

# A Pure Language

(Feast Sermon Notes)

By Warren Zehrung 9/29/2015

Brethren, these are the **last days** – time is short! We’ve been called out of the world. Zephaniah contains a prophetic message of God’s wrath on all the nations. But, let’s ask this question, “How much of the world still remains in us?” Adam and Eve left us an ‘evil’ component in our lives.

Zephaniah 3:6 I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate; I made their streets waste, that none passes by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant.

These are the days of the soon coming tribulation. Hopefully, we, God’s people will be protected from the horrors of those days.

Zephaniah 3:7 I said, Surely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive instruction; so their dwelling should not be cut off, howsoever I punished them: but they rose early, and corrupted all their doings.

God corrected them to bring them to repentance.

Zephaniah 3:8 Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.

But then comes the beginning of the World Tomorrow. The title of today’s sermon comes from Zephaniah 3:9.

Zephaniah 3:9 For then will I turn to the people **a pure language**, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.

Even in God’s Church, we do not serve God with one consent. God is going to give us a language where we understand each other – there will be no ambiguity or misunderstanding. We will see in today’s sermon that with **a pure language** there will be no more false religion or substitute religious practices.

Some people think that this verse means we will all be speaking some kind of pure form of Hebrew. That is not what this is talking about. It will certainly be a pure language – yes – but there is much more to it than that, as we shall see today.

Let me hearken back for a moment. To put this into context, I want to start back with my dad. My dad was a very loveable man. He was a gentle man, he was a kind man. I look forward to seeing him so much, on the Last Great Day. My dad had a gentle heart.

My dad was born in 1916, and he grew up in a kinder and gentler culture when movies were not so graphic.

The last movie my dad ever saw was Dances with wolves.

Dances with Wolves was a 1990 American epic western film directed, produced by, and starring Kevin Costner.

It tells the story of a Union Army lieutenant who traveled to the American frontier to find a military post, and his dealings with a group of Native American Indians.

My dad wanted to see it because he was born and raised in Nebraska and this movie took place in the northern plains states - including South Dakota and Wyoming.

The movie won seven Academy Awards including Best Picture and the Golden Globe Award for Best Motion Picture – for Drama.

But, it was way over the top in tragedy for my dad who spent 28 years in the US Navy and all of WWII.

Drama indeed - it was so violent and harsh with killing and bloodshed that it made my dad ill. And it was a movie. Somehow the standards of culture and society had fallen to a very low quality. Cultural expectations had greatly devolved and plunged very far down.

Brethren, we like to think that we wear a **spiritual raincoat** that keeps the effects of these degraded customs away from our hearts and minds. Yes, we have one foot in God's Kingdom – but we are not entirely separate from this present evil world.

2Corinthians 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and **be ye separate** [from the ways of the world], saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

Ezekiel 9:4 And the LORD said unto [Ezekiel], Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

God is looking for an attitude that is missing in those who are not converted. We can hardly watch the evening news for all the atrocities they show – terrorism, murders, wars, abortions, perversions and every lawless act.

The society we live in causes us to be a calloused people. For example, we have the Biblical story of Abraham's nephew, Lot, who moved down to Sodom – and it gravely affected him and his family. Mrs. Lot yearned to go back!

2Peter 2:7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conduct of the wicked.

God gives us that example of a wrong culture and society to be associated with – even though Lot and his family tried not to be involved in their perversions.

Because Adam and Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil – that **evil** raises its evil head in us sometimes because it is a part of our very human nature. Sometimes inadvertently, and sometimes, shame on us, on purpose.

There must be a remake of our nature – an **inner** change in humanity itself.

Isaiah 11:6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

Isaiah 11:7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

Isaiah 11:8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.

Isaiah 11:9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

Isaiah 11:10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his **rest** shall be glorious. [Think millennial rest.]

Isaiah 11:11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

Isaiah 11:12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Isaiah was not written to the animals – but to us. We can see their nature being changed – but these verses are indicative of the fact that it is **we whose nature must be changed**.

Isaiah 65:24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

The 'unnatural' will become natural.

Isaiah 65:25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.

But, God is interested in changing the nature of humans.

Isaiah 35:5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

Isaiah 35:6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

These are pictures of God's **Spirit** basically changing the nature of mankind.

Isaiah 35:7 And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land **springs of water**.

Isaiah 35:8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The highway of holiness.

