

**Feb. 10:** 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

Message: Disciples Make ... God Talk

Scripture: Romans 10:14–15

Blurb: “The tongue is the mightiest weapon!” This quote rings true for each one of us! How we speak, what we say, is some of our greatest impact. This Sunday we’ll discover how disciples use their tongues for good. But it’s not just about not saying bad things and intentionally saying good things. It’s about filling our talk with God.

Kids: Conner - Paper airplanes. Need to carefully listen and obey ... trial and error.

Memory Verse: “Be guided by the Spirit and you won’t carry out your selfish desires.” - Galatians 5:16

**Opening Song:** *King of Glory* - Sanctify

**Welcome:** -Pastor David

**Memory Verse:**

“Be guided by the Spirit and you won’t carry out your selfish desires.” - Galatians 5:16

**Worship Music Set:**

*The Way*

*The Wonderful Words of Life*

Conner takes kids into lobby - Paper airplanes

*Resurrecting*

Worship Prayer - Andrew

**Offering:** *Come, Follow Me* - Sanctify

**Serve Moment:** Valentine’s Day Parent’s Night Out - Andrew

**Grow Moment:** Wednesday Grow Groups starting - David

**Prayers:** *The Lord’s Prayer* - later in the message. - David

**Kid’s Moment:** Paper Airplanes - Conner

Need to speak the words of truth: the way that works. Do it this way.

Need to listen to the words of truth: Tested and tried. If do it your own way, won’t work well.

**Message:** Disciples Make . . . God Talk

**Bumper Video**

**PP#1:** *Image for light appearing at creation, with the words, “God said, ‘Let there be light!’ And light appeared.” -Genesis 1:3*

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without shape or form. Darkness covered the deep sea. God’s Spirit swept over the waters. God said, ‘Let there be light!’ And light appeared.”

Light first dawned when God spoke. God created by speaking. Words of power. Words of creation. Words of life!

God’s transforming power is unleashed in His spoken word. Order is brought to chaos. God’s Spirit sweeps the abyss. Light shines in darkness. Life. Words of life.

But then, the creation that God made perfect “fell” back towards the chaos, the abyss, the darkness. Human sin corrupted all of creation—not completely, but significantly. And our world today, our reality, is not perfect. We see evidence of the swirling chaos in our world. The formless abyss describes the deep emptiness of our society. Darkness spreads across the despairing human heart.

We need God’s Word! We need God’s Light! We need God’s Life!

**PP#2:** Disciples Make . . . God Talk

“The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but in the mouth of the wicked lurks violence.” -Proverbs 10:11

Disciples of Jesus—who walk in His footsteps, who follow Him, keep up with Him—make Him their own, make Jesus #1. They make the Holy Spirit their guide. They make a pattern for growth. Disciples of Jesus make disciples, who make disciples. And to do that, disciples of Jesus make God talk. Proverbs 10:11, “The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but in the mouth of the wicked lurks violence.”

God speaks life. Jesus, God’s Son, is Himself the Word of God, the Word of Life. Disciples follow the Word of Life. Disciples of the Word of Life speak words of life. Disciples make ... God talk!

**PP#3:** Disciples Make . . . God Talk

1. Disciples talk TO God every day

-Prayer is the language of passionate spirituality

-Listen for God’s voice speaking words of life into you

-Prayer is speaking God’s heart into yours

Disciples have Jesus. We have help. We have hope. We have light.

We have that personal connection to our creator, we are restored to life. We have God’s words in our lives, and we have God’s words for our world.

Disciples talk to God, we talk *with* God. And that conversation is our salvation! God’s words of life, spoken into us, penetrate into our hearts, transform us, make us new. If you are struggling with the spreading darkness of despair in your hearts, let God’s Words of light penetrate into you. Open your heart to Him. Put your trust in Him. If you are struggling with an inner corruption, a sin that nags at you, a struggle you can’t overcome, ask God to clean you with His words of new life.

Talking with God is the great privilege we neglect too often. We get to share with Him our deepest and inmost reality, and His words of life wash over us. Prayer is the language of passionate

spirituality. Do you feel lukewarm in your relationship with God? Pray. Does God feel distant? Pray. You want a closer, deeper relationship with Jesus? Pray.

Prayer is speaking: we get to give it all to Him. We get to lay it all out there, pour it all out. Nowhere else can we do that like this. Nowhere else is safe and healing like with Jesus. But prayer is also listening. It is silencing our words, so we can hear God's words. We listen for God's voice speaking words of life into us. His power, His life, His creating: poured into us! We are transformed...made new...released from bondage...given a new start.

Jesus taught His followers to pray. They asked Him how they should pray, and Jesus gave them a formula prayer to pray. He told them to "pray like this." We now call it the Lord's Prayer, and we pray it frequently here at Forest Hills.

What is amazing about this prayer is that it trains us in what we should be praying about. It's not a list of things, rather, *it's a summary of God's heart*. Jesus taught His followers to pray like this, so we would hear our voices speaking God's words, God's heart, into our hearts. Praying the Lord's Prayer is a way for us to have our hearts transformed—conformed—put in alignment with, God's heart.

