

Peace for the Journey ... June 9, 2010

Scripture Reading: [James 3:1-12](#)

"If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all."

How many of us heard these words in some form or another when we were growing up. Whether from parents or teachers (or even a hurt friend) we learned this simple lesson. Most of us have experienced the truth that words have power, and that what we say matters. Think about how you feel when you hear the words, "I love you," from someone special. On the other hand, think about how it feels to hear, "I hate you."

We also learned -- sometimes the hard way -- that very often the best thing we can do in a difficult situation is to say nothing at all.

"It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to open one's mouth and remove all doubt."
Abraham Lincoln*

As Christians we are often eager to talk about God and faith. We are eager to share the Good News, and rightly so, but sometimes our silence also tells a powerful story. This is not just to say that "actions speak louder than words," but that silence -- biting (bridling) our tongue -- "says" a lot.

Think about words you've spoken recently: are there any words you wish you could take back? Have you repeated some juicy gossip that hurt a friend? Have you tried to be funny at someone's expense? Have you said something unkind to someone else, just to make yourself feel better? Have you put someone down, to make yourself look better?

Look for opportunities this week to keep silent. Sometimes you can "say" a lot by saying nothing.

Dear God: Forgive me for the ways I have misused the gift of speech. Help me learn to use my words to build up more than I use them to tear down. Teach me to be silent, not only so I can hear your voice, but so that my silence can be a witness to my confidence in you. Amen.