

Title: Taming the Tongue

Series: James

Text: James 3:1-12

Let's take our Bibles and turn to James chapter 3. I want to continue our study of ~~this little, yet powerful book.~~ *The How To's of CHRISTIAN LIVING* James chapter 3 and beginning with Vs 1 reading through Vs 12. *Our Topic: Taming The Tongue*

(Read James 3:1-12)

Shall we pray

Our Father in Heaven, we come again to your wonderful Word. And we pray that we might know it as YOUR VOICE TO US. Our Father, as we discuss this matter of our tongue and what we say, OH, GOD, we pray that you would fill our minds with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. That you would cause us to understand what is your will for our tongue. Remove now, our Father, from our minds the opinions of man. So that we may know the opinions of the Holy Spirit. That we might know, Father, what to do about our tongue. What to do about what we say. This we pray and desire in the name of Jesus...

Amen...

+++

It has often been said that ["]we say what we say because we are what we are."["]

In the Bible there is much given to the tongue, or, what we say. For example the Bible has the following things to say about the tongue: It is called in Psalms 57:4 "A SHARP SWORD." In Psalms 45:1 the tongue is referred to "as the pen of a ready writer." In Psalms 140:3 "the tongue is as a serpent; the poson of a viper is under their lips."

In Isaiah 30:27 the tongue is called "a consuming fire."

In Jeremiah 9:8 the tonue is "a deadly arrow; it speaks deciet."

And in James 3:6 "the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity.

And in Vs 8 of the same chapter, "it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison."

And so the Bible has much to say about the tongue,

It is the tongue that has destroyed nations. It is the tongue that has wreaked reputations. It is the tongue that has destroyed homes. It is the tongue that has divided churches. And it is so easy to persecute others by what we say. Not even considering the subject of what we do.

So, the ^{Tongue} tongue is very, very important from God's view point. And James, who is talking about (2A) THE CHARACTERISTICS OF FAITH AND WORKS, gives an entire chapter to the subject of the tongue. WHY? Because it is the tongue which is the place of God's work. The tongue will indicate to all concerned just where our commitment lies. The tongue is the instrument through which God wants to work in our lives.

(3B) Now, our topic is: TAMING THE TONGUE..Or, as your outline says FAITH CONTROLS THE TONGUE. And I would like to ask you two simple questions.

(1C) First, WHY DOES THE TONGUE NEED TO BE TAMED? (2C)And secondly, HOW CAN THE TONGUE BE TAMED?

(1C) First WHY? WHY DOES THE TONGUE NEED TO BE TAMED? And there are four reasons given in James chapter 3 as to why the tongue needs to be tamed.

(1D) REASON NUMBER ONE: The tongue needs to be tamed because of the control that it has over us.

Notice in Vereses 2 to 4, what James is saying: "For we all stumble in many ways: if any one does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man."

The word "perfect" means "mature". It is not talking about a sinless nature. It is talking about a mature person. That person is mature. WHY?.... Because he is able to bridle, or contol, his whole body."

And then James gives us in vereses 3-4, two illustrations.

(1E) First, Vs 3, a horse has a bit in his mouth so that we can control him and turn the whole body. Those of you who have gone horse backing riding know the importance of the bridle and the rains. I remember when I first want horse back riding. It did not take me long to learn just how important the rains were in controlling the horse. If the horse feels that you do not have control of the rains, he will go his own way.

And many times people with little experience hold the reins so loosely that the horse does not obey. And they cry out: "WOAH". And this does no good, because it is the reins, brother, it is the reins, sister, that controls the horse. Hold on to them. Move them to one side and the horse will go that way. Move them to the other side and the horse will go that way. Pull them back with firmness and the horse will stop.

Christmas Horse *Go - Pass The Lead*
Stop - Amen

So, James is saying that the TONGUE is the instrument that controls every operation in the human life. And the Bible teaches that fact. What we say has the control over what we are and what we do.

(2E) The second illustration that James gives is that of a ship. In Vs 4, we have the illustration of a great ship. And even though it is driven by strong winds, its direction is controlled by a small rudder. The person who controls the rudder of that great ship is the person who controls the direction of the ship.

