Guidelines for Speech

I. INTRODUCTION.
   A. Tongues are powerful.
   B. We are told to keep our tongues from evil.
      1. Tonight, we want to examine how we can keep our tongues from evil.
      2. When we speak, we must:

II. BE PREPARED TO ACCOUNT FOR OUR WORDS (Mt 12:34-37).
   A. Our tongues speak "out of the abundance of the heart." What we say is an indication of our hearts.
   B. We shall give account for every "idle word."
      1. "Idle words" denote those words which are unproductive, useless.
         a. "Idle" was used of people who were unemployed, standing around doing nothing.
         b. "Idle words" do nothing—they are better left unsaid.
      2. We shall give account for every such word we speak.

III. DO SO IN THE NAME OF JESUS (Col 3:17).
   A. "In the name of" means "by the authority of."
   B. We need to talk the way the Lord expects us to talk.
   C. A good rule of thumb is this, "Would I say this if Jesus were standing here?"

IV. SPEAK THE TRUTH.
   A. Scripture affirms this.
      1. Ex 20:16.
      2. Prov 6:16-19.
      3. Rv 21:8.
   B. God places emphasis on truth.
      1. Jesus is "the way, the ***truth***, the life."
      2. Truth, in Scripture, is often that which is right.
      3. Therefore, when we speak in truth, we do right.
   C. On reason God places so much emphasis on truth is that Satan does not (Jn 8:44).
   D. Illustration about the melon farmer, *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, p 229.

V. SPEAK TO BUILD UP.
   A. Paul makes clear the kind of speech we are to have:
      1. It is not to be evil, i.e., hurtful.
      2. It is to be helpful; it's to build up, not tear down.
   B. This rules out much conversation:
      1. Slander.
         a. Scriptures:
            1) Mt 15:19.
            2) 2 Cor 12:20.
         b. Slander is speech that harms someone's reputation; it's spreading rumors.
         c. Potiphar's wife hurt Joseph's reputation with her life (Gn 39).
      2. Gossip.
         a. Scriptures.
            1) Prov 11:13.
            2) 2 Cor 12:20.
            3) 1 Tm 5:13.
         b. Gossip is telling things whether or not they are true; gossips are those who say, "Have I got a story for you!"
         c. We can't retract gossip—story about the monk, *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, p 175.

VI. THINK BEFORE WE SPEAK.

A. Js 1:19.

B. If our minds would think before our tongues spoke, we could avoid many problems.

C. Quote from Zeno, *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, p 379.