some of those for you.

You can follow along in your bulletins. You have a little handout. In honor of God's word, will you please stand? In Proverbs it says, The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. The one who has knowledge uses words with restraint, and whoever has understanding is even-tempered. A person finds joy in giving an apt reply, and how good is a timely word. The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit.

A gossip betrays a confidence, so avoid anyone who talks too much. A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret. Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up.

[1:17] Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips. Plans are established by seeking advice, so if you wage war, obtain guidance.

In Matthew 12, 34-35 it says, For whatever is in your heart determines what you say. A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart.

And in John 1, 1 and 14, we're reminded of this. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The Word became flesh, and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

This is the reading of God's Word. Good morning, Watermark. Glad you all made it this morning. It's pretty nice out there.

[2:30] At least it was when I got out of the house. Yeah, so it's kind of like beach weather today, so it's great that you made it to church instead. Well, our teaching pastor, Tobin, is currently traveling.

He'll be back in about two weeks. So my name is Mike, and I'm working with a college student, so I'm filling in for him. And next week, we'll have Eric come up and speak and share about youth and family a little bit and what we find in the Proverbs about that.

We also have a big group of teachers here with us, so if you haven't been here last week and you met them, then maybe you have a chance this week. They're here with the English Language Institute sharing just their lives with some of the middle school students here in Hong Kong for the next few weeks and teaching.

So we're really thankful for you guys being here and serving with us and just serving alongside the church. At the beginning of the message, I just wanted to share a little story that happened this past week.

As Jeremy mentioned, we have been talking about the sermon series for a while with the staff. And so after the last conversation I had with the staff, I got this WhatsApp message from one of our staff members, and she was standing in line in the bank.

[3:40] And so right in front of her was this elderly lady, and the lady had two grandkids with her, and suddenly the elderly lady turned to another stranger in line and said, Oh, look at my grandkids.

They are stupid like empty rice bowls. Totally useless. When I hear that kind of stories, I always wonder, what is happening in these kids, in these little souls?

Words are really powerful. Proverbs 18.21 actually says, Death and life are in the power of words. Words can give us life, and they can tear us down.

They can hurt us, and they can build us up or bring healing. When you think about your own life, maybe you have experiences where words have had an impact on you, and you may recall some of these moments where there are certain words that just stick with you.

Maybe it's something your parents said, maybe just a one-time thing or over and over again, and these words just stick with you and make you feel useless or like a failure.

[4 : 48] Or maybe just some recent words in your family, like maybe with your spouse, and you just recall like an argument, and you just feel the emotion again rising up about the words that have been said.

Maybe it's just like the disrespectful or downgrading words of a boss that really just hit you and make you not even want to go to work or the gossip of a friend that has something that they said about you back.

Or it's even words that you said yourself, and now that you think about certain words, you just regret it, and you wish you just wouldn't have said it. Sometimes I'm just surprised, like in that story in the bank, how people use words.

There was another similar story, like a few years ago, I lived in Calhoun City, and I had this elderly retired couple as neighbors, and about once a week, in the middle of the night, she would start yelling at him at the top of her lungs, and sometimes like an hour long.

And when I had Cantonese speaking friends over, like they would always listen to it, and then they giggle, and then they would translate, and say, oh yeah, she said that. Why have I ever gotten married to you, and you are so useless, and a lot of things I don't even want to repeat here.

[6 : 04] But she went on and on, and I didn't even know like how many ways you can say that I don't even want to be married to you over and over again. So I'm just startled how words are used.

And there are certain ways of how words are used in Hong Kong differently to where I come from. So some of these encounters, I might not understand so well. It's just foreign to me and how people talk, maybe in Chinese culture or German-American culture.

Some parents may say, oh, you know, that's the way of how I show love. It's the way of how I want to motivate my kids to do better. I don't want them to be too prideful. So I was thinking about this book called The Five Love Languages.

Some of you may have heard of that, and it's written by an American author for an American audience, so I don't know how much it applies to worldwide culture, but it's basically talking about five different ways of how people show that they care and love.

And one of these five love languages is called the words of affirmation, so words that are uplifting and encouraging. And so I hear these stories, and I wonder whether, in a different setting, you may have to have words of humiliation that show that you really love and care.

