

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 17TH - 18TH, 2022 // BOOK OF JAMES

WORDS (JAMES 3:1-8)

WHAT WE SAY WILL BE HELD INTO ACCOUNT

The first half of James 3 is about our tongue. He starts off by warning us **not to flippantly take on the role of teacher because with that position comes "stricter judgment."**

- This is most important in the context of spiritual leadership, but in all forms of instruction, we will be held accountable.

A SMALL PART THAT CAN DO MASSIVE DAMAGE

James uses the analogy of a horse bit and a ship rudder to show the huge impact our words have on people and situations. The most pertinent example is how a small fire eventually sets an entire forest ablaze if not tempered.

- **Cursing, gossip, and slander do damage that extends past the initial recipients.**

"SET ON FIRE BY HELL"

Our mouths are further evidence of our relationship, or lack thereof, with God.

- **Gossip, slander, backbiting, and "abusive language" (Ephesians 5:4) are things that shouldn't come from the mouth of Christians. When they do, we're to repent and strive to stop using our words in evil ways.**

NOT SILENT, BUT CONTROLLED

We can do great damage, but we can also do great building up with our words. Though the tongue can be the most evil part of us, by the grace of God, the tongue can also be the biggest blessing to others.

- Proverbs 30:32 tells us to **speak life to every situation**. In this, we help ourselves and others.

"NO ONE CAN TAME THE TONGUE"

The only way for the tongue to be tempered and used for building up is to relent and **let the Holy Spirit take control of every corner of our heart and mind.**

- **It's "from an abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Luke 6:45). If our words are evil, we must do a check on our hearts.**

WORDS (PT. 2) (JAMES 3:9-12)

WE CAN OFTEN BE DIVIDED HOUSES

Because we can gravitate to selfishness or let situations in life detract us from God, we will both "bless" God and "curse" people.

- James tells us that **we are sinfully inconsistent when we can praise God or pray but still act out in anger or malicious intent toward other people.**

IT GOES BACK TO "TWO MASTERS" (MATTHEW 6:24)

It is impossible for a spring to produce both sweet and bitter water or for a tree to produce two different fruits. In the same way, **we cannot serve God and our sinful desires with our words simultaneously.**

- **We will all fail in this, but we can repent and learn to grow in holiness in this area.**

CHOOSING TO GUARD OUR TONGUES

Colossians 4:6 says, "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt." But the only way we can do that is to choose to have the Word of God "dwell richly" (Colossians 3:16) in our hearts.

- **We must consciously and intentionally ingest the Word and time with God while thinking about how we are speaking.**

REAL WISDOM (JAMES 3:13-18)

"WHO AMONG YOU IS WISE...?"

Back to the topic of works (ch. 2), we are to conduct ourselves with gentleness and wisdom.

- **Wisdom and understanding is to have knowledge, moral insight, and skill in deciding practical issues of conduct.**
- **True Christians demonstrate wisdom by doing good deeds with humility.**

WHAT IS HUMILITY?

To be humble doesn't mean we are the doormats of other people's desires, but that we are **able to control and overpower the natural human tendency to be arrogant or selfish by the power of the Holy Spirit.**

- Humility also isn't self-deprecation but **a proper estimation of self.**

FALSE "WISDOM"

If we have "bitter envy" or "selfish ambition," we're falling to the world's wisdom that James says is "earthly, unspiritual, and **demonic.**"

- Envy and selfishness summarize American culture. **We have fallen prey to jealousy and self-promotion, and unfortunately, this has infiltrated the church.**

ENVY AND SELFISHNESS PRODUCE CHAOS

V16 really nails it! Where there is envy and the reckless pursuit of self, there is "disorder and every evil practice."

- Though it often masks itself in a twisted version of "love," **the wisdom of the world destroys the spirit of real mutual concern, and chaos and hurt ensue.**

TO HAVE TRUE WISDOM

Godly wisdom is "pure, then **peace-loving, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without pretense.**"

- **Are we living by the Bible, promoting peace, considerate, willing to submit and learn, merciful, demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit, committed to truth, and sincere?**

"THE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS"

When we have a relationship with Jesus, we learn to walk in wisdom, which leads us to "cultivate peace" and produce the "fruit of righteousness" (living the way God desires).

- **It is only when we give everything, even our words, to Jesus that we can live in wisdom, peace, and righteousness.**

THE MOST UNRULY MEMBER

- **Our words carry tremendous weight!** If we lead or teach in any way, we must be even more cautious because we will be held to a "stricter judgment."
- Only God can control the tongue. **When we give our hearts and minds to God, what comes out of us is righteousness.**

BEING AT PEACE WITH GOD

- **How we live matters.** The only way we can conduct ourselves with true wisdom and gentleness is for the creation (us) to have an understanding of who the Creator (God) is.
- **We must intentionally strive to know God more, to follow Him more closely, and to trust Him because He wants the best for us.**

BEING AT PEACE WITH OURSELVES

- **We can only find contentment and be at peace with who we are when we have peace about who God is.**
- Building a relationship with Jesus (pray, read, obey) makes us humble and balanced people and keeps us from falling into the world's "wisdom" that is broken and empty.

BEING AT PEACE WITH OTHERS

- When we're at peace with God and confident in who we are in Him, we can love people well and "cultivate peace" that produces more righteousness in the world around us.
- **To be righteous people of peace isn't easy, but it is the light Christians are called to be. This starts with the tongue.**