

Mouth, Feet, Eyes

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Preacher: Matthew Capone

[0 : 00] You may be seated. Good morning. My name is Matthew Capone, and I'm the pastor here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church, and it's my joy to bring God's word to you today.

A special welcome if you're new or visiting with us. We're glad that you're here. And we're glad that you're here not because we're trying to fill seats, but because we're following Jesus together as one community.

And as we follow Jesus together, we become convinced that there's no one so good, they don't need God's grace, and no one so bad that they can't have it. Which is why we come back week after week to hear what God has to say to us in his word.

We're continuing this morning our series in the book of Romans. The book of Romans is a letter written by the Apostle Paul in the 50s AD, and it is called Romans for a very simple reason, which is that it's written to the churches in the city of Rome.

This letter is about the gospel. It's about the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection. And Paul's hope in writing it, as we saw in chapter 1, is that these churches would be established in the gospel.

[1 : 17] We're going to see many applications, as we already have, but Paul is especially concerned with the mission and the unity of the church. And while we go off on many different topics, there will be many spokes in the book of Romans.

We are constantly coming back to the hub of the gospel. We are approaching the end of chapter 3 of the book of Romans. Paul is coming to the conclusion of his argument that everyone deserves God's wrath, both the religious and the non-religious.

And so as he comes to his climax here, he presents one of his final arguments, his final proofs of human depravity, which are the words that come out of our mouths.

And so I invite you to turn with me now to God's word. You can turn in your Bible. You can turn on your phone. You can turn in your worship guide. No matter where you turn, remember that this is God's word.

Proverbs chapter 30, verse 5 tells us, every word of God proves true. He's a shield to those who take refuge in him. And so that's why we read now Romans chapter 3, starting at verse 13.

[2 : 36] Their throat is an open grave. They use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips.

Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. In their paths are ruin and misery.

And the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word.

Our Father in heaven, we do praise you and we thank you again as we do every Sunday. That you have given us rich and deep, challenging and encouraging instruction in your word.

Lord, we ask that you would do that. You do it again this morning. That you'd pour out your Holy Spirit here now in a special way among us. That we would be able to hear and believe and understand what you've written for us here in your word.

[3 : 52] Most of all, we ask that you would show us Jesus with great clarity. That we would see his beauty, his love, his mercy, and his grace. That it would melt our hearts and we would follow after him in faith.

We ask all of these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen. 13 years ago, now soon to be 14 years ago, in 2011, we celebrated our great American event of Super Bowl XLV.

And as you know, for some people, the Super Bowl is about the football. And for some of us, the Super Bowl is about the commercials. And in 2011, Bridgestone Tire ran what became a famous

commercial about how efficient and beautiful and durable their products were.

It starts out with two men who are together next to each other in a cubicle farm. And we find out that one man, whose name is Rod, has just fired off an email to the man in the cubicle next to him.

That seems like a normal occurrence, except maybe they could talk to each other instead of emailing back and forth. And his friend turns to him, though, and says, Oh no, Rod, you sent this email, reply all.

[5 : 17] You hit reply all. And Rod looks like his life has just come to an end. And so he runs off out of the office. He gets into his car with his wonderful Bridgestone tires that take him quickly to a conference room where we see him running around the ring of the conference table, slamming laptops shut before anyone has a chance to see his email.

He then reaches into a home window where someone is working from home, grabs their laptop, pulls it out of the window, and disappears. He shows up in a restaurant where there's a man on a laptop, and he interrupts the server so that she spills coffee onto his keyboard.

He slaps cell phones out of people's hands. He even goes off-road, which I assume is to show us again how great Bridgestone is, to hunt down a man who is backpacking in the wilderness.

So he can also intercept the email. And at the end, we see him running into a room, perhaps full of computer servers, and he rips the wires out of the wall.

All the while, Rod is screaming. And why is Rod screaming? Why is he in such a rush to intercept everyone's laptop and phone before they have a chance to see his email?

[6 : 45] Well, we get a hint at the very beginning of the commercial because as Rod hits send, there is a big smirk on his face. Rod is screaming because he has just emailed out something so inappropriate.