**PP#4:** The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)

[Jesus said, when you pray,] 9 Pray like this:

Our Father in heaven, holy is your name.

10 Bring in your kingdom so that your will is done on earth as it's done in heaven.

11 Give us the bread we need for today.

12 Forgive us for the ways we have wronged you,

just as we also forgive those who have wronged us.

13 And don't lead us into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.

I moved the prayer time from earlier in the service, to now, so we could pray the words of life of the Lord's Prayer. It's here on the screens. I'm going to give us time to pray it in our hearts. But this time, I want you to see the words of this prayer as revealing God's heart to you. This identifies what God wants. This is what God wants for our world. This is what God wants you to be praying. Can you hear God's promise to be our provider? His passion about forgiveness? Being our Protector? So, let's each pray this prayer deeply in our hearts and invite the Holy Spirit to use it to conform our hearts to God's heart. Let's pray.

[Pause.]

Amen. Disciples make God talk. We talk to God every day, and we are created new!

**PP#5:** Disciples Make . . . God Talk

1. Disciples talk TO God every day

2. Disciples talk ABOUT God every day

-Disciples are sent

"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"-Romans 10:15

Disciples are called to make disciples, right? And a key way that we do that is by taking the God talk from within our hearts, that we have experienced and found to be true, and we speak that out into our world. Disciples talk *to* God, and out of that inner conversation, disciples talk *about* God.

In the Great Commission, Jesus says, “Go into all the world and make disciples, by teaching them everything I have told you.” Yes, our actions speak loudly. Our way of life is crucial. But our strongest witness comes when we make God talk to accompany our actions.

Church, we are sent into the world to show the world Jesus. We’ve talked about how we are like mirrors, reflecting God’s light to others. It shines in us, and then it shines out of us. Today I want you to think about yourself using another image. Think of yourself as a speaker, an amplifier. God’s Word is all over this world. But people aren’t hearing it. Just like we receive and reflect the light of Jesus, so we also receive and amplify the Word of God.

People out there are struggling in darkness, in chaos, in emptiness. They need to hear the Word of life. And church, you are sent! Jesus is heading out there, and He calls you to follow Him. He sends you out to go and teach, point out, reveal, speak hope and life.

**PP#6:** Romans 10:14–15

How, then, can they call on the One they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the One of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

Turn to Romans 10. Here Paul is showing the urgency of disciples to make God talk. He says, look around...do you see them all? See how they struggle? God’s heart breaks for them, and He has sent you to speak words of life to them! To urge disciples, Paul asks, Romans 10:14, “How, then, can they call on the One they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the One of whom they have not heard?” Consider the people God has placed in your life. Do you see how they struggle? Where is their help? Do we just hope they figure it out on their own? “And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” Now don’t read “preaching” here as only something pastors do from the pulpit on Sunday. Paul is using the word here to mean speaking about God, making God talk. And he’s speaking to everyone. In this sense, we are all preachers. “And how can anyone preach unless they are sent?” If you stay home all the time, stay safe, and don’t venture out to bring up God in your conversations, you are withholding the medicine for their terminal illness. Jesus sent you. He sent us. This is our Great Commission. Go! You are relays of God’s Word! “As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’”

Your feet are directed to go and share. You are the feet, and voice, of Jesus!

**PP#7:** Disciples Make . . . God Talk

1. Disciples talk TO God every day
2. Disciples talk ABOUT God every day

Disciples are sent

Disciples make God talk

“Always be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you.” - 1 Peter 3:15

If you don’t talk about Jesus, people will never know why you do what you do. And there’s even a greater danger. If you don’t talk about Jesus as the reason for why you do what you do, you are in danger of stealing Jesus’ credit. People will see you serve, and help, and make a difference, and they will think, “My, *he’s* such a good guy!” “Isn’t *she* a great person?”

Disciples, you have to be quick to give God the credit! 1 Peter 3:15, “Always be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you.”

Now, in Minnesota, we can be reserved about our faith. It's a private matter, and others may not believe like we do. So, we restrain our tongues. We talk about the weather, the Vikings, and the road conditions. As disciples, we also work hard at restraining our tongues. We know that the tongue can cut like a two-edged sword. So we work very hard at biting our tongues. We want to stop ourselves from saying all those nasty things that are just aching to come out.

But we can clamp our tongues too well! Yes, we need to *restrain* them from speaking bad things, but disciples of Jesus also needs to *loosen* our tongues to speak words of life.

On Monday Reese and I went to Rebekah's high school honors concert. They sang a song that put to words from social media to music. The composer was there. He composed this song to share words of encouragement and hope to teens who are experiencing more and more stress, feeling overwhelmed and hopeless, and getting depressed. He took phrases from social media that other youth had written to encourage their friends: words like, "don't give up," "what others say about me reflects on who they are, not who I am," "you are not a burden to anyone," "it was hard, yes, but I kept living," "your story is not over," "don't let your worst day be your last." The name of the song? *Please Stay*. The song got a standing ovation, because we know our world so desperately needs words of life!

Disciples, Jesus sent you to speak words of life! Proverbs 10:11 says, "The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life."

