

Devotional Thoughts :: MAY 18 - THOUGHTS BY WILLIAM MACDONALD

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“...he spake unadvisedly with his lips.” (Psa. 106:33)

When the people of Israel grumbled about the lack of water at Kadesh, God told Moses that water would flow if he would speak to the rock. But Moses was fed up with the people by now, so he lashed out at them, saying, “Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of the rock?” Then he smote the rock twice with his rod. By his angry words and disobedient action, he misrepresented God to the people. The result was that he forfeited the privilege of leading the children of Israel into the promised land (Num. 20:1-13).

It is easy for a man of burning zeal to be intemperate with other believers. He is so self-disciplined whereas they need to be forever babied along. He is so knowledgeable and they so ignorant.

But what he must learn is that they are still God’s beloved people, and that the Lord will not tolerate any verbal abuse of them. It is one thing to preach the Word of God in such power that people are convicted and torn up. But it is quite another thing to scold them severely as an expression of personal irritation. This will cut a man off from God’s best rewards.

When David’s illustrious men are listed in 2 Samuel 23, there is one name that is conspicuous by its absence. It is the name of Joab, David’s commander-in-chief. But why is his name missing? It has been suggested that the reason is that Joab used the sword on some of David’s friends. If so, the incident is full of warning for us when we are tempted to use our tongues as a sword on God’s people.

When James and John, the sons of thunder, wanted to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans, Jesus said, “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of” (Luke 9:55). How apropos the rebuke is to us when we speak unadvisedly with our lips to those who are His not only by creation (as the Samaritans were), but by redemption as well.