



For there is no truth in their mouth;
their inmost self is destruction;
their throat is an open grave;
they flatter with their tongue.

Psalms 5:9 esv

Against An Exhaled Pestilence

“Their throat is an open sepulchre,” a sepulchre full of loathsomeness, of miasma, of pestilence and death. But, worse than that, it is an open sepulchre, with all its evil gases issuing forth, to spread death and destruction all around. So, with the throat of the wicked, it would be a great mercy if it could always be closed. If we could seal in continual silence the mouth of the wicked it would be like a sepulchre shut up, and would not produce much mischief. But “their throat is an open sepulchre,” consequently all the wickedness of their heart exhales, and comes forth.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

As King Solomon so wisely yet wearily pointed out, there is nothing new under the sun. Man’s behavior, even inventiveness, has been cooked into his DNA from the start, as has his bent toward evil.

There is nothing new about the depravity of this age. There is nothing new about an infantile penchant to shock with repellant behavior and scatological language. There is nothing new about apparent adults behaving and speaking in public as if they were school-age boys in a locker room. If there is anything new today, it is the scope and immediacy of that which is “public.”

In Solomon’s day public behavior or the spoken word might be witnessed or heard by only a handful of individuals—at best, a few hundred. Words committed to papyrus or clay or parchment could be read by only an elite few. So if you were a foul-mouthed, boorish reprobate, most people didn’t know it at the time, and if they learned it at all, that knowledge came many years later as it got passed around by word of mouth.

Today if you are a foul-mouthed, boorish reprobate, millions can know it the instant you open your mouth. Today that which is “public” can be, and often is, immediately global—literally worldwide, reaching by television and internet anyone and everyone remotely interested (and even many not remotely interested).

This is the wonder and the danger of today’s ubiquitous media. In the nineties we all learned quickly of the seamy sexual proclivities of this nation’s president. The predictable excuses and rationalization of the sycophantic press that followed publicly telegraphed to the young and impressionable that this behavior was now perfectly acceptable. If he can do it, they not surprisingly concluded, *I can do it.*



Last week millions of people witnessed, the very moment they occurred, the loathsome behavior and language of celebrities who thought it clever to be publicly sexual and profane during the Golden Globe awards. In their own eyes, and the eyes of many in the room, they were being humorous and hip. But the truth is they were just being embarrassingly childish and inane—for all the world to see and hear.

And still there is nothing new under the sun.

**An oracle is within my heart
concerning the sinfulness of the
wicked:**

**There is no fear of God before his
eyes.**

For in his own eyes he flatters himself

too much to detect or hate his sin.
The words of his mouth are wicked
and deceitful;
he has ceased to be wise and to do
good.
Even on his bed he plots evil;
he commits himself to a sinful course
and does not reject what is wrong.
Psalms 36:1-4 niv

Solomon's father, King David, knew well that within man dwell all sorts of evil. What this weary world has not seen for a long time—and perhaps never has before with such conspicuous immediacy—is man's infantile eagerness to share this evil with anyone and everyone. We have indeed "forgotten how to blush."

Are they ashamed of their loathsome
conduct?
No, they have no shame at all;
they do not even know how to blush.
Jeremiah 6:15a niv

Stand

What does one do when one stumbles into a cesspool? One gets out—quickly and immediately.

What does one do when one is ambushed by the loathsome behavior and language of a depraved society? One gets out—quickly and immediately. Refuse to play its game; have no truck with it.

The apostle Paul instructs us to "flee immorality," "flee from idolatry," "flee from youthful lusts." But how is one to do this when one has not just stepped into a cesspool, but actually *lives* in one.

God's word does not tell believers to chuck it all and go live in a cave. In fact, it counsels just the opposite.

I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one.

1 Corinthians 5:9-11

In the economy of Christ's kingdom believers are to remain active participants in the world until they are called home to be with Him. We are not to isolate

ourselves from the unredeemed, but to be light to those dwelling in darkness. That is, we are to stand for what we claim to believe.

Doing so, it is easy to feel like young David standing before Goliath. But David had a secret weapon—and it wasn't the five smooth stones in his shepherd's pouch.

Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hands."

1 Samuel 17:45-47

When the believer stands his ground before evil, he does not stand alone. The believer's weapon is the Lord, and with that power at our side we need not blanch before the sickness of this world, for we have righteousness on our side.

But we do not stand in our *own* righteousness, for that is as ephemeral as the "righteousness" of those who embrace the depravity of this fallen world. No, we stand in the righteousness of our Savior.

We "flee" evil by standing firm in the righteous purity of our Lord and Savior. When the winds and storms and leeching cancers of this society come our way, we refuse delivery, and we do not shy away from our obligation to explain why, and by whose power we do it.

For, you see, the truth is that with this supernatural power at our side, we are not the ones running away at all.

Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

James 4:7-10

Alexander, when they said that the Persians were as the sands on the seashore, replied, "One butcher is not afraid of a whole flock of sheep."

So let it be with us. Let us feel that we are men of another mold than to be afraid, that believing in God, we do not know how to spell "cowardice."

Spurgeon

