WHAT SPELL CHECK MISSED

Last Wednesday afternoon I had a meeting to moderate. When I got to the meeting, I looked over the agenda and noticed my name was misspelled. Usually, people have trouble spelling my last name, but this time they got my first name wrong. It was quite a shock to see my name on the agenda as <u>Dead</u> Adlam. Dear Adlam, or Deal Adlam would have been easier to see than Dead. The funny thing was I was not the only Dean at the meeting that day. The other Dean present also had his name on the agenda, but his was spelled right. I almost got up and left, not out of anger, but if I was dead than it gave me a good excuse to be absent from the meeting. When I pointed out the mistake to the person who did up the agenda, she laughed and said, "I guess spell check did not pick up on that one!" She was right. Spell check would not see Dead Adlam as a spelling error.

We have come to rely on technology so much in order to make our lives easier. Using spell or grammar check after we have typed a message is meant to find the mistakes we have made. As helpful as these tools and aids are, they are not perfect in finding every mistake. Typing my name as Dead Adlam was a mistake that spell check was unable to recognize. If we want to avoid mistakes like this, we must still carefully review what we have written, even after completing spell check, to ensure nothing was missed by it. It was not a big deal that this mistake was missed in my case. I am a pretty forgiving guy, and everyone at the meeting had a good chuckle. Not everyone would be as understanding in this situation. Some people or employers would be very upset and angry by such a mistake. The Bible cautions us to be very *careful about the words that we speak*. The words we choose and speak are very powerful, and are a reflection to others about our relationship with God. That is why we find passages in the Bible like James 3:2 which say:

Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way.

We not only make mistakes with the words we speak, or don't speak, but also in the ones we write. Writing is used more by us in communicating with others than we ever have before. We used to write letters at one time, but now much of the writing we do to others is in the form of an e-mail or text message. We

may not have to control our tongues in this form of communication, but we do need to keep in mind the condition of our heart and mind in the words we type and send. The words we use in these forms of communicating with others are also a reflection to the recipients of our relationship with God.

One of the challenges when it comes to e-mails or texts is they are not as personal and relational as when we verbally talk with others. Because of the impersonal nature of e-mails and texts, people can often misunderstand the tone or meaning behind the words. I am sure we have all received e-mails from others and wondered after reading it if the person was angry at us. Perhaps we have experienced the exact opposite and had our words misinterpreted by others thinking we were being insensitive or angry in some way. We may rely on spell check before sending an e-mail to pick up on any spelling mistakes, but this tool is not perfect. Just as spell check did not see Dead Adlam as being a mistake, it cannot pick up on any words that we may have used that perhaps convey a sentiment of anger or judgement on our part to the other party. Because our words, either spoken or written, are a reflection of our relationship with God and serve as a witness to others it is so important that we check and double-check before sending any of these messages. I shared in a mid-week message quite a while back how I read over this message two or three times before sending it out looking for any and all mistakes. Even with using spell and grammar check, and careful review afterward I know there are still some mistakes in what I have written that I probably missed.

 A better and more perfect aid that I use before sending out a message like this or an e-mail is what I call my God check. I always ask God after I write these messages, or send certain e-mails, if I have made any mistakes that He is seeing. I am not thinking in terms of spelling mistakes when I ask Him this, but rather anything that would come across as a negative witness to others. I cannot tell you the number of times God has had me go back and change certain words I have used or rephrase sentences in a way not to offend somebody, or so that it may come across in a more Christ-like way. I cannot always rely on spell or grammar check to avoid mistakes in my written words, but I can depend on God check every time to point out my errors that would affect my Christian witness. I think we all need to rely on God check to help us in these days and times with the words we speak and send to others. The reason why I say this is I have noticed that people have become more and

more sensitive of late. People that I have known to be very compassionate and understanding previously seem to be more sensitive now. It is just an observation, and not a judgement. We have all been through so much over these past two years, and one of the effects it may have had on some people is to make them become more sensitive and reactionary to the words we speak and write. God knows that other person just like He does us. By praying and using God check, He will be able to guide us to avoid any unintentional words on our part to come across in the wrong way to the other person. By so doing we will continue to be a positive Christian witness to that other person.

Spell check did not catch the error last Wednesday of my name appearing as Dead Adlam on the agenda. God check did help me to laugh and show grace in front of everyone at the meeting. I am thankful for God check, and highly encourage everyone to take advantage of it. It works perfectly.

Keep safe and God Bless

Pastor Dead, I mean Pastor Dean