

Old Testament Reading [Isa 45:18-23](#)

45¹⁸ For thus says the LORD,
Who created the heavens
(He is God!),
Who formed the earth and made it
(He established it;
He did not create it empty,
He formed it to be inhabited!);
“I am the LORD, and there is no other.
19 I did not speak in secret,
in a land of darkness;
I did not say to the offspring of Jacob,
‘Seek Me in vain.’
I the LORD speak the truth;
I declare what is right.
20 “Assemble yourselves and come;
draw near together,
you survivors of the nations!
They have no knowledge
who carry about their wooden idols,
and keep on praying to a god
that cannot save.
21 Declare and present your case;
let them take counsel together!
Who told this long ago?
Who declared it of old?
Was it not I, the LORD?
And there is no other god besides Me,
a righteous God and a Savior;
there is none besides Me.
22 “Turn to Me and be saved,
all the ends of the earth!
For I am God, and there is no other.
23 By Myself I have sworn:
from My mouth has gone out in righteousness
a word that shall not return:
‘To Me every knee shall bow,
every tongue shall swear allegiance.’

Epistle Reading [James 3:4-18](#)

3⁴ 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 like-
ness of God. ¹⁰ From the same mouth come bless-
ing 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 bit-
ter 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 rea-
son, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial
and sincere. ¹⁸ And **a harvest of righteousness is
sown in peace by those who make peace.**

Gospel Reading [Matt 12:33-37](#)

12³³ “Either make the tree good and its fruit good,
or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is
known by its fruit. ³⁴ You brood of vipers! How can
you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the
abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ The
good person out of his good treasure brings forth
good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure
brings forth evil. ³⁶ I tell you, on the day of judg-
ment people will give account for every careless
word they speak; ³⁷ for by your words you will be
justified, and by your words you will be con-
demned.”

Introduction

The book of James tells us what a life of Godliness is supposed to look like. This week we cover how powerful our words can be. In Chp3, James speaks of: (1) evil words from evil hearts; (2) a redeeming source and (3) sowing peace.

Background

1. Evil words from evil hearts.
 - a. A small member, the tongue is like a rudder (J3v4), seemingly small but able to direct an entire ship; or like a small fire able to set a large forest ablaze (J3v5).
 - b. The tongue (by words) creates a world of unrighteousness, staining the whole body (humanity), setting on fire the entire course of life (all of human existence) (J3v6).
 - c. We don't often think of how damaging our unguarded words can be. Some even believe our unguarded words are who we really are and shouldn't be suppressed. The Bible and our culture agree: our words reveal who we really are; they reveal our evil hearts. Our words can be the evidence of our rebellion against God, as in [Rom 3:12-14](#): using our tongues to deceive, with the venom of asps under our lips.
 - d. Our words reveal the inner chaos or inner order of our souls; our words are the evidence by which we will be judged for the character of our souls ([Matt 12:36-37](#)).
2. A redeeming source.
 - a. Given that our words reveal things about our culture we do not like (racism, envy, chaos, destruction, self-aggrandizement), do we need new laws to fix our hearts? James helps: the same mouth shouldn't send out both blesses and curses (J3v10).
 - b. The problem isn't what is being produced, the problem is that only certain things can come from certain sources. A salt pond cannot yield fresh water (J3v12). The problem is the source; evil words come from evil hearts – a new law would be like putting a filter on to the salt water source only that the filter would clog.
 - c. The Bible tells us we need a redeeming source, we need new hearts. Our evil words must be redeemed at the source. A redeeming source which will issue forth new words in place of our evil words. That redeeming source is Christ Jesus.
 - 1) Our OT reading reveals the character of God the Father coming to the Israelites in exile for disobedience, wanting to be found as their Savior, God the Son. [Isa 45:23](#) *from My mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return – shall not return without accomplishing what is meant to be done. And, every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance (Phil 2:10-11).*
 - 2) [John 14:7](#) If you have seen me, you've seen the Father. He is the Word that reveals the source. Who is Christ but creative, self-giving, self-sacrificing, redeeming, loving, gracious, merciful God. He came to us to heal the source of our sin.
3. Sowing peace.
 - a. Christ Jesus took evil people (us) into His heart to heal the source of our sin, to unite us to Himself so our words can now participate in His Word so His source becomes our source to bring us peace with God and sow peace with one another.
 - b. Avoid wisdom which comes from the earth as it is unspiritual and demonic (J3:15), producing disorder and vile practices (J3:16). Instead embrace the wisdom coming from above which is pure, peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy (J3:17).
 - c. Embracing the wisdom from above, coming to God, being forgiven and now being in Christ – becomes the source for us to sow peace with others.

Discuss

1. Discuss James 3:6 – whole body (humanity); entire course of life (human existence).
2. Our words are the evidence by which we will be judged for the character of our souls.
3. How is debate about the acceptability of words **revealing evil hearts?** cancel culture?
4. Discuss Isa 45:23 – a word that shall not return = Christ Jesus.
5. United to Christ, our words participate with His words; His source is our source.

Conclusion/Application

•The son of a pastor, who was gunned down in church by an evil man, said to him: “Understand that as you have been judged, know that you still have an opportunity to ask for forgiveness; know that your life can still change; I guarantee you that if you choose to serve Jesus you will have a better life.” These men and women who were killed in church, had the source of life, of Jesus Christ, that transformed them. They had experienced His Grace and forgiveness, they knew the peace they had was still on offer for everyone – even and evil man with an evil heart. A harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace (J3:18). Go, sow peace in the name of Christ.