[7 : 11] But every culture, even sometimes in a family culture, you have this specific culture with a set of values and principles that you apply, and it's a certain way of how you speak and how you use words.

I have my own experiences about how words have been used in my family. I never really could recall a memory where my dad ever got loud. He never raised his voice. He never really got angry. I was always pretty calm at home, and that's probably why I have a hard time relating to some of the stories. But what I'm describing is not like the perfect happy family. Even so, the words were not loud.

There were a lot of very hurtful words that were said as well. One of the moments that I remember pretty well was the day of my high school graduation. And so that day, I was called up on stage, and I was awarded as the second best student to graduate.

And so when I got back home, my dad said, you could have been first if you would have worked harder. And I think a lot of people here can probably relate to that in the setting.

[8 : 16] I think the Prussian system of how my father raised his family was similar to how some Asian families are raised as well. And I've struggled for quite a while in my life with that feeling of maybe not really being good enough and being a failure.

I don't really remember uplifting words in my family, words that my dad would say that he's proud of me or that he believes in who I am and what I do. And words have power.

Once you release words, they have kind of like this power on their own that they develop. You cannot take them back. And in that life on their own that they have, and it's kind of planted in the souls of other people, they begin to tear down or build a person up.

But as I said, it's different cultures have different values. And currently, we are in this journey of looking at Proverbs. We are looking at the kingdom perspective in the Proverbs.

And we have looked at wealth and different topics and how a kingdom perspective looks like. And today, we are looking at what does a kingdom perspective look like in the topic of words. So what do I mean by a kingdom perspective?

[9 : 19] If you have been here for the last two weeks, you probably know a little bit more. But let me just repeat that again. So we are trying to look at not what words are supposed to be used and how words are supposed to be used from a German or Chinese or American perspective, but what does the kingdom of God say?

What does God's culture say about the use of words? Are there certain values that we can apply from how God thinks about that?

And so we use an illustration that hopefully you can get up here again. It's that rug that we have been looking at. Okay, we'll get that in a while.

So we have this picture up there with a rug. And so when you look at a rug from the back, you basically see that there are like these like knots and colors that are a little like merged together. And you can't really see fully the picture that's on the other side. And that's kind of like how we look at life. Some of the things don't make sense. We don't really see the perspective that God has.

[10 : 21] God looks at life and being all-knowing and understanding the world from his perspective. He can see the beautiful picture of even how words should be spoken. But our culture is broken.

We live in a broken world and words we use sometimes don't come out. Like some of us, you know, you see the two different pictures. So we are a little bit more like the picture on the right.

And some of us may say, I'm a really good communicator. Tobin actually said the same thing. I always think I'm a really good communicator until my wife tells me I'm not. And that's, I think, how it is with so many words we use.

We think we say something very clearly, but so many things kind of like get lost in translation of just from us to the other person. So we're realizing that a lot of words that we use, they just don't come across the way we want.

So we want to see what can we learn to see more clearly how we communicate and what are words and how are words spoken in light of what God, you know, how God sees words.

[11 : 21] It's kind of funny to me to use a sermon, a lot of words, to talk about the biblical perspective on words because one of the things that the Proverbs and throughout the Bible is being said that don't use too many words.

Be wise with the way you use words because the more words you say, the more danger is there that the words you say may be miscommunicating and hurting and, yeah, just bringing more hurt. So in Proverbs 12, 18, it actually says, there are those who chatter on like a stabbing sword. And I'll take a few chunks first out of some of the Proverbs that kind of look at more at the negative elements of how words are used and we look at the other parts a little bit later.

But so here it says, those who chatter on, there are those who chatter on like a stabbing sword. Now if you, like me, are a very kind of social person, you like being around people and, yeah, you just find it life-giving to, you know, sit down and have a long conversation, then you may struggle with this a little bit.

And maybe you can relate to the experience of sitting somewhere and starting to talk and then you talk and talk and after a while you say, oh, you shouldn't have said that. Maybe, maybe I said too much here.

[12 : 35] I think that's a really good question that you can ask yourself whether this is something that you struggle with. I sometimes ask myself, where do I go when I have a negative experience?

So when I'm upset or worried, what do I do with that? It's kind of like, oh, you know, something happens to you and you get really worried and really upset and someone walks by and says, oh, hey, seriously, I need to tell you something that just happened.