Isaiah 35:9 No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:

Zephaniah 3:9 shows us that there is another aspect to calling on the name of the Lord, and that is that there must first be a pure language. We are not as close to God as we can be. We are working on our relationship to God – but we must speak a pure language.

The word translated as “language” requires analysis. “Language” is also translated as “**lip**.” And once the idea of a lip is in place, then there is a natural progression to words and sounds and speech, and thus **language**.

But we need to take this ‘pure language’ concept one step farther. The lips are considered to be the issuing point of the heart. Jesus put it so simply when He said, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”

Proverbs 10:32 says, “The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked what is perverse.”

When we understand what is being said in, “A Pure Language,” we recognize that it is about the intent of who we are in our deepest core – the substance of which we are made. That, our heart of hearts, that is what is going to be made pure.

Some words **fall out of use** as what they describe are no longer relevant, and new words are **created** as the circumstances change. Gone are “ink-wells” and “steno pads.” New words arrive like “terabyte” and “flash-drive.”

Existing words take on new connotations. When I was a kid, “hard-drive” was a trip down a rough road. It is not just that the words are changing – it is **who and what** we are becoming. Young people cannot imagine how far down the tubes we’ve gone in a very short time. When I was a kid, “gender” was a good word. That is because everyone knew that it took a rooster and a hen to make baby chicks. Now, the word “trans-gender” has been perverted.

Brethren, it is what is going on inside of us that counts – how we perceive things – is it Godly or not? Let’s read about God’s ideal society in the millennium and the Kingdom of God.

Zechariah 8:16 These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates:

That is what God desires. But there is still **evil** in our hearts and nature.

Zechariah 8:17 And let none of you imagine **evil in your hearts** against his neighbor; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord.

False dealings and lying tongues are so commonplace today, they have come to be expected. Cheating and rudeness seem to be natural – and they are because our nature is not yet purified – into a pure language. “Natural” is going to be changed to Godly!

Zechariah selects **ten categories** of occupations that form a **culture of corruption**.

Government; Lawyers; Business Men; Judges; Politicians; the Media; Educators; Unions; Religious Men; Social Workers – they are all a part of the **culture of corruption**. They will all have to repent.

Zechariah 8:23 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that **ten men** shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew [spiritual person], saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that **God is with you**.

Those “**Ten ways** to Sunday” will give way to a new culture of **holiness** in the Kingdom of God. Brethren, we are all adversely affected by the societal standards of our day. Even **Church of God** groups are way too worldly. But the day is coming when these ten men will come looking for you, because they will take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew – that’s you a spiritual person, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.

The time will come when those who have not been called will desire to know how to have a pure heart and a pure language. It will be a massive renovation of society as we know of it today. Man’s languages have been divided since the tower of Babel.

Genesis 11:9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there **confound the language of all the earth**: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

All men on earth are adversely affected by this society of which we are a part – even those of us in God’s Church, we must strive to be only a part of God’s way, and adopt His pure language and culture now. We are still way too worldly.

Thus language is not simply a collection of words, but it is also a reflection of the underlying culture. So when the peoples have a pure language, it means that the dominant culture will also have experienced a massive renovation, and the pure language will reflect a far better reality because it will include God.

Isaiah 6:5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean **lips**, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean **lips**: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

The word translated “lips” twice here is the **same Hebrew word** for “language” in Zephaniah 3.

Isaiah’s response here doesn’t necessarily mean that the prophet was in the habit of cussing and swearing like a sailor. Isaiah realized how the culture of his day had rubbed off on him.

The major charge that God had against His people wasn’t the **words** they were speaking, but the pagan and sinful culture they were involved in. A culture that is far from God will certainly have a debased language, but the real problem was that they were going astray **in their hearts**, and not just that they were using foul language.

When Isaiah caught a glimpse of the Almighty, he was crushed by the great contrast of how pure His Lord was, compared to how defiled Isaiah was. So Isaiah symbolically went through a purification ritual. We all need to be purged and refined of our unclean lips – that reflect the evil remaining in our hearts.

Isaiah 6:6-7 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged."

Isaiah did not actually have a sizzling hot coal burn and blister his mouth – but that is what this purification ritual by the angel pictured – the removal of the impure language or culture which Isaiah knew had deeply impacted him. It is only God who can purge the **evil from our nature**.

When Isaiah's iniquity was taken away, and his sin purged, what was really being affected was his **heart and being**.

David sought that 'pure language' of a life of Godliness. With a right attitude, King David examined himself in this way:

Psalms 17:3 Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast **refined me, and shalt find nothing**; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.

