



The Angel Angle

by

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“Can you believe people?”

Tessa’s halo quivered with indignation as she stomped across the cloud bank and gestured downward.

Her friend, Herald, the Christmas angel, who was sitting on a cloud bench, looked up at his friend. “Don’t let it get to you, Tess. You know how humans are.”

“I don’t care. They should be different. They talk and talk and half the time don’t say anything. If they do, it’s generally something hurtful or ugly. You should have heard the two teenagers I just left. Arguing at the top of their lungs. About nothing. Don’t they know about the power of words?”

Herald shrugged. “Maybe not.”

“Well, somebody should tell them. I wish I could be a person for a day...well, no I don’t really, but honestly, Herry, they’re just so...so human!”

He grinned. “I think that’s what they’re supposed to be.” He scooted over and made room for her next to him. “Here. Have a seat and cool off.”

Tessa plopped down beside him. She reached behind her and arranged her wings into a more comfortable position.

“What’s the problem?” Herry made his tone deliberately calm.

“It’s all these words. People use words for a thousand different reasons...to describe things, to explain stuff, to give instructions, express emotion, give opinions, to try to convince or influence each other and on and on.”

“So?”

Tessa ignored his question. “There must be millions of words in the world, yet these humans are always thinking up new ones. I’ve heard they actually add them to their dictionaries every so often. Like they didn’t have enough words, already.”

“Hmmm. Yeah, I see what you mean. They use words a lot, both written and spoken.”

“Exactly. They don’t ever stop and think that words can bless, they can curse, they can influence, they can heal, or they can destroy.”

“That’s for sure.” Herry looked at Tessa and grinned. “Do you remember that old rhyme they used to quote?”

“You mean the one that goes, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me?”

“That’s the one.” Herry grimaced. “That’s sure wrong.”

“You can say that again,” said Tessa. “Look at all the studies humans have done that show words can and do hurt everyday. Children grow up warped because they’ve been called dumb or stupid, or worse. Relationships are destroyed because harsh words are thrown at others as weapons. There are unjust words, ugly words.”

“Of course, there are also words of approval or love that make people glow and feel good, too.”

Tessa nodded. “Too bad there aren’t more of those. I wonder how many of these folks who are alive now were influenced by words that were spoken in their childhood, or even adulthood, that have helped make them what they are today.”

“Or,” said Herry, “words that were not spoken, and should have been. Words that kept someone from ever realizing their full potential.”

“You remember that quotation, “the pen is mightier than the sword?” Tessa’s brunette curls quivered with intensity. “It’s true. Written words, as well as spoken ones, can inspire or crush, reassure or destroy. The person who speaks or writes sarcasm or belittles others with words is injuring...maybe even destroying others as surely as if they wielded a sword. And the politicians! If they’re one-tenth as bad as their opponents accuse them of being, none of them are fit to hold office.”

He grinned. “Guess they don’t know what God thinks about words.”

“Hmph!” Tessa snorted. “Or they don’t care.”

Herry nodded. “There’s that, of course. Do you suppose they don’t know how much stuff there is in the Bible about words?”

“You mean like “The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life.”* Or “When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, but he who restrains his lips is wise.”*

Sitting up straight, Herry continued. “Remember ‘The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver.’* Then there’s ‘The lips of the righteous bring forth what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked what is perverted.’*”

“Exactly. How about ‘with his mouth the godless man destroys his neighbor’* and ‘The one who guards his mouth preserves his life; the one who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.’**”

“And those are just a few in the book of Proverbs.” Unfurling his wings, Herry stood up. “You also have some in the Psalms and the New Testament.”

“Like?” Tessa asked.

“Oh, like ‘Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies.’** And ‘Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry, for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.’**”

“Hmmm.” Tessa looked thoughtful. “Seems like I also remember ‘Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.’**”

“Another good one.” Herry tapped his chin. “Do you remember what the Bible says in the book of James? ‘The tongue is like a fire. It is a whole world of evil among the parts of our bodies. The tongue spreads its evil through the whole body. The tongue is set on fire by hell, and it starts a fire that influences all of life. People can tame every kind of wild animal, bird, reptile, and fish, and they have tamed them, but no one can tame the tongue. It is wild and evil and full of deadly poison.’”

Tessa picked up the rest of the quotation. “We use our tongues to praise our Lord and Father, but then we curse people, whom God made like himself. Praises and curses come from the same mouth! My brothers and sisters, this should not happen.”***

“I guess a person’s words can tell you a lot about who they really are.”

“You’re right, Herry. Not only that, but in the book of Matthew, Jesus said “But I tell you that every careless (useless) word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words, you will be condemned.”****

Herry stood silent, looking into the distance. “Sounds like words, then, can also have *eternal* consequences.”

Tessa nodded. “Yes. In Proverbs again, the Bible says ‘People will be rewarded for what they say, they will be rewarded by how they speak. What you say can mean life or death. Those who speak with care will be rewarded.’*****

“Don’t forget the book of James, in the New Testament. ‘If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.’*****

A shudder shook Tessa’s frame, then she stood and faced the Herald angel. “I wish they knew these things, Herry. I really wish the humans knew these things.”

He looked solemn. “They do, Tessa. They have the Bible. It’s words...but words direct from God. We’d better hope and pray some of those folks Down Below decide to read it and see why words are so important.”

She sighed. “Gotta go, Herry. I’m scheduled to take a special message to a pastor in a small church in rural Texas. Plus those teens I just left were reaching for the dishes. I’d better see if there’s any crockery left in the house.”

Herry looked solemn. “I just hope the dishes were the only thing smashed and not their hearts.”

END

*Proverbs 10:11;10:19; 10:20; 10:32; 11:9; 13:3

**Psalm 34:13; James 1:19; Colossians 4:6

***James 3:6-8 (CEV); James 3:9-12 (CEV)

****Matthew 12:36-37 (CEV)

*****Proverbs 18:20-21

*****James 1:26