

Lifepoint Church
James 3:1-12 [Part 2]
6.26.16

Taming The Beast/// TONGUE

The Tongue: Small but Powerful

James 3:3

When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal.

Next, James describes the tongue also like the **RUDDER** of a ship, which is smaller in proportion than the bit of a horse but has the same effect on the ship that it guides.

James 3:4

Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go.

Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.

James 3:5

Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.

"It only takes a spark...to get a fire glowing."

Takeaway/// Guard your words. Once you say it, it's out there. Never to be returned again.

Horse's Bit, Rudder, & Fire

Something this small [2 oz.] can be so powerful.

Our goal last week was to release the words from others who have hurt us, and guard the words that come from our mouth with great caution and care.

Words not to tear down and inflict pain, but life giving words that lift up and encourage.

We continue this second week in James Chapter 3

The Tongue: Necessary but Dangerous

In the next 3 verses, James elaborates on the image he used in verse 5.

James 3:6

The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

This world of evil James is speaking of consists of...Dr. Charles Swindoll lists in his book on practical living.

Boastful Pride

Destructive Anger

Cutting Bitterness

Flattering Lust

The tongue communicates them all.

Something else that is mentioned is the word "hell". Which the familiar term commonly used is Hades, but this time James uses the term Gehenna, which was an actual valley outside of Jerusalem that was actually used as a garbage dump. All the filth of the city was dumped there. In the same way, all the filth of our heart accumulates on our tongues.

In the next two verses, James changes the imagery.

Think the San Diego Zoo for a moment...

James 3:7-8a

*All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, **8** but no human being can tame the tongue.*

Think of all the animals of the world that have been tamed. Lions, tigers, bears...oh my. Seals, elephants, & dolphins. But not even the greatest of trainers can ever tame the tongue.

Then James gives a third and final snapshot of the tongue.

James 3:8b

It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

Our tongues are like that of a snake...striking its deadly poison to those around us.

Lstly, we learn that the tongue is...

The Tongue: Helpful but Inconsistent

The tongue is a powerful dangerous 2-ounce beast. Remember...this is only sometimes. Because sometimes it can mend bones instead of break them; can build people up instead of tear them down; and bring life instead of death.

So, here is the Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde description of of the tendency of the tongue.

James 3:9-10

With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness.

10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.

So, its humanly possible to do both with your tongue. Praise & Cursing.

Then James tells us how the nature of the human heart is far different than anything in nature.

James 3:11-12

Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?

12 My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

Unlike people, nature is inconsistent.

**Peach trees don't produce poisonous mushrooms.
Orange trees don't produce poisonous berries.
Only the human heart is capable of producing such inconsistencies.**

Here is the application that we can sum up in 3 simple statements regarding the tongue.

- 1. The Tongue DEFILES [Jesus' words in Matthew 15, "it's actually the heart that defiles"]**
- 2. The Tongue DEFIES [Defies every attempt at human control]**
- 3. The Tongue DISPLAYS [what you really are]**

One of the early church fathers once said...

"By examining the tongue, physicians find out the diseases of the body; and philosophers, the diseases of the mind and heart."

James 3 creates an imagery that communicates volumes about your tongue. I encourage you to read these throughout the Book of Proverbs.

A FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

Proverbs 10:11

The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.

A HEALING AGENT

Proverbs 12:18

The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

A TREE OF LIFE

Proverbs 15:4

The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit.

MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD OR JEWELS

Proverbs 20:15

Gold there is, and rubies in abundance, but lips that speak knowledge are a rare jewel.

If we guard our words, we have a will grow in maturity as believers.

EPHESIANS 4:15

15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

[The Message]

God wants us to grow up, to know the whole truth and tell it in love—like Christ in everything. We take our lead from Christ, who is the source of everything we do. He keeps us in step with

each other. His very breath and blood flow through us, nourishing us so that we will grow up healthy in God, robust in love.

SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE