

WORDS THAT CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Nov. 17, 2019

Rev. Lori Fleming

Rev. Fleming: The title of my talk today is “Words That Can Change Your Life.” Since the very beginning, human beings have looked for words to express what they saw all around them. To explain natural phenomenon – the rain and the snow – because they didn’t have science. They didn’t understand it. They just had to explain it by observation. They tried to control their environment by different words. They imagined that a storm up on the mountain with lightning and thunder meant that God was angry. And they had to find the right prayers to appease this angry God.

They used words to summon the good things they wanted in life: fame, and power, and love. Through poetry and songs, we see beautiful words in those things. They tried to be like the great illusionists, like David Copperfield, and come up with a magic term that would bring whatever they wanted into their life – like abracadabra, presto change – to fulfill their desires. They created legends and stories about wise men that could spin straw into gold. They had legends and fairy tales about witches who could come up with a brew to either cure and heal or curse someone, or maybe even make a love potion.

Ancient people tried calling – invoking – the spirits of the gods on their behalf through the use of words. The ancient Israelites developed a whole way of making animal sacrifices to appease this angry God so that they would be in right relationship with God.

As human beings, we have always looked for the right words to express what we were saying. We’ve looked for words to stop the storms in our lives. You remember the story about Jesus and his disciples; they got in a boat and they rowed out to the middle of the Sea of Galilee, and this storm blew up. And there was lightening and there was thunder, and the rain was blowing sideways, and the disciples were afraid. And they woke Jesus up – I don’t know how he could sleep through that, but that’s the story.

[Congregation laughs]

They woke Jesus up and they said, “*Master, Master; do something!*” He stood up in the boat. He claimed his power. He put his arms out and he said, “*Peace. Be still.*”

Peace. Be still. That’s how we calm all the storms in our lives: by a simple use of the words, “*Peace. Be still.*” Because simply using words makes it come into being! Our words create our world by speaking them, by believing them, by having faith in them and by acting on them. What we speak and what we think creates our reality. So watch what you’re saying!

Words have the power to change our lives. In the book, *Open your Mind to Receive*, Rev. Catherine Ponder, a well-known Unity minister who wrote lots and lots of books on prosperity, tells a story about one of her prosperity classes. A man comes to her who owns a restaurant. And he says, “*My restaurant’s not doing very well. I’ve been here years. I used to have lots and lots of clientele, but they seem to have wandered away. What should I do?*” And she said, “*Well, let me come over to the restaurant and I’ll see what I think.*”

So a couple of days later, she goes to the restaurant, and the minute she walks in, it's dingy and it's not very clean. And it's not fresh and, you know, the menus have stains on them. And she figures out right away that's the problem. And she tells him, *"You need to freshen up this place. Some paint, you know. Clean it up a little bit."* He said, *"Alright; that's what I'll do."* And then she notices as she's getting ready to leave there was a sign by the cash register and it said, *"This is a non-profit business. We didn't plan it to be that way, it just worked out that way."*

[Congregation laughs]

Words have the power to change our lives! She recommended he get rid of that sign ...

[Congregation laughs]

...because it was bringing to him a non-profit restaurant. The words were actually creating losses in his business! She said if he wanted to prosper, he had to get rid of his negative thinking and the negative words.

Every day each one of us uses lots, and lots and lots of words. And our words are powerful. They produce results that match their meaning. So, say what you mean and mean what you say!

Many times, we don't pay attention to the words we're saying. We say them by rote. I'm going to say some negative words, so I want you to know that ahead of time – that's a spoiler alert. Do not take these words into your consciousness! You may have said some of these yourself. *"Oh, that makes me sick."* Or *"I hate it when..."* Or even worse, we invite other people into our hatred and we say, *"Don't you just hate it when..." whatever.*

My mother, who had four kids in less five years – and we were pretty rowdy – used you say, *"You kids are driving me crazy!"* And she was right!

[Congregation laughs]

It was our personal mission as children!