Or you get on your phone and maybe the first thing you do when you're really worried and upset is, I need to call my mom or I need to call my best friend and it's really vent about what just happened with my boss or with my friends.

Or maybe you are in the more modern generation and you get on Facebook and you change your status to, I'm so upset, just don't ask me what just happened. You just want to, you know, the emotions just kind of like take over and you just want to talk about it and you just want to let it out and suddenly these words become, you know, chattering and then they can become stabbing swords because in our anger and that first hint of emotion that is still there, we just start talking about things that we shouldn't talk about and the heatedness of the moment kind of like takes over. Proverbs 17.27 says, the one who has knowledge uses words with restraint. I can sometimes heart to not let our response be driven by our feelings.

[13 : 57] Maybe we just need to learn to kind of like take a deep breath and then we just need to learn that the first person we probably should go to is God. I find that really hard because the tangible situation of, you know, talking to my wife or talking to a friend is so much more real to digest everything but really just taking a breath and taking these emotions to God and let him take that first edge off.

I think there's a lot of wisdom in that and so I think it's a good indicator to ask ourselves, is that what we do? But you may say, actually, I don't really struggle with that so much. I'm always pretty calm and when I get angry, I'm kind of getting quiet.

I'm not really so confrontational so I just, you know, don't do that. It doesn't apply to me. So here's another proverb. How good is a timely word? In my life, I have learned to avoid words.

So I mentioned how I grew up in a house with very little fighting. One of the reasons was because my dad was the boss of the house. He was the authority and if he would say something, that would be nothing to argue about.

There would be no argument or disagreements with that. So my only response to whenever there was something going on was to be quiet, to walk away.

[15 : 20] But words need to come at one point because the hurt is there and some healing needs to happen in one way or the other. So if you turn around 1523, it would also say, how bad if a timely word does not come?

So out of my upbringing, I didn't learn a healthy way of talking about hurt so it took me quite a while to really relearn that later on in life, not to avoid all conflict and to walk away and just to give people a silence treatment.

So when you think about relationships in your life, maybe relationships with your parents or with your siblings, with your spouse, maybe relationships in your workplace or in close friendships, where do you see yourself more?

like, is it more that there are relationships in which you just see yourself more on the side of like digesting more words and chattering and letting out the emotions or do you find more, I have a hard time even saying words.

Now, let's kind of like address and explore a little bit more of these proverbs. In 15.4, it says, a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit. It's a different element.

[16 : 36] Have you met people that are very good with words? Like, they can take your words and actually twist them around and you walk away and, ah, I didn't even want to say that, but they took it that way or that are really good at manipulating through their words or even lie and deceive through the words they say.

when I was reading this proverb, I had to think of one of my colleagues. It's 15 years ago, but it's so interesting how it sticks with me that there was this one person that I worked with in the bank and every time we started talking, suddenly the conversation shifted to that one person that was not in the room and then we would be on a coffee break or a lunch table and people would start talking and suddenly again, you know, you would just talk about the flaws of whoever was not there and I was 20 years old when I started working there and at that time, it kind of seemed like a revelation when I first thought, what happens when I'm not in the room?

You know, there are these reasons that we have for saying words and now I look back and I really wondered, what was she so insecure about? Like, what did she, why did she need that?

Was she unhappy with herself and with her life and what are the words that she may have needed in her life to be spoken to her to not feel like she has to push everyone down and so even when I find myself using words that are crushing to others, I kind of wonder, like, what's up in my heart?

What's going on in my life that I need to work on? So we continue in that kind of proverb. There's a proverb in 2019 that says, a gossip betrays a confidence, so avoid anyone who talks too much.

[18 : 15] I actually believe that one of the greatest challenges in church today is that we don't really have safe places. It's actually a problem that we have all in the world, but when we come to church, we think of it, oh, this should be a safe place, but just thinking about the relationships in church or, you know, in your community groups, maybe in your own family, you may wonder, is it really that safe for me to really be who I am?

You think of the divorce rate and you wonder, should I even tell my spouse everything because maybe one thing that breaks apart and then, oh, she has all the power of knowing everything about me.

This all reminds me of that story in the first chapters of the Bible. Right in the beginning, after God creates humankind, it says, and they were all naked and felt no shame.