**PP#8:** How to make God-talk with others:

1. Share how Jesus helped you

One of the key ways that we can speak God's words of life to others is to share from your own personal experience how Jesus helped you. It starts by listening. Listen to their story, what they are going through, what they are fighting. Listening with compassion is itself therapeutic. But it also gives you the chance to hear the Holy Spirit drawing parallels to your life. After giving them lots of time to share, you can respond not with what they need to do to fix it—this is a warning to all you fixers out there—not what they need to do to fix it, but how Jesus helped you in a hard time. Your words change from, "Well, **you** need to . . .," or "Well, **I did** this or that," to "When I was faced with a big struggle, I prayed. I asked God for help. And you know what? **He did!** You want to know how?" Trust me, they're going to say "yes." And off you go. You describe your reality with God in it. So, share how Jesus has made a difference in your life, especially in situations of hardship.

**PP#9:** How to make God-talk with others:

1. Share how Jesus helped you
2. Point out God in their story

Another key way to speak life into others is to share where you see God working in their lives. You see, most people will gladly tell you their story. Your job? It's to listen to where God pops up in it. Most people don't see or hear God, even though He's all over the place. As a disciple, you can, and you just call out when you see it. They can't see it, they're too close. But you can, because you've gotten good at seeing God everywhere! Then, when they're ready to listen, you can say things like, "Wow, you know, I can't help but see how God has been there for you. He's been right there, helping you through this."

They'll say, "Really? Like where?"

I've learned to pick up on phrases like, "It just so happened that ..." or "I don't know how, but ...." That's God, right? People tell me, "I was in for a gall bladder scan, and the doctors *just so happened* to notice this lump on my liver." Or "The car was totaled, and the paramedics said I was lucky. I don't know how, but I could easily have died." I say something like, "Well, it sounds like God was helping you through that. I know it's been hard, but it sounds like God was protecting you." Or, "Your gall bladder was giving you grief, and sounds to me like God used that to point out another problem that you wouldn't have known about."

If you listen closely, you can usually spot a God moment in their own story. Your job is to call attention to it. Then you can say, "And God will get you through this. Trust Him."

**PP#10:** How to make God-talk with others:

1. Share how Jesus helped you
2. Point out God in their story
3. Pray for and with them

But avoid those platitudes. Don't say that God *caused* it, or must have *wanted* it. "Your loved one has a terminal illness? Well, it must be God's plan." No. That's not biblical. Or even, "God must have a lesson for you to learn." Ouch. You mean God inflicts them to teach you a lesson? That's not my God! Instead say, "God is using that," or "God will help you in that."

And then, always, offer to pray for them. And even, when you can—after you ask if it'd be okay—pray out loud for them right and there.

**PP#11:** Disciples Make . . . God Talk

1. Disciples talk TO God every day
2. Disciples talk ABOUT God every day
  - Disciples are sent
  - Disciples make God talk
  - Disciples speak God's name

Disciples: speak God's name as you talk. Every day, make a point to speak God's name, use "God" in some way as you talk to others. Speak the name "Jesus." You'll be surprised at how, even though He's the most important person to you, you tend to avoid speaking His name. It's a learned behavior in our culture. Saying "Jesus" sounds weird, it sticks out. It seems to have twice the decibels as anything else you say. But studies have shown that our culture is changing. Most people now are very open to hearing about Jesus. There is a growing curiosity about Him. I have learned to be reserved about my God talk. Generations younger than I? They are asking about Him. I need to get up with our changing culture. You and I need to gracefully, and gently, increase our speech about God. After all, He is the most important relationship in our lives, right?

**PP#12:** Disciples speak God's name:

Su:  
M:  
Tu:  
W:  
Th:  
F:  
Sa:

So, here's your homework: On the bulletin insert where it says "Notes," write vertically in descending order for each day of the week, S, M, Tu, W, Th, F, and S. Then, make a point *each day* to make God talk. Having the list will help you remember, and provide accountability to help you actually do it. Then, each evening before bed, fill out how you did it that day.

**PP#13:** Disciples speak God's name:

Su: Told Sam at church, "God bless you."

M: Prayed with Alice when she called.

Tu: Said, "May God bless you" to the cashier.

W: Told my son, "God has a plan for your life."

Th: Wrote Ian on Facebook, "God was there for you!"

F: Shared with Fran how Jesus was my rock during my diagnosis.

Sa: Told my neighbor, "God gave us a beautiful day!" Then invited her to church.

Okay, speak about God, by name, out loud to someone, every day. That's your homework. You'll notice the more you do it, the easier it becomes. It becomes second nature.

Disciples make . . . God talk. Disciples talk TO God every day. Disciples talk ABOUT God every day. To a world struggling with chaos, with emptiness, with darkness, "The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life." May you amplify God's Word!

Amen.

**Closing Song:** *Send Me Out*

**Memory Verse:**

"I say be guided by the Spirit and you won't carry out your selfish desires." - Galatians 5:16

**Announcements:** -Pastor David

Wednesday is Tacos by Keintz family

Wednesday Grow Groups starting this week

**Benediction:** -Pastor David