[Rev. Lori and congregation laugh]

Before a play starts, we say to the actors, *"Break a leg!"* or *"Knock 'em dead."* Oh goodness, I really, really, really would not want someone to say that to me as I was coming out here to speak to you, and then find all of you in that condition.

[Congregation laughs]

Yikes! Watch what you say! If you don't watch what you say, you're going to be sick, hateful, crazy, with a broken leg and maybe dead.

[Congregation laughs]

Eliminate those words from your vocabulary!

Our words create our world. But sometimes, what we wear speaks louder than words. For example, the gentleman with the Rolex watch, or the lady with the diamond ring, or beautiful designer clothes. That speaks of prosperity, doesn't it?

I was at a theme park in Orlando a few years ago, and this couple was coming toward me. And they both had on light blue T-shirts with white words. And the words said, "I'm with stupid." And they had arrows that pointed to each other... except they weren't walking in the right position; they were reversed, so the arrows pointed away.

[Congregation laughs]

But who wears a T-shirt like that? ***[Rev. Lori laughs]*** Or, who goes with a person that wears a T-shirt like that? Maybe that's a better question!

[Rev. Lori and congregation laugh]

I guess that tells a story!

So, last year, because my grandson – it was his first Christmas – I bought a whole lot of things out of catalogues. And a lot of them were for children. And this year, I've gotten catalogues I never even knew existed! It's been really fun. One of the catalogues I got was a catalogue of T-shirts that have slogans on them. I'm going to share some of those with you.

For some reason, there's a T-shirt that's about Robert. Now, I don't know if you can change the name if you're not Robert, but they have Robert T-shirts. The one I liked the best was: "Robert: the man; the myth; the legend."

[Rev. Lori and congregation laugh]

Or for some of us, we might want to wear this one: "Born to be wild," and underneath in little letters it says, "Until 9 p.m."

[Rev. Lori and congregation laugh]

And how many of you have pets? This is for you if you have pets: "Dogs have owners; cat have staff."

[Congregation laughs]

And if you have a cat, you know that's true!

I like this one: "Some of my best friends are imaginary."

[Rev. Lori and congregation laugh]

And there are some for siblings, right? There's one that says: "I'm the oldest; I make the rules." "I'm the middle; I'm the reason there are rules." "I'm the youngest; the rules don't apply to me"

[Congregation laughs]

Or there's one that says, "I'm an only child; what are rules?"

[Rev. Lori and congregation laugh]

There is one that says, "I don't repeat gossip, so listen carefully."

[Congregation laughs]

There's one with a baby onesie – the little t-shirt that snaps between the legs that are so cute – and it says, "I still live with my parents."

[Rev. Lori and congregation laugh]

Here's my personal favorite, though: "Being cremated is my last hope for a smokin' hot body."

[Congregation laughs]

That's a good one; that's a good one!

[Rev. Lori and congregation laugh]

Even words that are printed on a T-shirt help create our reality! Because words have the power to change our lives. Catherine Ponder says that words are your gift of prophecy. Now, she's not talking about some special psychic gift that only a few have. Prophecy means an oral utterance. In the dictionary, it's defined as: "To make a prediction, or to utter, as if by Divine inspiration." What you're talking about is Divinely inspired to create in your life. Think about that! To prophesy means to predict with assurance.

So, Catherine Ponder says, *"Our words become our prophecy – a prediction of the future – simply by speaking them, hearing them and believing them."* She said if you're not satisfied with your life, you can begin using your gift of prophecy to improve your life. She said that we can change our words; then we'll change our world. She said that, when we improve our words, we will improve our world. And when we transform our words, we transform our world.

Are you ready for that? I'm ready for that! I am ready to transform this world into a place that's sustainable for all. Words are causal. They evoke feelings and they convey meanings. They literally draw what we are talking about to us. They're like a magnet!