And I think what it really talks about is that people were stripped naked in their soul and standing in front of God and God, who is all-knowing and who knows everything already, he's right there and there was no embarrassment, no place for feeling, you know, just shame or embarrassment.

We can be safe in his presence, but the story goes on. And then Adam and Eve, that relationship with God and them breaks apart. And now the next thing that happens, because their trust is broken, they suddenly hide behind that bush and they cover all their shame and they are in hiding.

[19 : 47] And even today we are in hiding. There are barely any people that say, I can just be stripped naked in my soul and just let people know everything about me.

Instead, we wear a mask and we try to protect ourselves and make sure that we cannot be humiliated and embarrassed by others. So we keep hiding. And as I said, I have seen that in church as well, that people entrust themselves to others, maybe even to the pastor, and then their souls are crushed and their confidence is broken.

The Bible calls us to be one body. And when one part of the body is hurting, then all is hurting. So it talks about how maybe you're bleeding in your marriage, in your relationships.

Maybe you're just suffering in your financial situation. You struggle with secret sins and the body should be there and bring healing and bring restoration to the whole body and embrace the people and lift them up out of their hurting.

At Watermark, we desire that. We desire community and the inward focus and community is such an essential element of what we want to stand for. And we hope that the community groups that you join, that there would be a place where you find that kind of safety.

[21 : 08] Where people around you have the love of Christ and surround you with the love of Christ, where you can be real and be safe. But where we fall short of that, it's because we are fallen people.

And so I just want to say sorry if you have walked through church experiences, whether here or anywhere else, and you have gotten hurt and you have gotten disappointed. I just encourage you to take a step forward in just allowing a place of safety to be built in your life again.

And if you have been hurt in your friendships and your relationships, I just pray that you would find the strength again to move forward and finding community in the way that God designs it for and desires it for us.

Proverbs 12.25, and this is the last one that I want to use in that first part of the message, is that 12.25 says, that anxiety makes the heart of a person depressed, depressed, but a kind word cheers it up.

And so anxiety and fear and depression, when you hear these words, they all mean something very different to all of us here. Some may not relate to it so much, but for some, it may be very, very close to home.

[22 : 20] Like for me, I think when I read through that proverb, it connects with a lot of things because I've been ministering to students for the last seven years here in the city and it seems like a reoccurring theme that people worry about and deal with.

For most of my life, I've been a pretty positive person. I've not really been too anxious. I thought I can deal with most things and depression was something that I couldn't really relate to either. But several years ago, there was a time where God allowed me to walk through a season of my life where I started to connect with many of the things. I realized that I have put myself in an environment where it was not very healthy.

I had moved to a different place. I didn't really know a lot of people. People didn't know me so well. So I started to be in a place where I just started working and living life but not being known.

I worked under a boss that was very manipulative. When we had a disagreement and started discussing these disagreements, I realized that every place that I went to trying to find some help with the personnel department and the leadership, they were all very close friends to him.

[23 : 26] and I realized that in that whole situation, I was very alone. So anxiety built up in me and when I went to work, I would get really nervous just being on the bus to work and wondering what will happen today and I was afraid of losing the job and the relationships that had built over the years and so over weeks, depression built up in me.

And so as I was walking through that, I realized I don't really have a lot of people that know me. I don't really have people that can tell me words that speak into my situation because people don't know my situation.

I didn't have people in my life that would speak the truth that there's nothing to worry. It's okay to step out of the situation. It's actually okay because God has, you know, still so many things that he will do in your life.

There's nothing to fear about because you are safe in God and your identity is not shaken by losing any of this. So I've learned that it is important to include people in my life that can speak into these times in my life and who know me and they don't act based on kind of like their own insecurities and agendas but they act because they have a clear vision, a God vision on the situation I'm in.

So they can point me on a kingdom perspective in the words they use. So at this stage we have looked at a couple of proverbs. We've examined how they can be hurtful and tearing people down.

[24 : 55] We have looked at what it means to actually use wise words and timely words and we looked at how we need to be cautious in who we allow to speak words and in what time into our lives and the people that speak these words need to know us really.

Before we kind of go a little bit more into looking into the kingdom perspective and what these positive words are and what this God culture is about I actually want to invite Jason and Natalie and Jason Jr.

up on stage and they'll be sharing with us for a few minutes just on their life journey how words have influenced their life the positive and negative words and how they as a young family with the little guy how they discern how they want to use words.

