Garbage Trucks (and Mouths)

INTRODUCTION:

1. The sanitation crews around here, at least for the most part, do a great job.

2. Throughout the week you see them stopping at homes and businesses, loading the garbage on to trucks.

   a. Unfortunately, some garbage gets left behind—that which comes from people's mouths. These trucks weren't designed to pick up that kind of trash, and if they were, there wouldn't be enough of them.

   b. To put in bluntly, it can be awful hard to find people who don't "cuss," at least among those on the "outside"—those in the world.

   c. It really shouldn't surprise us to hear bad language used so frequently in the world, but what IS encouraging is that when people in the world come to the Lord, one of the first things they realize is that they need to clean up their language.

3. Our main concern today, though, is US. Let's make sure we know what the Bible says so we can set a good example before the world.

BODY:

A. Let's start with Psalms 139:3-4.

   1. God hears every word we say, yes, all the good, but also all the bad.

      a. And according to Jesus, we will give an account to Him for the words we've spoken (Matthew 12:34-37).

      b. Some will refrain from bad language when "ladies are present," or when the "preacher is around."

      c. God is always present—and He will hold us accountable!

B. Colossians 3:8; Ephesians 4:29; 5:3-4.

   1. The teaching of Christ in these passages is plain: do not use **corrupt**, **filthy**, or **coarse** language (you might want to look up these words).

   2. This would certainly include "dirty jokes" (politely referred to as "off color humor"), and what are commonly referred to as "cuss words."

C. 1 Tim. 1:9.

   1. Profane here is not limited to speech, but it certainly includes it.

2. And profane speech is in a different category than the ones just mentioned.

3. Words become profane when sacred words and ideas are treated in a common or trivial fashion.

   a. People talk about going through "hell." No matter how bad it is, it does not merit any comparison to hell.

   b. Today, when you hear, "Oh my God," or "Jesus Christ," in many cases, it's to express disgust or surprise—not exactly the reverence the Lord intended.

   c. Sometimes, the Lord's name is even used in combination with other expletives. One would have to be truly blind not to see the blasphemy involved.

4. And while we're on the subject, is it really any better to use euphemisms, such as "golly," or "Jee" ("gee")? And while there may be a more noble intent on the part of those who use them, it's not hard to see where these words (and others) come from.

   a. Why not use some other words that we know for sure do not profane the Lord, or anything the Lord holds sacred?

D. Some argue that since the Bible doesn't contain a list of prohibited words, we can't label any particular word as sinful.

   1. Here's a quote from an article by Wayne Jackson:"

      a. "The Bible could not possibly provide a list of 'forbidden' words, since words come and go. Some words become obsolete, and fade from the human vocabulary with the passing of time. Too, new words are ever being born. A 'word list' could never be totally relevant, even if it were possible to construct such. The biblical documents deal with different *abuses* of language, in a general way, but there is no catalog of prohibited words...Words become 'bad' by virtue of their connotation, motive, etc., and such circumstances can change from time-to-time, or from place-to-place." For example, "bloody" might mean one thing to us, but in some parts of the world, it would be considered offensive speech.

      b. I think most of us have a pretty good idea of the words we ought not to say.

E. Titus 3:2 (James 4:11-12; 1 Peter 2:1-2).

   1. Foul language is often directed to and against other people ("cussing someone out"). Wouldn't this be an example of speaking evil against them?

   2. "Foul" language is an appropriate description, because it indicates language that is out of bounds—that which has "crossed the line."

3. James 3:9-10.

   a. How hypocritical would it be for us to use our tongues in this assembly today to bless God, and then go out tomorrow and use that same tongue to curse men?

F. Galatians 5:19-21; 2 Corinthians 12:20 ("outbursts of wrath" also listed).

   1. Foul language is often spoken during a "fit of anger," or an "outburst of wrath."

   2. This is certainly no excuse, because God expects us to control our temper, and gives us the resources to do so.

      a. "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19).

G. Ephesians 6:4.

   1. Ever heard even young children use bad language? Kind of shocks the senses, doesn't it? Wonder where they heard these words?

   2. Let's make sure they don't hear these words from us.

H. Galatians 1:10

   1. Many (especially youth) use foul language because it puts them with the "in crowd"; it makes them feel more accepted by their peers.

   2. But the goal is NOT to please them, but to please God.

   3. The Lord is looking for young people willing to go against the crowd and stand for what's right, to counter all this filthy speech with pure and wholesome speech.

      a. "Sound speech that cannot be condemned" (Titus 2:8).

I. "But I only use these words to add emphasis to what I've said; it helps me get my point across better."

   1. The Oxford English Dictionary contains about 295,000 words, with over 600,000 different word forms. I believe we can find a word in there somewhere to give the needed emphasis, without resorting to filthy, corrupt, or coarse language.

CONCLUSION:

1. Two passages very aptly express the attitude we should have toward this subject:

   a. Psalms 141:3: "Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips."

   b. Psalms 19:14: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."