And the Bible says that the tongue is like that rudder. It controls us. And a person is mature, or perfect as it says in Vs 2, he is mature if he can control his whole body. And how can a person control his body if he cannot control his tongue? He cannot. It is impossible. It is a little member, but let me tell you, it is very powerful

Proverbs 18:21 says, "that death and life are in the power of the tongue." Think about that? Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

In Psalms 12:2 it says that "with our tongue we will prevail; our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?"

The tongue reveals what we are. Here, the wicked man is saying: "how can God possibly have any rulership over my life, because I have my tongue and my lips and they are my own and who is going to control me?"

We may not be consciously and forcefully saying that; but, my beloved, that is the way it works out. With our mouth in what we say, we are controlling. and the Bible teaches us that the ^{Tongue} tongue needs to be tamed because of the control it has over us.

(2D) Secondly, in verses 5 to 8, the Bible teaches us that the tongue needs to be tamed because of the corruption that it will cause in us, personally.

(READ VS 5-8)

You see, you may have the most perfect background the world has ever seen. And every experience of life may add up to a life that is rich and meaningful. But, if we cannot control our tongue the Bible says it will defile, it will corrupt our entire body. It will effect every part of us *as it says in verses 5-8*

In Psalms 52: we read this: "Your tongue devises destruction, like a sharp razor, O worker of deceit. You love evil more than good, falsehood more than speaking what is right. You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue."

Or, how about Romans 3, where Paul says, "there throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving. The poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness."

Who is Paul talking about? The conclusion of that argument is "every mouth." God is talking about every person. The tongue will defile and corrupt. It is deceitful. It will bring us down. Dear friends, the tongue needs to be tamed because of the corruption it will cause in us.

(3D) Their is a third reason WHY the tongue needs to be tamed. It needs to be tamed because of the conflict it produces. Notice Vs 9.. "with it we bless our Lord and Father; and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God."

Now, isn't that being inconsistent? We bless God, but we curse men. You say, "Well, I don't use swear words. I don't curse in that term." All that James is talking about is any words that flow from the mouth that are bitter to the human heart. Any time we say a ~~curse~~ *curse* word to anyone, regardless of who it is, anytime there is a bitterness or a harshness in our tongue, we are part of this inconsistency and this great conflict between what we say we are before God and what People know us to be. A GREAT CONFLICT. And the world looks at this and says, "well, he says he's a Christian, but listen to what he says." And what we say does reveal what we are. And so the tongue must be tamed because of the conflict it produces. It breaks down our Christian testimony.

Those are not my words. Those are the words of Jesus Christ. Every careless word, Jesus says, will one day be brought before us and we must give an account for it. The Bible tells us that by our words we shall be justified.

You say, "I thought we were justified by faith." YES! And to say "FAITH", we must translate it into language by "WORDS". Jesus said "you must confess me before men."

But, I think there is more intended, here. I think what is intended is what James is trying to say throughout his whole book. And that is: IF WE HAVE GENUINE FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST IT WILL SHOW IN OUR LIFE.

Do you remember from last week, what James said in chapter 2 about Abraham? Abraham believed God long before he was called upon to offer his son, Isaac, on the altar of sacrifice. And Abraham's willingness to do what God ask him to do proved that his faith was real. It was more than mere lip service. A lot of people are merely giving lip service to the things of God. As we said last week, "Hell will be full of people who gave merely lip profession. People who say "I BELIEVE" with their tongue, but their was something wrong with the heart.

Psalm 139:4 says, "even before there is a word on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you did know it all."

God knows ever single word we have ever said. And Jesus said, "Every careless word, every word that was said in passing, I will bring it to your knowledge at the judgment!" Dear friends, we will give an account.

I hope you understand. We need to tame our tongue because of the consequences it bring to others and to ourselves

(4D) The fourth reason is this: the tongue needs to be tamed because of the consequence it brings. There are terrific consequences. These consequences are in two directions: TOWARDS OTHERS.....AND TOWARDS OURSELVES.

I would like you to turn in your Bibles to the Book of Psalm. The book of Psalm chapter 64. Psalm chapter 64 verses 1 thru 4....(READ)

The point here is that others will suffer the consequences of a bad tongue. And we all know that the way to destroy or hurt a person is not by hitting them with our fist, but by saying a word that will cut and criticize and bring down.