Maybe it's scandalous. Maybe it's hurtful. But there's only one answer. He needs Bridgestone tires to get him there in time. Before they read his words and find out the truth.

Paul is making his closing argument here of chapters 1 through 3 in Romans. I've been telling you that he sums it up in verse 23, which we'll come to soon, when he says, For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

So I've told you over and over now, Paul's making this argument that everyone deserves God's wrath. Chapter 1, non-religious people, the Gentiles, deserve God's wrath.

Chapter 2, religious people, the Jews, deserve God's wrath. Chapter 3, Paul responds to objections and ties it all together. He is answering all excuses.

[8 : 02] He is closing all doors. He is leaving no room for escape. And so as he comes to the very end of this argument, the chance for him to clench it once and for all, where does he go?

If he is going to answer every objection and close every mouth, he heads to our words. Paul is saying this.

You think you can wiggle out of everything that I've said in these previous three chapters. Maybe you're convinced that somehow it doesn't apply to you.

Well, as we come to the end, let's look at this. What are the words that come out of your mouth?

That's why he tells us, verse 13, Their throat is an open grave.

Imagine you go to the cemetery and you dig up a casket, and it has been there for 20 years.

[9 : 11] This happens in TV shows all too often, by the way. And you open it up. What will it smell like? That's the image that Paul wants you to have.

He's saying that is what human speech is like. The words that come out of our mouths stink like a dead corpse to high heaven.

It goes even further than that. Verse 13, he says, The venom of asps is under their lips. Asps is a type of snake.

It's a category of snake. There's snakes that are poisonous. In other words, Paul is saying, When you speak against someone, Verse 14, With curses and bitterness, You are biting them.

But it is not the bite of a garden snake. It is in fact the bite of a rattlesnake. It doesn't merely hurt. It kills.

[10 : 20] You might say, Sticks and stones can break my bones. Words will never hurt me. Paul here would seek to differ.

He's telling us the things that come out of our mouths Have the power to kill. The venom of asps is under their lips.

The commercial with Rod landed so well Because we all know the truth. There are things that you have said And there are things that I have said That we would like to remain hidden. Some of you are going to the book of James In Sunday school right now. I don't know if you're to chapter 3 yet or not. But James makes the same argument. Chapter 3, verse 2, he says, For we all stumble in many ways.

And if anybody does not stumble in what he says, He is a perfect man. Able also to bridle his whole body. Now, if you lack self-awareness, You might hear that and say, Wow, I didn't know I was a perfect man.

[11:38] But I'm perfect in the things that come out of my mouth. Well, just in case that's your thought, James follows up, verses 8 and 9. But no human being can tame the tongue.

It is a restless evil, This is going to sound familiar, Full of deadly poison. Paul hasn't made a mistake here. He hasn't misspoken by talking about asps.

No, James says the same thing. It's not a garden snake. It's a rattlesnake. If you have made it this far In the book of Romans, And you think you're good.

You think you're able to get off the hook In every angle that Paul has exposed, The question is this. Have you ever spoken poorly of someone else?

Have you ever said something In order to harm someone else? No one does good, not even one.

[12:44] Their throat is an open grave. They use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips.

Now you might say to that, Well, you know, Nobody's perfect. Everyone has said things that they regret, So it must not be a big deal.

And if you say that, Of course you've made the great mistake. And the great mistake is this, To compare yourself To the people around you. What has Paul been telling us?

What's the standard? The standard is the holiness of God. The standard is not the people around us. The standard is God himself.

And so that's why the prophet Isaiah, In Isaiah chapter 6, When he encounters the holiness of God, Says this, Woe is me, for I am lost. I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst Of a people of unclean lips.

[13:54] For my eyes have seen the king, The lord of hosts. What's Isaiah saying? He's saying my comparison to other people Is irrelevant.

When I see the holiness and glory And majesty of God, I finally know how far I fall short.

Brothers and sisters, The same is true for us. And also, as I've been telling you, What Paul teaches, Jesus taught first.