Catherine was moving out of her apartment. Her son [Richard] had grown up and joined the Air Force and he was no longer living in the apartment with her. She was trying to pack everything up, and you know difficult that is. She kept thinking to herself, *"Oh, I wish Richard was here. He'd be able to help me. He knows how to move things. And he knows how to take things apart. Oh, I wish Richard were here."*

And then she stopped herself, because she realized Richard had his own life now. She had to figure this out on her own, and it wasn't fair to call him back. So pretty soon, the doorbell rings. And the two little neighbor kids come over – a little boy and a little girl – and they say, *"Hey, Rev. Ponder, we heard you're moving; can we help you pack?"* She's like, *"Well, yeah; sure. Come on in!"* So, she got them busy – I don't know; maybe she gave them books. You know, they don't break. They're little kids.

[Congregation laughs]

Ministers have lots, and lots, and lots of books! And so, they were working away and it was starting to get done faster, and she's like, *"Thank you, God, for sending me help. I really appreciate that!"*

And the doorbell rings again, and she answers the door. And there's a young man standing there. He's about the same height as her son. And he says, *"Hi, Rev. Ponder; I'm visiting my parents next door. My little brother and sister are helping you. I'm wondering if you need some help. Maybe I can move*

something for you – take something apart.” And she’s like, “Oh my goodness; that’s exactly what I need! Come on in!” And she stopped and she said, “What’s your name?” And he said, “Richard.”

[Congregation murmurs]

Exactly! Exactly! That’s exactly what he said! Her gift of prophecy – wishing that Richard were there – had brought another Richard to her to give her help!

Words have the power to change your life! Jesus understood this mysterious power of prophecy and the spoken word. His disciples were asking him, *“Master, you know you’re getting so popular. All these people are coming to hear you. And many of them are not Jewish, and we’re Jewish, and we’re not allowed to eat with people who aren’t Jewish... who don’t follow our dietary laws. What are we going to do? You know we’re out in the field, and we’re talking. And people are bringing out food and we’re not allowed to be with them?”* And Jesus had these amazing words; he said, *“It’s not what goes into the mouth that defiles us. It’s what comes out of the mouth that defiles us.”*

It’s not what goes into us that defiles us; it’s what comes out of our mouths that defiles us! Are we speaking words that defile us? Are we saying that terrible four-letter word I don’t ever want to hear you say? *“Can’t?”* Are we holding ourselves back from our greater good because we say we can’t do it? That we’re not strong enough or smart enough or pretty enough or rich enough? *“I can’t; I can’t.”* Don’t say it! Remove that word from your vocabulary!

Start using words that give us life and vitality and illumination. Every word we say sets up this vibration of whatever we’re saying, and it causes that thing to be drawn to us. You know, we know that, when people are sick and they’re trying to invent a new drug, they get a group of people who have the same illness and they divide them in half. One side they give them the drug that they’re testing, and on the other side they give them a placebo: a drug that has absolutely no effect. And if the drug is good, and it works, the people on the drug get better. But the interesting thing is a lot of times the people on the placebo also get better. Why? Because they’re told that this is a drug that’s going to make them better. It’s the power of suggestion.

Now, if you’re feeling bad, and you keep saying how sick you are, don’t expect to get better. You’re just going to get sicker! Have you ever been to an “organ recital”? An organ recital is when old people get together and they talk about their hip replacements...

[Congregation laughs]

... I have one! Their knee replacements, their gallbladder surgery, their cataract surgery – that’s an organ recital.

[Congregation laughs]

But, you know, if you’re sick and you start saying, *“I’m feeling better; I’m feeling better,”* before long, you’ll be feeling better! That’s just how our minds work. The great Emmet Fox advises us to go on a “mental diet” to stop thinking negative things. I’m going to take that a step further. Go on a mental diet to stop thinking negative things, and go on an oral diet to stop saying negative things.

In his book, *Prosperity*, Charles Fillmore –co-founder of the Unity movement – says, *“Your words are charged with great spiritual life force. Be careful of your words. We are held accountable for our lightest*

word. If you speak negative words, your substance will be decreased. If you talk in a positive, appreciative, grateful way, you will be prospered."

