

WORDS MATTER

I loved Literature classes. I loved to read, and stories were my lifeline. I learned more than enjoying a good story from books, I learned life lessons. I learned about other lives and was transported to other times and places, and I learned the power of words. In Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, Shakespeare wrote of Marc Antony telling a crowd of the death of Caesar. He said he would say nothing about Caesar's deeds, he would not relate all Caesar had done for the people, because he was there to bury Caesar, not to praise him. By the end of his talk, he had succeeded in turning the people against those that had murdered Caesar. The power of words. We had to do a fair amount of memorization in High School and this included Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. These were powerful words and with them you realize that Lincoln had a great task in front of him. His words were the beginning of the healing of a fractured nation. Words matter. We memorized Henry Wordsworth Longfellow's Psalm of Life. "Tell me not in mournful numbers life is but an empty dream, for the soul is dead that slumbers and things are not what they seem, Life is real, life is earnest, and the grave is not its goal, dust thou art to dust returnest was not spoken of the soul." Words matter. Our teacher had a message in the front of the classroom, "This above all, to thine own self be true." Words matter. The words we speak on social media or to others matter. Great orators can move people with their words, words can wound, and words can heal, words can lift us up and make us better or words can wound us and make us lower than we are. When I think of words I think of Peter. Peter had denied knowing Jesus, not once, not twice but three times. Luke 22:62 and he went outside and wept bitterly. Words matter.

John 21:15-17 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "You know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Again, Jesus said, "Simon, son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." The third time he said to him, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, You know all things, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

Lord, may we be a better people, may we realize that our words matter. Be with those that are ill, those that grieve, those that suffer. Be with our church, be with our leaders, may we be a sanctuary for those who seek you. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry, be with him and his family, grant them good health. Be with our families, bless them. Lord, we thank you for those that touch our lives, for our families, for our church family, for our friends. May we soon be back together again and may this pandemic end. May the lessons learned from this past year make us a better and more grateful people. In Jesus name, Amen

Grace Epperson