These are Jesus' words from Matthew chapter 12. Out of the abundance of the heart, The mouth speaks. The good person, Out of his good treasure, Brings forth good.

And the evil person, Out of his evil treasure, Brings forth evil. But I tell you, On the day of judgment, People will give account For every careless word they speak.

[15:02] For by your words, You will be justified. And by your words, You will be condemned. Paul doesn't just leave us there, though.

We transition From verses 13 and 14, Which talk about our words, The things that come out of our mouth. And suddenly, It gets worse.

Verses 15 Through 17, Savage words Lead to savage actions. Verse 15, Their feet are swift to shed blood.

Verse 16, And their paths are ruin and misery. And we shouldn't be surprised That this is the progression That happens here. This is a truth That world history bears out.

This is a foundational, Fundamental principle of humanity. And it's this. Hateful words Lead to violent actions. Hateful words Lead to violent actions.

[16:17] We might even say more than that. Dehumanizing words Lead to violent actions. You'll see this On the back of your worship guide.

Dehumanization has fueled Innumerable acts of violence. Human rights violations. War crimes. And genocide. It makes slavery, torture, And human trafficking possible.

Dehumanizing others Is the process By which we become accepting Of violations Against human nature The human spirit And for many of us Violations against The central tenets Of our faith.

Brene Brown is saying In the 21st century What Paul knew In the first century What history has borne out Hateful words Lead to violent actions.

Brene Brown then goes on To give a list of examples The Nazis Called the Jews Rats In the Rwanda genocide The Hutus Called the Tutsis Cockroaches The Serbs Called the Bosnians Aliens In fact this is A recognized tactic Of fascist leaders You dehumanize Your opponents And then you justify Violence And what Paul teaches Jesus taught first This is from Matthew chapter 15 Do you not see That whatever goes Into the mouth Passes into the stomach And is expelled But what comes Out of the mouth Proceeds from the heart And this defiles A person For out of the heart Come evil thoughts Murder Adultery Sexual immorality

[18 : 16] Theft False witness And slander These Are what defile A person Hateful words Lead To violent Actions Now we could say Many things about this We could take it In many directions I'll say this For 2024 As our society As our culture Becomes Less and less Christian Dehumanizing Words Are becoming More and more Common They're becoming More and more Common in our Culture In our Politics And so I want To tell you This this morning Whatever you do Whichever Politician You support Do not

Participate Do not Participate In throats That are an Open grave In tongues That deceive In the venom Of asps That is under Their lips Don't participate Do not celebrate Our politicians May refer To people As garbage As deplorables As trash And as animals Brothers and sisters That is not How Christians Speak Those are not The words That come out Of your mouth Don't use them Don't celebrate Them Grieve When others Do Do not Participate Paul is Telling us Here It is Evil It is Wicked This is The sign Of God's Judgment On the world This is not The way That Christians Talk It is Language That is A stench In the Nostrils Of the Lord Not only That Winsome Speech More and More Is part of Our witness In this World When you Speak In a way That honors Those around You People will Notice And they Will notice Because our Culture is Becoming More and More crass Every year They will Know

That something Is different Remember Sinful words Are not a Garden snake They are Paul has Told us This James tells Us this A rattlesnake They are Filled With venomous Poison I call Your attention To page Five Of your Worship Guide Last week I told you I was giving You one Of my Favorite Quotes What the Heart Desires The will Chooses The mind Justifies I'm going to Give you Another one Of my Favorite Quotes This Week This Is a Prayer For Christians About what Comes out Of their Mouths Lord I am Surrounded By Peoples Whose Words Are Either Fawning And Flattering Or Malicious And Stinging Don't Let Let me Imitate Them Make My Words Honest And True Economical And Few Wise And Well

Chosen Calm And Kind Give Me So Much Love And Grace That This Kind Of Conversation Comes Naturally To Me There Are Few Quotes That I Commend To You As Highly As This One There Are Many Things That Show Up In Our Worship Guide In The Side Bars And I Have Never Said This Before This Is One To Cut Out And Keep In 2024 Let Us Be Known By Our Love Let Us Have Words That Are Honest And True Economical And Few Wise And Well Chosen Calm And Kind And How Will We Have Words Like That When And Only When God Gives Us So Much Love And Grace That It Comes Naturally To Us What

