

Read: Jeremiah 23:23-29

Speak It Faithfully!

Jeremiah 23:28a

Let the prophet who has a dream recount the dream, but let the one who has my word speak it faithfully.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Exactly nine years ago this week, a mother took her son to a zoo in China. She wanted her son to hear the different sounds the animals made. As they approached the cage marked "African Lion," the mother hoped she and her son would hear the ferocious roar of the lion. Instead, when they neared the cage and saw the animal, it barked. The lion was actually a Tibetan mastiff, a dog that has a furry brown coat that makes it look like a really small lion. The mother and other customers felt cheated. So the zoo officials tried to explain the situation. They put the dog in the cage when the real African lion was sent to a breeding center. Regardless of any "good reason" the lion wasn't in its cage, the zoo officials lied. This made people very upset. They expected to see and hear the African lion, but the zoo officials didn't hold up their end of the agreement. They didn't tell the truth.

People throughout history have been telling lies. It began with our first parents, Adam and Eve. They lied to God about their sin. People tell lies about their own actions or the actions of others. Sometimes they might lie because they think it will help a situation, but usually one lie turns into another lie to cover up the first one. What's even worse is when the lie is about God's Word. When people don't tell the truth about God's Word, it is very dangerous because it can pull people away from God's truth and God himself.

God gives us such a treasure in his Word, yet many people miss its many promises. They twist its truths and spew lies. This is called false teaching. False teachings can lead people further away from God.

God calls us to speak his Word truthfully, just as it is written. When we speak only what God says, others will know what's true. God gives you the strength to do this through his Holy Spirit when you regularly hear and learn his Word. Sitting with your family and reading or listening to these devotions is just one of the many ways you are carrying out God's will for your life. Then, armed with these truths, you will be among those who hold this treasure in your heart. You will be able to speak it faithfully to those around you. God promises that his Word will not return to him empty. That means that when people hear God's Word, the Holy Spirit works in their hearts as God wills it. Then they too can come to believe in Jesus as their Savior and join us in heaven.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What animal did the zoo substitute in place of the lion?
- What's it called when you don't tell the truth?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What happens when God's Word is not spoken of truthfully and faithfully?
- Consider how you can share God's Word faithfully. Name two promises from his Word that you will share with someone.

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Think of a truth from God's Word. Now think of a way people have tried to change it to something they want it to be.
- Share with your family what you would tell someone who challenges the truth of God's Word.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for giving us your true Word, in which you give us the news about our Savior and salvation. Send your Holy Spirit to strengthen our faith and cause us to speak this Word faithfully to others. In Jesus' name. Amen.