

**Lessons for Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost**

**September 16, 2018**

Psalm 116:1–9 ~ *The psalmist expresses love for the Lord who heard him and delivered him from peril.*

Isaiah 50:4–10 ~ *The Lord's servant spoke an encouraging word, but it was met with reviling ridicule.*

James 3:1–12 ~ *The words we speak, whether good or bad, have great power to help or harm others.*

Mark 9:14–29 ~ *When Jesus rebuked an evil spirit with his word, it released a boy who had been deaf.*

**GATHERING THE TEXTS:** What's on the Tip of Your Tongue?

Isaiah spoke for the Lord's servant who brought a new word of encouragement every morning, but was met each day by opposition and ridicule from those who would not listen. Jesus demonstrated to the disciples that even a deaf spirit hears and obeys the word spoken by the Son of Man. St. James pointed out that our tongues, although they are only a small part of the body, can drive us to destruction or lead us in giving praise to God.

**PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE:** Lord Jesus, let me hear Your powerful word to heal and strengthen me. Give me an encouraging word to bless my friends and neighbors. Let me speak words of praise to glorify Your name that all may know Your gift of love and mercy. Amen.

**STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT:** Words at our command can help or harm our neighbors, just as we can use the material blessings God has put at our disposal either to bless or to oppress.

**OFFERING PRAYER:** Lord, Your Word made flesh brought teachings we should heed!  
In these gifts flesh out our words with loving deeds. Amen.

**CONVICTION AND COMFORT:** We often subscribe to the idea that "words can never hurt me." Although we have all known hurt enough from things others have said, we still think the careless, and at times malicious, use of words is no big deal! When we recognize that we have failed to speak healing words to the hurting and disconsolate, God's Word in Christ is a mighty power to redeem us from the bondage of our own sentence of destruction.