[23 : 26] Paul Taught Jesus Taught First Matthew Chapter 5 You Have Heard That It Was Said To Those Of Old You Shall Not Murder And Whoever Murders Will Be Liable To Judgment But I Say To You That Everyone Who Is Angry With His Brother Will Be Liable To Judgment Whoever Insults His Brother Will Be Liable To The Council And Whoever Says You Fool Will Be Liable To The Fires Of Hell Paul Then Goes On To Tell Us Verse 17 The Conclusion The Summary Of All This And The Way Of Peace They Have Not Known Of Course We Don't Need Paul To Tell Us That History Proves That As Well One Pastor References The Historian Will Durant I'm Sure I Mispronounced That Who Says In Over 3500

Years Of Recorded History Only 286 Have Seen No War What Else Is There To Say The Way Of Peace They Have Not Known What's The Reason The Root For All Of This Paul Tells Us That As Well In Verse 18 Why Is It That We Have These Poisonous Words And These Violent Actions It's Because There Is No Fear Of God Before Their Eyes The Problem Is The Problem Is Not Read Enough Books About History And The Power Of Words The Problem Is Not That There Has Not Been Enough Education And Teaching The Problem Is Not That No One Told Them No The Problem Is That

God And His Glory And Power And Authority Are Not At The Forefront Of Their Vision To Fear The Lord Means That We Have A Right Understanding Of Who God Is And His Role In This World We Know That God Is The Judge Of All The Earth And That All Our Life Is Lived Before Him It's To

Know Jesus Words That We've Already Read From Matthew Chapter 12 On The Day Of Judgment People Will Give Account For Every Careless Word They Speak To Know That Is To Know The Fear Of God To Know The Fear Of God Is To Recognize That We Don't Belong To Ourselves But We Belong To Him And If We Fear God We Will Know That We Must Have What Paul Talks About In Romans Chapter One

We Must Have A Righteousness That Comes From Faith For Faith Why Why do We need That Righteousness Because All Have Sinned And Fall Short Of The Glory Of God Our Words Expose It Our Minds Reveal It Why Are We Told That Their Throat Is An Open Grave That Their Words Are Death We're Told That Because Mankind Is Spiritually Dead Paul Tells Us In The Letter To The Ephesians Ephesians Chapter Two That We Are Dead In Our Sins And Trespasses And So We Actually Don't Have The Power By Our We Can't Pull Our Our So Up By The Boot Traps And Suddenly Make Our Words Honest And True Economical And Few Wise And Well Chosen Common Kind You're Not Powerful Enough To Do That You

Can't Do It On Your Own You See The Problem I've Told You Before The Gospel Is This The Gospel Is The Admission That We Must Change And The Recognition We Cannot Change Ourselves And In Holding Those Two Things There Is Great Hope Remember When We Were In The Gospel Of Mark Chapter Two Jesus Is Accused Of Eating With Sinners And Tax Collectors What Kind Of Words Do You Think Came Out Of Sinners And Tax Collectors Mouths Yeah Not Good Ones And So The Scribes And The Pharisees Come And They Say Jesus Why Are You Doing This Why Are You Hanging Out With These People And He Says This Those Who Are Well Have No Need Of A Physician But Those Who Are Sick I Came Not To Call The Righteous But Sinners Do You That

[28 : 28] You're Sick Do You Know That You're A Sinner Do You Know That You Must Change And You Cannot Change Yourself Jesus Christ Offers To Heal You Come To Him In Faith Let's Pray Our Father In Heaven We Do Praise You And Thank You For Your Word That Pierces Us To Our Heart That Challenges Us That Shows Us Our Great Need For You And Your Grace And Also Reminds Us That Your Grace Is Greater Than Our Sin We Ask That You Would Move Us With Great Conviction That We Would See Even More Our Need For You We Would Embrace Even More Your Grace And Your Mercy In Jesus Christ We Ask These