Well hello watermark my name is Natalie Mann my name is Jason Mann and this is Jason Jr. He gets a little stage fright now and again.

Well today as Mike said words are powerful. I grew up in a girl's home I grew up in a boy's home so what this meant was I was taught to suppress my words my parents didn't allow me to articulate any negative emotion with my words so I figured out at a very young age that I had to walk around with a lot of heaviness so I couldn't experience full joy without expressing myself with words so I was often a very sad girl.

[26 : 24] I would say in my house there were several boys and whether it was around food or air time in the family you kind of had to fight for that a little bit. It wasn't I wouldn't say it was toxic but there was just that element of a kind of competitive environment and you needed to articulate your needs out loud so words were a key part of self expression.

So I'm a trained family counselor and I found out very quickly in working with families and with kids that there isn't a family out there that is not dysfunctional that doesn't have a problem with using words so I figured out that quickly at a very young age four or five and in raising this little guy right now I could say that Jason and I have even experienced with getting into some heated discussions around him that he's actually affected by it.

Yeah actually to be very candid I remember our first fight after we brought him home from the hospital he was about four days old and I don't even remember what we were fighting about but we just went on a walk it was great I was thinking this is awesome and then family moment yeah and then something happened and he started breathing kind of in a noisy way and I was convinced we had given him asthma by stressing him out but it turns out he just had a little gunk in his throat and he's fine but it was kind of scary that first realization when he said wait a second there's this little person they kind of like live in our home which as you can imagine is small being here in Hong Kong and they just kind of like passively you know take up all that energy even if they can't understand all the words and why don't I share briefly about myself as a now as a husband and dad I would say coming out of my childhood again there was this this kind of self-expression mode so my view of words was I need to use them to make sure my knees are heard right so Natalie needs to hear them if it's if she's not hearing it then I probably need to speak louder and get more intense

and all the women especially are laughing so that's not effective obviously and I think the biggest lesson that I try and remind myself is around just using words with wisdom in other words not just knee-jerk reaction what am I feeling that therefore needs to be blurted out as some kind of distorted honesty quote-unquote but using words as a tool to say what is the goal here as a key member of this family what can I say or not say that helps our family get to a better place and of course when that is consistently happening my needs have a way of getting met in the process but yeah why don't I leave it to them so just to wrap up

I feel like I've experienced freedom with using words in my relationship with Christ and going to God's word and so that's how I found freedom growing into adulthood and in my own marriage and in becoming a new mother so we definitely have a ton of work to do don't we honey yes we do not have it all together but we're working hard on it and I'd say we go to God's word to find our wisdom in using words and so I want to encourage you guys to come on this journey with us and figure out how to use words wisely and figure that out with the Lord so thank you so much can I share a couple quick things so number one you can come find us later and we'll tell you more ugly stories but number two is I just thought of two quick things that have been helpful for me so growing up part of the reason you had to articulate your needs quickly was because if things did get too heated then mom and dad would shut it down and they'd say we'll talk about this later but we never talked about it later so you kind of had to like get things out at the moment

