

THE REST OF THE STORY

(Going Deeper & Personal Application of Sunday Sermons)

Luke 11

7-Second Delay

Live radio and television shows use a **7-second delay** on their broadcast programs. It's a good practice that avoids offending the audience by protecting them from profanity, slander, and most unnecessary verbal abuse of impulsive, irate, or vulgar people might blurt out without warning. It isn't clear why 7 seconds seems best to delay airing a program where *verbal diarrhea* may be a possibility, but it does allow time to delete that segment or bleep it out before sending it out to the audience.

However much time you may decide is up to you, but since social media isn't going to do the same with phones, email, Facebook, Twitter, etc. it is up to each of us (especially Christians) to hold that thought before hitting the *send* button. Taking a just a few seconds or minutes to prayerfully think about what you've written may *buy time* for you to change your mind, edit, or delete what was impulsively written. Since someday, when our lives will be accounted for (**2 Corinthians 5:10**) and we must account for 'every idle word' (**Matthew 12:35-37**), it is important to prayerfully consult with God's Spirit before emitting the words and pictures you can never retrieve once the *send* button is pushed.

Take this concept to another level – what about that personal broadcasting thing we wear on the front of our head-- our mouth? Mature people should have the ability to *delay* for just a few seconds, minutes, or hours, maybe days to think about what comes out of that opening between the nose and chin. What would it hurt to '**S.T.O.P.**' (**Stop, Think Over, Pray**) before saying something, especially if we are feeling emotional about the issue?

Immature people just blabber out whatever they feel without calmly *proof-thinking* through what they are about to say. So much damage (*much of the time irreparable*) is done by people saying things that later they regrettably say '*I didn't really mean it*' (*another problem then – you're lying, because at the moment you said it, you did mean it*) (**James 3:2-12**). Why not have a few basic principles about any communication you feel compelled to make:

- 1) be sure you correspond only AFTER you have ALL the facts about something (**Proverbs 14:15**),
- 2) be sure you have taken a moment to ask God's Spirit to help you respond (or not) appropriately (**John 16:13-15, Ephesians 4:26, 29-32**),
- 3) honestly ask yourself "Do you really have to say or write this right now?" Or, can you wait a little bit to pray and see if things change or your feelings calm down?
- 4) Will what you are about to send makes things better or stir up more bad emotions, just making matters worse (**Proverbs 10:11, 10:19-20, 10:32; 15:1-4, 15:23; 16:23-24; 17:27-28; 21:23; 29:20; 25:11-12**).

A few moments to *pause* and *think* before you *speak* or *send* will change your life and those who hear you – "**Death and life are in the power of the tongue.**" (**Proverbs 18:21**).

Of course, the mouth only broadcasts the programs being produced in our minds and heart. The Lord Jesus goes to the *heart* of the matter (**Matthew 12:35-37**). Control and *delay* must start as a decision of our mind. The Spirit-filled mind of a believer must reserve the authority to put a *hold* on emotions erupting in our heart before releasing a response through our mouth and fingertips (**Colossians 3:12-17**). We proofread important papers for errors, so why shouldn't we proofread our reactions and responses before submitting them to others – once it's said or sent it's too late to do anything about it and we become accountable before God for any blessing or damage done by it. Why not try using the *delay* feature in all communications you feel sure you really need to *send*? A bit of time to **Stop, Think Over & Pray** about your words, may save you a lot of trouble with others now and before the Lord later, on Judgment Day. **PtL**

War of the Words

(Jesus' Great Judean Ministry versus The Enemy's Open Warfare)

Luke 11:14-28 & Matthew 12:22-37

Background review: Jesus and the twelve have come south from Galilee after the fall festival of Tabernacles and sent 70 (72) other new disciples into Judea ministering and preaching just as the twelve had in the north (*Luke 10*). With the twelve restored to usefulness again by Christ's teaching on the importance of prayer to a disciple, their summer slump is quickly replaced with confrontation by the religious establishment of Jerusalem (*Matthew 12 & Luke 11*). The war was on following Jesus' healing of a man who was mute (*also blind according to Matthew 12:32*) (*Luke 11:14*). Upon being healed, the man must have uttered some sort of thanks and praise to Jesus, stating something about Him being the *Son of David* (a term for Messiah). This does seem to be the case because of the slanderous way the religious leaders there responded to the crowd's reaction to the healed man's words: "*Could this be the Son of David?*" (*Matthew 12:23*).

The religious leaders (*Pharisees according to Matthew 12:24 & scribes / Matthew 12:38*) instantly blurting out that Jesus' powers to heal were from the devil. Jesus calmly refutes their impetuously blasphemous charge with logic and reason (*Luke 11:15-23*), teaching about demonic activity after being evicted (*Luke 11:24-26*) and a warning about their eternally fatal commission of the *unpardonable sin* (*Matthew 12:31-32*). To conclude this initial outbreak of hostilities against Him, Jesus teaches about being very, very careful about making snap judgments and critical remarks with one's words because we will give account for all we say on Judgment Day... (*Matthew 12:33-37*).

Answering Hostile Critics

(Jesus' calm, rational response to slander)

Luke 11:16-26

- How did Jesus' way of confronting those who publicly slandered Him differ from the way most people would handle it? How do you think the 12 felt about it?
- What is your natural instinct and response when you are criticized, lied about or publicly slandered? But if you are a Christian with the Holy Spirit in control, how should we respond? (*1 Peter 2:21-23, Matthew 5:23-26, Galatians 6:1, Matthew 18:15-17*)

Warning Sinful People

(Jesus' stern, biblical rebuke of serious sin)

Matthew 12:33-37

- In calling the religious leaders a 'brood of vipers' (*exclamation point*) describe the demeanor you think Christ changed to after reasoning with them about their criticism. Do you think there is a place for speaking sternly to someone about their sinful words and/or ways? What level of seriousness should be reserved for such firm, indignation?
- Do you think Jesus employed **2 Timothy 3:16-17 & 4:2-4** when rebuking sinfulness?
- Have you ever had to be this firm with anyone? Will you be if confronted with sin?
- How many times should we rebuke somebody who continues in sin? (*Titus 3:9-10*)?

Correcting False Teaching

(Jesus' gracious refute of wrong positions)

Luke 11:27-28

- What was right and wrong with what the woman said about Mary? How could the crowd hearing her have taken her words wrong? Talk about Jesus' diplomatic response to her and lessons for us on correcting error.
- Why wasn't Jesus *tough* with her? How can we tell when to be tough, or tender? (*Jude 21-22*)

Sunday Preview: Miraculous Signs & Wonders

(Jesus' downplaying of supernatural drama)

Matthew 12:39-45 & Luke 11:29-32

Near the time of His sacrifice on the cross and resurrection, Jesus performed fewer and fewer miraculous signs. After His resurrection and ascension, the apostles will resume miraculous signs and wonders for the period of their lives until the New Testament Scriptures were finished, approved, and compiled (*canonized*) (*2 Corinthians 12:12 & 1 Corinthians 13:8-10*). After the 1st Century *Apostolic Era* many of the miraculous signs and wonders diminished and some were done away with because they were for the *foundational period of the Church Age* (*Ephesians 2:20*). Now that we have the completed New Testament to preach and believe, it, the Bible, is the sign language needed for faith and righteousness (*2 Peter 1:16-21*). Miracles may still happen as God wills, but they certainly aren't as prevalent as the first century or where the Scriptures haven't yet been translated and taught. **Discuss any thoughts on this position in preparation for Sunday.**