

Sunday | LUKE 12:11-12

We live in a world awash in words. Tweets, billboards, texts, taglines, blogs, podcasts, headlines, newsfeeds, talk shows. Silence rarely surrounds us, and we become uncomfortable with anything less than a full assault on our senses. Whenever we find ourselves waiting or with a moment to spare, we instinctively go to a screen, scroll, distract ourselves and disengage from much that is all around us. Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit to give us the words we most need when we most need them. All that Jesus asks of his disciples, he equips us to do. Jesus grounds his admonition not to worry in the promise that he will give us what we need when we are called upon to do his work. Nonetheless, we find ourselves often anxious and afraid. Could that be related to our sensory overload, our constant distraction, our inability to tune out the noise and hone our hearing to the Spirit's signal?

Words matter and yet we blithely speak without thought, post without prayer, text without considering the consequences. We quickly respond to whatever stimulus is in front of us instead of stopping to seek the Spirit's wisdom first.

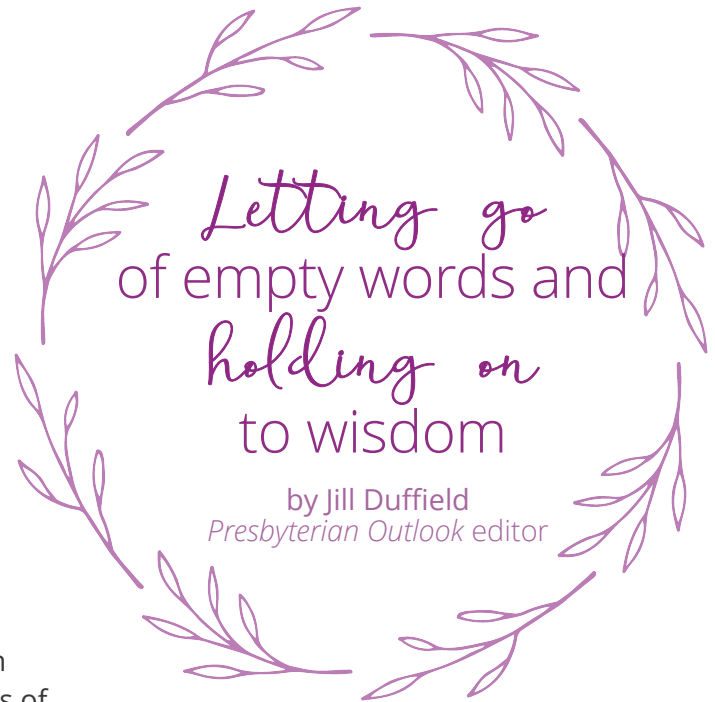
What if this Lent we sought to let go of all that distracts us and attempted to discern the words the Spirit is giving us to speak and enact? We will surely mishear and fall short, but grace abounds and God continues to teach us. This week could we challenge ourselves to pay close attention to the words we utter and type and disseminate and ask ourselves if they reflect the teachings of Jesus, the character of God and the wisdom of the Spirit?

*Lord, Word made flesh, grace upon grace, we pause to listen for what you are saying to your church. We lean in to hear your wisdom so that our speech will reflect your character. Guide our thoughts, our words, our actions so that all we do, every sound we utter, builds up and contributes to your present and coming kingdom. Amen.*

Monday | EPHESIANS 4:29

Today prayerfully attempt to use only words that give grace, that are useful for building up. At the end of the day, mentally review what you said or wrote. How did you do? How hard was it? Ask for forgiveness for when your words were less than grace-filled. Give thanks for when you were able to use upbuilding words.

*You are the Word, grace upon grace, and we want to reflect you in our own words. Forgive us when our words tear down or destroy that which you wish to build up and heal. Silence in us any voice but yours, that we might hear and imitate your performative, good, life-giving speech. Amen.*



*Tuesday* | ISAIAH 59:21

What does covenant mean to you? What does it mean that God has made a covenant with us, a covenant that confers God's words and Spirit upon us? Who are the people you know whose words and actions reflect God's words and Spirit? What is it about them that communicates God's words?

*God who communicates in a myriad of ways, we praise you for the people we know who speak your language fluently. We are grateful for their witness and words, the ways they point to you and inspire us to do likewise. We, too, hope to learn and live your divine lexicon in ways that call forth the good and beautiful. Amen.*

*Wednesday* | JOEL 2:28-29

God speaks through diverse voices. No one is off limits to God's power and Spirit. Often God chooses unexpected people to further divine plans. Are there people God may be speaking to and through whom you disregard? Pay attention today to who might be speaking God's word. Are they who you expected? What did they say?

*Lord of all, you pour out your Spirit where and when and to whom you will. We assume we know the likely candidates for your work, but a quick review of Bible stories reminds us of how wide and varied the protagonists you pick are. Attune us to your word, no matter who speaks it, so that we can hear and heed it. Amen.*

*Thursday* | ACTS 2:4

The Spirit gives the first disciples the ability to speak in a multitude of languages in order to tell of God's deeds of power. What are the languages, literally and metaphorically, we are called to speak in order to best communicate God's story in our context? How is God teaching those languages to us?

*Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us. Mold us and shape us. Grant us the languages we need to best share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Silence us when necessary. Open us to learning new things so that we can participate in the new thing you are doing in our midst. Amen.*

*Friday* | MATTHEW 12:36-37

Are there words you have uttered that you do not want to give God an account for saying? If so, are there ways you can make amends and ask for forgiveness for them? Review recent conversations, emails and social media posts and consider if you want to be held accountable for them or not.

*Merciful God, do you really call us to account for every careless word we utter? Knowing you are merciful and abounding in steadfast love, we confess the frequency of such carelessness and ask for forgiveness. We trust that you invite us to repent, to turn and attempt to do better. We count on the Spirit helping us in our weakness. Amen.*

*Saturday* | COLOSSIANS 3:17

Today do everything in the name and for the sake of Jesus. Try to give thanks for absolutely everything that comes your way this day. How does this gratitude change your perspective? How does doing everything in and for Jesus change the way you do things? Write down your answers to these questions so that you can go back and reflect on them later.

*Lord Jesus, we know that nothing can separate us from your love. You bless us richly and daily, how then, can we not be thankful and full of joy? Our gratitude cannot be contained or constrained. Thank you for seeking us out. Thank you for reconciling us to God and one another. Thank you for the gift of this day and every day. Amen.*