

The Sanctified Tongue

James 3:1-12

June 19, 2022 | Mark Welborn, Lay Pastor

BIG IDEA: We must let the Holy Spirit sanctify our tongue.

James 3:1 | “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.”

I. A Warning to Teachers and Leaders

1. In general speech
2. When teaching and leading in the study of God’s Word
3. Encouragement to those gifted and called to teach

2 Timothy 4:2-3 | “preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions.”

1 Timothy 4:13-14b | “Until I come, devote yourselves to the public reading of scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. 14 Do not neglect the gift you have...”

1 Timothy 3:1 | “The saying is trustworthy, if anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task”

James 3:2 | “For we all stumble in many ways.”

II. Because We’re Prone to Sin

Proverbs 20:9 | “Who can say, ‘I have made my heart pure; I am clean from my sin?’”

1 John 1:8 | “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

Isaiah 6:5-7 | “And I said: ‘Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!’ 6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth and said: ‘Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin is atoned for.’”

Romans 3:23 | “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”

James 3:2b | “And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle his whole body.”

III. The Perfect Man

1. “Perfect” translated from the Greek word “Teleios”...two possible meanings:

- i. Absolute perfection (Jesus)
- ii. Complete or mature

2. Objective: Complete maturity

- i. The fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22 | ““But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control;”

- ii. A renewed mind

Romans 12:2 | “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

- iii. Crosspoint Family

Colossians 4:6 | “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.”

James 3:3-5 | “If we put bits in the mouths of horses so that they will obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. 4 Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. 5 So also the tongue is a small member yet it boasts of great things.”

IV. Our Tongue is a Tool of Our Heart

1. Bridle bit (rider and bit)
2. Ship’s rudder (pilot and rudder)
3. Tongue (Christian and tongue)

James 3:5b-6 | “How great a forest is set ablaze by such a fire! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the whole course of life, and set on fire by hell.”

- The devastating power of the tongue (v. 6)

“...the whole course of life,”

Colossians 3:8 | “But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.”

James 3:6b | “...and set on fire by hell.”

V. A Tool of Our Enemy, “The Liar”

1. Spiritual warfare

“That it is said to be set on fire by hell indicates that the tongue can be Satan’s tool, fulfilling hell’s purposes to pollute, corrupt and destroy.”

- John MacArthur

Ephesians 6:12 | “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood...” (NIV)

John 8:31-32 | “So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, ‘if you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples. 32 and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.’”

James 3:7-8 | “For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, 8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.”

VI. Controlling our tongue is beyond our power

1. Good news

Psalm 51:10 | “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.”

Ezekiel 36:25-27 | “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”

Romans 12:2 | “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

James 3:9-12 | “9 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. 10 From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. 11 Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.”

VII. Fresh Water or Salt Water?

1. Fresh water (sanctified use of the tongue)

Psalm 107:2 | “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so...”

Mark 16:15 | “And he said to them, ‘Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.’”

Romans 15:14 | “Instruct one another...”

Ephesians 5:19 | “Speak to one another with Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.”

Colossians 3:16 | “Admonish one another...”

1 Thessalonians 5:11 | “Encourage each other...”

Psalms 150:6 | “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!”

2. Salt water (sinful use of the tongue)

Colossians 3:9 | “Do not lie to each other...”

James 4:11 | “Do not slander one another...”

James 5:9 | “Don’t grumble against each other...”

2 Corinthians 12:20 | “For I am afraid...there may be gossip...”

Ephesians 4:29 | “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths...”

Benediction

1 Peter 2:21-23 | “21 For this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. 22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued trusting himself to him who judges justly.”