I think I've found in our family it's sometimes helpful to not shove something under the rug but also not just share whatever is coming out in the heat of the moment in the moment so it's kind of this middle ground where you say okay there's something here we need to address this but we're a little bit charged right now let's just take a breather and we'll be more constructive later the other thing is I have two guys in my life now who ask me regularly how are you doing with this are you staying calm are you being a good dad and husband so it's helpful to be part of a team in that process absolutely thank you so much you guys have a blessed week applause thank you guys I don't really know I don't really know what your story is like I don't know whether you relate to much of what's happening but Natalie said that there is no family that's not dysfunctional so there may be something that you can learn even if it's not like a childhood trauma that you're carrying with you if in your story there are certain things that you carry around and you have seen that words have had an impact on you and how you live your life today and it's like that backpack that you're carrying around maybe something where you are or words have kind of like crushed your soul in some part and you really wonder like how healing comes for that and how you can step out of that again or maybe there are words that you said that you do regret and that really weigh on you because they burden a relationship and burden the way that you live and I just want to let you know that after the service we will have our prayer team up here we'll also have the staff team around and also in the back of the church we just really encourage you to just take the opportunity to have people speak some encouraging words in your life to be able to get the words out of your heart that you've been stuffing down encourage you to just let people pray for you just really get on a journey of healing these things that are just in your life so we want to now spend just a little bit more time and just looking a little bit on God's way of how does he help us to see how words should be used and so I want to just first go back at the proverbs that we already looked at but look at the other elements so in 1113 for example it's a gossip betrays confidence but this one about gossip says but a trustworthy person keeps a secret so trust is the positive value here so where the safe place that we talked about is provided when people are dependable and faithful so it's like that story in Genesis when we just recall the story of being in the presence of God and Adam and Eve struggling with feeling safe where Adam and Eve hide and they cover their shame a little later in that story actually God tells them that they can't go out like this and he actually makes a garment of skin for them he knows that the world that they're going out there is a cruel place and that it can crush their soul and so God protects them and gives them that garment of skin and I think that if you just think of your life wondering whether you have like that one person that gives you that safety and strength that you need to walk through life the one person that you know that will be dependable and keep the secret and that will be trustworthy that will walk you through a place without embarrassment and shame

[33 : 46] I think that one person can be like that oasis in a desert walking through life nowadays just having that one person where we strip our soul naked and be real Proverbs 12 18 actually also has a second part there are those who chatter on like a stabbing sword but a wise tongue heals so it's not only that words can hurt and they can be like swords but used in the right moment so words

used in wisdom they can heal so healing can come through words Proverbs 15 4 in the same context says the soothing tongue is a tree of life but a harsh tongue crushes the spirit so again words can be crushing but when they're spoken in comfort and gentleness and peace words can lift a soul up and they can bring an encouragement one of my favorite authors is Donald Miller some of you may know him and he has this book called Father Fiction and he tells that story of how he grew up in a very dysfunctional home his father actually walked out of the family pretty early and so he's been struggling with guilt and feeling responsible for that and feeling like a failure and so he looks at his life and he always feels that there's nobody that there's no reason why I'm really here there's no really meaning of my life whether I would be here or not doesn't really matter at all but in his journey he starts to meet other people other guys in his life they begin to mentor him and they speak the truth just who God is in his life and that he is loved by

God and that God desires healing for him and so suddenly he realizes that history would not be the same without him and I just wonder how I feel about that sometimes whether the world would be not even noticing whether I'm here or not whether you think of my existence whether I'm here or not I don't think it really matters or whether you would think the history of the world is not the same because I'm here that God has a plan for you that he has a purpose for you being here and that he wants you to be that tree of life to other people around you and and bringing renewal and reconciliation to the world and so Donald Miller as he starts to go through the process of realizing that that he has meaning in his life and that God has a purpose for him and he is going through his own healing he then begins this ministry or project that he starts it's called the mentorship project and it's inspired by his own experience the mentorship project is a place where he has the vision of wanting for now to raise 10,000 mentors 10,000 adults that will be the father fathers to the fatherless basically men that would step into the life of youth that are troubled that don't have fathers that speak into their lives life-giving words and they are trained to be the trees that give life to the to the young people and I look at this story and I wonder how much does his life matter and how much impact does his life bring to the fatherless so I wonder like how we feel about that do we see that we can be people that bring our life to other people the same kind of teaching is found in the proverbs 1624 gracious words are a honeycomb sweet to the soul and healing to the bones so these words spoken in graciousness and gentleness how they can lift up and encourage it's just all over the place but when I look at the proverbs it's not just about this like nice honey coated speech I could it may feel like oh you know we just have to smile all the time and and be happy if you look at proverbs 24 26 you actually see an honest answer is like a kiss on the lips so suddenly you see yeah it's about graciousness and gentleness but there needs to be truth it doesn't help if you just honey coated and and nice and smile at people so the question is do we have truth tellers in our lives do we have people that really know what's what's happening in our lives that will say you know you messed up and you need to change proverbs 20 18 plans are established by seeking advice so if you wage war obtain guidance now look at that and using that picture of the proverbs if you are in the danger of losing a battle like maybe you're wrestling with a job situation family situation and and in the middle of of advice that you are seeking you are asking a person that doesn't tell you the truth he just wants to be your friend like I have had friends in my life that were just always telling me yeah you are right you know you're always right you do good but there was no truth in it like sometimes I needed to hear it's not wise so if I have a friend and I want to want to go into war and I realize that battle I could probably not win and I go for for guidance and he says oh you're a great leader like you can do it I'll lose everything so truth is such an essential part that that we need so when I see that heartbeat of proverbs I see graciousness and the gentleness but I also see truth now when you look at that there is no way around that you can see that it all points to the same thing it's the story of Christ we look at John chapter 1 verse 1 it says in the beginning was the word and the word was God and the word was with God and the word was God and in verse 14 and the word became flesh and he made his dwelling among us and we have seen his glory the glory of the one and only son who came from the father full of grace and truth the word