The tongue. They sharpened their tongue like a sword. They aimed bitter speech as arrows. WHAT ARROWS? Bitter words.

Oh, my friends, bitter words come from our mouth. And when they come they hurt. They hurt others. And we can destroy people by what we say. And it happens so often. Christians hurting other Christians by what they say. Churches being divided by what someone says.

We all know the subject of gossip. Gossip is simply saying something about someone that you know may or may not be true. And even if it is true, the Bible says "rejoice not in evil." In other words, don't be quick to share a word of hardack in someone else's life. The Bible tells us not to be doing this act. Hay! The consequences it bring to others are severe.

(2) But, notice Vs 7 and 8 of Psalm 64. And notice the consequences to ourselves. (Read Vs 7 and 8)

God will bring what we say back upon us. And we will suffer the consequences

I want you to turn in your Bibles to the book of Matthew. The book of Matt. chapter 12. I think of all the passages concerning the tongue and the one that stands out in my mind the most concerning the consequences towards us is this one in Matthew. Matthew chapter 12 beginning at verse 34. Jesus is speaking and notice what He says about the consequences of our words.

(Read Matt. 12:34-37)

(II) ^{How} This brings us to the second question: HOW CAN THE TONGUE BE

tamed? ^{see why it} should be tamed. But how can it be tamed? I would like ^{Share} to ~~you~~ ^{rest to you} four little steps that ^{we} you should take. And some of ^{us} you should take them today. FOUR LITTLE STEPS IN TAMING THE TONGUE. ^{Here is what you can do}

(1) Number one, acknowledge your need before God. In Psalms 120:1-2, "In my trouble I cried to the Lord and He answered me. Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue." ^{ACKNOWLEDGE you need and -}

Cry to God to deliver you from your tongue. And God will do what He promised to do. Have you every prayed for that deliverance? Acknowledge your need before God.

(2) Number two, confess Jesus Christ as Your Lord and Saviour. in Phil. 2:11 Paul says: "every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Confess Jesus Christ with your mouth. The Bible says "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." A person believes in his heart-YES- but with his mouth he confesses that belief. ^{That is why we urge} you at every service of this church to confess your belief. To publically confess your faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus said: "Confess me before men and I will confess you before my Father in Heaven." God doesn't have any reference in the Bible to silent Christians. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." It is hard and sometimes difficult. But, beloved, we all must come to Christ. There is no other solution. Jesus died for our sins. He took our place on the cross. He rose from the dead. And one day we will face Christ as either OUR JUDGE..OR..OUR SAVIOUR. So, confess Christ today. Recognize that the God who made your tongue can control what you say. Confess Jesus as your Lord and saviour.

(3) Third, ^{daily} yield your tongue and your speech to the control of the Holy Spirit In Matthew 10 we read these words: "But when they deliver ~~ed~~ you up, do not become anxious about how or what you will speak; for it shall be given you ~~in~~ that hour what you are to speak, for it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you."

I Cor. 2:4 the Apostle Paul says: "And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power?" Yield your tongue and your speech and everything you say to the Holy Spirit of God. *And that should be daily*

(4D) And fourth, practice as a habit of life, with all those who come in contact with you....PRACTICE....Philippians 4:8...."Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things."

You see, let your minds dwell on those things that are good. If you can't say something good, say nothing.....

O.K...Acknowledge your need. Do we have a need? We sure do!

Confess Christ as your Saviour and Lord. If you have never done so before, make this your hour of decision. Invite Jesus to come into your life. This means that Christ will forgive you of your sins...past...present...and future. It means that God will give you eternal life, right now,.....

And then yield your tongue and speech to the control of the Holy Spirit. You see, only a christian can do this and make this decision to let the Holy Spirit control the tongue. Before we come to Christ, the Holy Spirit is not in us. But, when we take Christ into our lives, we receive the Holy Spirit of God. He indwells us. And He wants to use our tongue for that which is good and wholesome and uplifting.

And finally practice Philippians 4:8....Say only those things that edify and encourage and uplift ~~any~~ ^{people} other person.

May God help us to make the decisisions that we need to make today...

May This be a big part of our vision and Victory in 1997

Shall we clos in prayer