There's the formula, my friends. Get positive! It's all we need to know! But are we practicing it? Some of you are, I know. Are we matching every word that we say with positive things? Mr. Fillmore says, in *Christian Healing*, "Certain words, used persistently, mold and transform conditions in the body, in the mind and in the affairs."

There's a four-letter word that I'm going to let you say. And that word is "love." Because love overcomes hate, resistance, opposition, obstinacy, anger, jealousy and all states of consciousness where there's a mental or physical friction. Mr. Fillmore says, "Every word brings forth after its own kind because it's a seed with a creative idea inherent in it. And it comes straight from the parental source – which is God."

So, maybe instead of saying, "Don't you just hate that?" we could say, instead – no matter what it is – "Don't you just love that?" Love it right out of your life!

[Congregation laughs]

Bye! Imagine the results that would come from saying that you love everything! Love is a generative energy that changes everything! Do your mental housekeeping and get rid of all those poverty words.

The Buddhists say to practice it this way: "Practice right effort. Encourage good, helpful thoughts. Discourage unwholesome destructive thoughts." Well, that's exactly what Mr. Fillmore was saying: practice right mindfulness. Be aware of what you feel, think, and do in every moment. Practice right meditation. Calm mind. Practice meditation, which leads to nirvana. (That's, "Peace. Be still" Nirvana is enlightenment.) Because we have the power of our words to change our lives.

In his book, *The Four Agreements*, by Don Miguel Ruiz, the first agreement is: Be impeccable with your words. He says, "Why your word? Your word is the power you have to create. Your word is a gift that comes directly from God." He quotes the Gospel of John. It says, "In the beginning, there was the word, and the word was with God, and the word is God." Through your word, you express your creative power. It's through your word that you manifest everything... not just some things. Everything! What you dream, what you feel, what you really manifest is through the word.

Remember Daniel Nahmod? We sing his songs all the time. He's been here; he's a fabulous singer. He writes all his songs and the words are amazing – so good. He was at the Southeast Regional Conference about four years ago. And there's one song on his album that I love, and it's his version of "Alleluia." And he does it with a female voice, and I asked him who that person was. I said, "Her voice is beautiful! I would love it if you did more songs with her." And he said, "So would I! She's my wife. And she doesn't think she can sing." And I'm like, "Holy cow!" He said her brother told her when she was a little girl that she had a terrible voice, and she believed that – to this day, as an adult! Which is really a shame, because she's gone through life missing opportunities to share that beautiful voice with so many people.

She made an agreement – let someone else make an agreement – for her that colored her life. Are we allowing someone else in our life – someone's opinion, even though it's erroneous – do we believe it? Are we taking their opinion and making an agreement that defines who we are? I hope not!

People who are financially poor have used their words and talked themselves into prosperity through better jobs or through more business. They've affirmed it and it has come into their life!

If you have trouble getting along with someone at work... Many years ago there was someone I had trouble working with. And so, I developed an affirmation. I'm going to make up the name so you won't know who it is – to protect the guilty... I mean, the innocent.

[Congregation laughs]

And it was, “Go, Johnny; go, Johnny; go, go, go! Go, Johnny; go, Johnny; go, go, go!” Pretty soon, Johnny announced he had gotten a better job.

[Congregation laughs]

He'd gotten a raise. We threw a great going away party! We were really glad to see Johnny go; Johnny, go; Johnny, go, go, go!

[Congregation laughs]

That's how you get rid of the things in your life you don't like. Go, go, go!

When we begin to recognize the power of our words – how it influences our body, how it influences our spirit, how it influences everything – it's like saying, “*Abracadabra, Presto Chango.*” How many times have you bought a lottery ticket and you said to yourself, “*I don't know why I'm buying this thing; I never win anything.*”

[Congregation laughs]

Yeah. Well, don't be surprised if you're not winning. Change your affirmation!

In *Chicken Soup for the Soul-Think Positive; Live Happy*, there's a story about a woman, who – every time there's any kind of contest – she entered it. So, she entered a contest to win cat food, to win a trip to Hawaii, and one to join the Pepsi Generation. That was a pretty long time ago, but you may remember that. So, the cat food company sent her a check for \$50 – pretty good. She didn't win the trip to Hawaii, but they sent her a Polaroid camera – that was pretty good. And the Pepsi people sent her a biking outfit, because on the entry they asked what her favorite sport was, and she said biking. So, she got a biking outfit.