Christ spoken into being the world that that has been been breathing into existence by the very Christ this word becomes flesh and he makes it makes his dwelling among us Jesus Christ in him we see the full glory of God right here where we are and then it says in the fullness of grace and truth so hundreds of years before Christ even comes we see the proverbs and the proverbs guide us in a kingdom perspective saying when you speak words they need to be spoken with

graciousness but also with truth and then 600 years later the word becomes flesh and dwells among us in the fullness of grace and truth seen by the people it actually reminds me of a story that happened to me during the time that I was struggling with was anxiety and depression so there are a lot of words being said that really crushed my soul and a lot of trust was broken with people and even the people that kind of like knew me said words but they couldn't really lift me up from where I was but there was this story that happened one of my friends actually decided to get on the plane and flew out in the morning on one day and he met me for an afternoon and the evening of that day he got back on the plane and flew back to England he saw me for an afternoon and why that story means so much to me is because it was not about the words but it was the effort that showed that he cared and

I see that in God I see that in his word that he gave us words lots of words in the Old Testaments lots of words about his graciousness and his truth and his character but at one point he decides it's enough words and the word becomes flesh and he dwells among us and he walks among us and he shows us who he is words need to be followed by by action and lived out to become real and true and so I look at what Christ does and how the God of the universe becomes the word becomes flesh and he dwells among us and there he takes on all our hurt even the hurt from all our words that have happened our life stories he takes it on himself and he goes to the cross and he dies for us and he shows us all his graciousness and truth the word becomes flesh like no more words to say there he steps right in the middle of our hurting and of our suffering and he shows that he cares he identifies with our story he identifies with our hurting and he takes it to the cross so if you are here today and your soul has been crushed by words or if you struggle over souls that you have crushed on the way then know that the word became flesh and in his mercy and forgiveness and grace he died on the cross to enter a relationship and to heal the relationship with him and give you the strength to find healing in your own soul so as we close I just encourage you to not walk out today without finding some step of healing I want to emphasize that again the prayer team will be up here we'll sing like two songs and just you know be able to reflect and see where you are with all that and then take the opportunity to just really talk with someone and pray with someone and just get out what's what's in you and we hope that ultimately you will see that in the death and resurrection of Christ we find the hope that this is not the end but the kingdom perspective shows that there is a kingdom coming which all relationships are restored and there reconciliation will be happen over the words that have been spoken and that have been hurtful and that have been destroying relationships and there are people probably in heaven that we may not want to be with right now but that's where the cross of Christ is so much greater than even the things that we want but he reconciles things that are greater than every hurt or any hurt that we can experience let me pray for us father we just humbled by the reality that you the word becomes flesh that you don't stay in a far distance as a religion that is read in a book but that you stepped into humanity and into you right among us and that you the word became flesh because you care about us and that you desire for our relationship with you to be healed and that relationships among us would be healed and that you would make the way for that father just pray for the people here today that have been hurt by words and that have heard through words that today would be a this is a time where healing would begin um you know we would just look at you and what you have done and um that you would humble yourself and even go to the cross for us that that would give us um yeah just a motivation and an encouragement and that you desire healing for us as well father just pray for the families here um for the parents that you would continue to speak a kingdom perspectives into them that they would know that it's not about being perfect and saying the perfect words and uh that many many families are overwhelmed by raising kids

[45 : 10] but that your grace and your mercy is right there and that you desire to teach everyone through the words that you have and that you put people in community um yeah just learn together from you and your word so today we just uh want to look again at the cross and um what it means for us and that it means that uh we can find healing in you we pray this in christ's name amen