

**Scripture: James 3:1-18**

*Sermon Title: Be A Blessing to Your Co-worker*

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**James Chapter 3**

*1 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. 2 For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. 3 If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they 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. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small 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 entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. 7 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. 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? 12 Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water. 13 Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. 15 This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. 17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. 18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.*

**Introduction:**

Today, we're diving into the power of words and how they impact not only our relationships with God, but also those with our coworkers. James chapter 3 gives us a clear picture of how challenging it can be to tame our tongues, yet how vital it is for our spiritual growth and the well-being of those around us.

- **The Tongue's Power (James 3:1-8):**

*1 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. 2 For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. 3 If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they 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. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small 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 entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. 7 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.*

*James starts by reminding us that teachers, those who use their tongues to speak words to instruct others, bear a greater responsibility. Why? Because tongues speak words that have immense power. Tongues can guide like a small rudder steering a massive ship, or ignite a devastating fire. Our tongues, though small, can bless or curse, build up or tear down.*

- **Blessing and Cursing from the Same Mouth (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? 12 Can a fig tree, my*

*brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.*

This seems contradictory, doesn't it? How can we praise God and speak harshly to others? Yet, James highlights this common struggle. The words that come out of our mouths (aka tongues) reveal the true state of our hearts. Jesus teaches us this:

**Matthew 12:34b**

“ . . . For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”

**Luke 6:45**

“The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”

- ***The Wisdom from Above (James 3:13-18):***

*13 Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. 15 This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. 17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. 18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.*

So, how do we bridge this gap? How do we become people whose tongues speak words that consistently bless those around us, including our coworkers? James points us to wisdom, not of this world, but from above. This wisdom is pure, peaceable, gentle, and full of mercy. It leads to righteousness and peace, both within ourselves and in our workplace relationships.

**Ephesians 4:25-32**

25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. 26 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil. 28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. 29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

**Best Practices in Our Workplace to Bless Our Co-workers :**

- *Speak truth: Be honest and trustworthy in your communication.*
- *Control anger: Don't let it fester and lead to harmful words.*
- *Build up, don't tear down: Use your words to encourage and support your colleagues.*
- *Forgive: Just as Christ forgave us, extend grace to those around you.*

**Conclusion:**

*Taming our tongues is an ongoing process, but it's one with incredible rewards. By choosing words that bless, encourage, and build up, we not only honor God but also create a more positive and productive environment to Seek First the Kingdom. Let's commit to being a blessing to our coworkers through the power of our tongues.*

