

You Don't Say!

People will often say one thing to one person, then quite the opposite to another. We call that, “talking out of both sides of your mouth.” Peter was an impulsive, impetuous man who often let his mouth get him into trouble. We see a few examples of this malady in today's Templates of Truth.

Jesus was the talk of the town! In a conversation with His disciples, He asked them, *Who do people say that I am?* (Mark 8:27). That question is vitally important. You and I are not important, and it is really not that important what anyone thinks about us. But Jesus is very important and it is decidedly important what a person thinks about Jesus. After telling Jesus what they had heard from the crowds, the question was rephrased to make it far more personal – *But who do you say that I am?* (Mark 8:29). That question is also vitally important. It doesn't matter what other people say about Jesus as much as it matters what you say about Jesus. What others believe about Jesus has no bearing whatsoever on your eternity. What you believe about Jesus has everything to do with your eternity.

Peter was the first to speak up, and his answer was profound indeed – *Thou art the Christ* (Mark 8:29). In Matthew's account of this conversation, Jesus affirmed that Peter was given this understanding from the Father Himself in heaven (Matthew 16:17). With the answer revealing His identity as the promised Messiah of God, Jesus then seized the opportunity to inform them about His impending death, burial and resurrection. That news stunned His disciples, and Peter (once again) was the first to take *Him aside and rebuke Him* (Mark 8:32). Matthew quotes Peter's exact rebuke: *God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to you!* (Matthew 16:22). As my mother use to often say, Peter let his “mouth overload his brain!” Peter had no clue what he was really saying. Had his words been honored, the world's redemption from the condemnation of sin would have never been accomplished, including Peter's. That answer certainly did not come from the Father in heaven! It came straight from the pits of hell, and Jesus call it what it was: *Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's* (Mark 8:33). When our mind and our mouth do not represent the truth of God, they manifest the lies of Satan.

Well, in spite of this malfunction of the tongue, Peter was privy to a most extraordinary experience – the Transfiguration of Christ. There, Peter witnessed the appearance of Elijah and Moses talking with Jesus. There were simply no words feasible enough to capture the awesome majesty of that moment (as Mark 9:6 affirms), but Peter found some – *Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah* (Mark 9:5). Like before, Peter had no clue what he was really saying. Note, first of all, his pride-free humility – *it is good for us to be here*. In other words, “Of all the twelve, you picked the best three, Jesus, to share this special experience with.” Then notice how Peter placed Jesus on the same level with Moses and Elijah, while also establishing that they were as worthy of worship as Jesus was. If that weren't enough, Peter's imperative demanded that Jesus help in

building His own altar. Peter would have been better off to have just kept his mouth shut. When you don't know what to say, it is usually best that you say nothing at all.

Yes, Peter had a problem. In one moment he could be the mouthpiece of God, and in the next moment, a mouthpiece for Satan. That is a problem you and I often have as well. James captures the essence of this malady when he says, *No one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil, full of poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father; and with it we curse men* (James 3:8-9). We mean well; we don't intend to undermine, but the way it comes out is just all wrong. What is the solution to our problem? The voice from the Transfiguration cloud provides the answer – *This is My beloved Son, listen to Him* (Mark 9:7). Quit talking and listen. Don't just listen to anybody, listen to God's Son. The best place to hear Jesus is in His Word, the Bible. When you and I spend a portion of each day studying and meditating on the words of Scripture, we gain an insight and understanding of God that imparts wisdom and knowledge far beyond mere words. When we do, we are less likely to engage mouth before we engage mind, soul and spirit.

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide in Christ. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in the Lord Jesus.

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