So, a few months go by, and she sees an announcement on the bulletin board at the Women's Center promoting a class, “Learning the Art and Skill of Winning Contests and Sweepstakes.” Well, that sounds like fun! She was intrigued, so she signed up. Now she took a lot of classes and so, she had this game she played with her husband. She'd say, “*Honey, I signed up for another class. Can you guess what it is?*” And he had 20 questions to ask to figure out what it was. Well, this is the first one that she stumped him. And when she told him what it was, he said, “*Really? Do you really think there's any skill to winning a contest?*” She got her back up and she said, “*Let me tell you something; I'm saying right now that, by the end of this year, I'm going to win something that's worth more than \$5,000. You just wait and see!*”

So, she went to the class. The teacher was telling them all about all the things that she had won. And the first thing that she suggested was that they subscribe to a contest newsletter. I didn't even know there was such a thing! I guess it lists all the sweepstakes and things that are going on. Maybe they can advertise in them. She said, “*There's only one rule. You have to follow the instructions of the contest perfectly. If they want you to write your name and address on 3X5 card and put it in a #10 envelope, and*

write in block letters – do that exactly. Don't write in cursive and don't send a postcard. If they want a postcard, send a postcard. And only give them the information they want. Do exactly as they say."

And then she told them, *"Even if there's a major trip – like the trip to Hawaii – a lot of times they give away small prizes, too."* Like the woman who'd gotten the Polaroid camera. And then she reminded them of the three P's: Patience, Persistence, and Postage. And the woman said, "Wait a minute, there's another one: Positive Thinking."

So, the woman went out and got some 3x5 cards, she got some envelopes, she got some postage and she started filling out all these entries. Well, as the weeks went by, her mail got really interesting. She got seven Polaroid cameras.

[Congregation laughs]

Assorted t-shirts, flowers, one of those big exercise balls, potted plants, costume jewelry, books, wallets. She was just winning stuff all over the place! There was some pretty interesting and weird stuff that were these sub-prizes. And the ones she couldn't use, she gave away to her friends.

So, later in November, she gets a phone call. She answers the phone and they ask if it's her name. She says, "Yes." And they say, *"You have just won a fully loaded Ford Escort Station Wagon."* She's like, *"Oh my goodness!"* So, she calls her husband at work. She never calls him at work to bother him! She said, *"Sorry to bother you, Honey, but remember when I said that I was going to win something more than \$5,000 before the end of the year? Guess what I won?"* She told him she'd won a car. He couldn't believe it!

So, when she went down to pick up the car; it was given by the newspaper, not even the Ford Motor Company. She went down to pick up the car and they took pictures of her and they interviewed her. And when it was over she said, *"I just have one question. In your entry, it said you were only allowed one entry per family. Did anybody do more than one entry?"* They said, *"Oh, yeah; lots of people did. You know what we did with those? We took them all and threw all of them away. They lost their right to win when they didn't follow the directions."* And the caveat is: the next week she went a charity function and she won a bottle of wine – she didn't drink wine – she gave it to her friend. She told her friend, *"Remember the power of positive thinking!"*

Can we begin to use our positive thinking and positive words to create exactly what we want in our lives? Once we've developed this new habit of speaking and thinking, our positive words and positive thoughts will bring our good to us! We don't have to use that incantation, *"Abracadabra; Presto chango."* We don't need a magic potion or a spell. The positive words of simple faith that we know what we're speaking about is coming true makes us constantly aware of God's presence, right here and right now. And that it's God's good pleasure to give us the kingdom as our divine birthright, because all good comes from God. And God wants us to live abundantly, limitlessly, with lots and lots of blessings. And that's why I say words have the power to change your life. Thank you.

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Thank you to volunteer Hollie Nelson for transcribing this message