Remember the riots in England back in August?

Remember some politicians calling for Twitter to be closed down during civil disturbances?

Well, a research study has just been published which found that during the summer riots, the social networking site was, in fact, a force for good.

The research analysed millions of messages posted by users during the riots and found no evidence that Twitter had been used to incite or organise the riots. In fact the opposite was true – the social networking site was used mainly to help mobilise community support for the clean-up after the riots.

Another recent study found that both Twitter and Facebook have played a critical role in mobilising, shaping opinions and influencing change in the Arab Spring of the past year.

Of course Twitter can be negative too. If you followed what people were tweeting during the X Factor Final at the weekend, you'll have noticed a lot of easy insults. And if you happened to be following the Russian President's tweets in the past week, you will have read something very rude about one of his political opponents.

There are now 100s of millions of tweeters around the world.

Communicating in no more than 140 characters is obviously popular.

But Twitter is like every other communication technology that ever was.

From the words of the first human ever to use language to the latest hashtag on your twitter feed, people have always used communication to do good and to do damage.

As the book of James puts it 'With our tongues we bless God our Father and with the same tongues we curse the very men and women he made in his image. Curses and blessings out of the same mouth!'

I believe words are powerful. Words can create a better future. Words can build up. Words can comfort.

And of course at this time of the year we hear a remarkable claim that 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.'

But as you know, words can put down. Words can hurt and words can destroy.

I wonder if we got the researchers who analysed all those tweets during the summer riots, to do an audit of all of our words, spoken, written or on social media. How many would be positive and how many would be negative?

Let me try to express this in less than 140 characters:

Words can build up and words can tear down. So when talking, texting or tweeting today remember the power of your words #thoughtfortheday