Notice how lives are to be changed through God's refining.

Zechariah 13:9 And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God.

That new refinement is a clean heart and a pure language. We understand that sin begins in our heart, even though it is expressed through the mouth.

Our present status as men on earth is like – God knows:

Jeremiah 17:9 The **heart is deceitful** above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Jeremiah 17:10 I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

Only God can overwrite men's deceitful hearts. We will be entirely new creations – totally changed.

Jeremiah 31:33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Jeremiah 31:8 Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither.

In the World Tomorrow, everyone will have a yielded demeanor – being cooperative, supportive and selfless.

Jeremiah 31:9 They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

God's law will be written in their inward parts. The new 'natural' will no longer contain an evil component.

Jeremiah 31:1 At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.

People will honestly face their problems. There will be no pretensions, no patronizing, no 'sweeping things under the rug,' no taking of advantage.

Jeremiah 31:12 Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all.

Jeremiah 31:13 Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their **mourning into joy**, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow.

No action or language can compare with the inexpressible language Paul heard in his vision of the third heaven.

2Corinthians 12:4 [Paul said:] How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

That is because God's ways are not our ways. God's perfect way is so much higher than man's ways – it is impossible to describe His way in our present language.

The Israelites, being delivered, had the opportunity to worship the God which had brought them out of Egypt. They bowed down in front of a calf made of gold, and Aaron said, "This is your God, O Israel."

They were off their beam!

The Israelites readily accepted an improper understanding of God / Elohim because of their pitiful understanding of God. **They had been in Egypt for far too long.** The Hebrew words they were speaking were not matching up to spiritual reality because **their culture** was corrupted, and it was corrupted because their hearts were not one with God.

Brethren, God has already begun to work on us – but we still have a long way to go. The miracle of languages at Pentecost gave evidence that God would **overcome any language barrier**, so that His chosen could call on His name in any language of men, as long as there was a new heart – a new Spirit. Beginning with Pentecost, God opened salvation to people of any human language whom He called.

With repentance, baptism, and the receipt of the Holy Spirit, there is a cleansing that takes place, and a new heart is given—a heart that will teach the lips to speak in a way that reflects a new spiritual reality.

The speech of one who is being converted becomes pure, not merely in the avoidance of foul language, but also because it is used to speak truth, and because it reflects more of the culture of the Kingdom of God, and less of the culture that is passing away.

"Calling on the name of the Lord," is simply another way of describing true worship. There will be no language barrier between us and God. Calling on the name of the Lord is honoring and beseeching God because of His fundamental nature and character. We call on God because we want to **put on** His nature and character – Godly nature and Godly character.

Prayer, the actual calling or speaking to God, proceeds from deep within our heart of hearts. Pure lips, and thus a pure heart, are required for this because it is only when the heart is cleansed that it can begin to recognize the truth of God, and thus speak what is true.

The cleansed heart is one that is turned toward God. With that change in focus and direction, the whole life begins to change, and what comes out of the mouth will give evidence of that.

Even more than what is said, though, a pure heart will be reflected in the life that is lived, for a change of heart affects far more than just one's words.

This is why Peter said that after conversion, other people will think it strange that we do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, and they will speak evil of us (1 Peter 4:4). The Godly nature that is motivating us is different from the carnal human nature that is motivating them, even though we are still using the same human language.

Ezekiel 36:26 **A new heart** also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

Ezekiel 36:27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

Ezekiel 36:29 I will also save you from all your uncleanness.

Ezekiel 36:31 Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.

Our lives are a testimony – either of God **or** of the world. Regardless of what we profess with our mouths, or what language of men we use, our very lives are a testimony. Whether for Good or Evil. Whether for the Tree of Life, or the mixed up tree of the knowledge of good and **evil**.

The Day is approaching when Israel, Judah, and all other peoples will be brought through a purifying and refining fire and into the glorious Kingdom of God, and we are here this week in anticipation of that Day.

In the aftermath, the cleansed and humbled peoples – who have been brought to their knees – will have a pure language, which indicates they will have different hearts. The Church, spiritual Israel has already gone through a cleansing, and has already been given access to a pure heart. Thank God that we already have what it takes to call on the name of the Lord. And yet there is still much work for us to do in purifying our hearts, purifying our lips, so that our culture – our way of life – is one that is accepted by our King when He returns.

Credit for title and context to David Grabbe.

End: A Pure Language