Little but Powerful-the Human Tongue (Part 1)

November 15, 2026

Bible Passage: James 3:1-5

Big Idea: **Our _____ have the power to direct our lives and destroy our worlds, requiring supernatural control.**

Fighter Memory Verse
NOVEMBER

Romans 15:13
May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

#1- It is a weighty responsibility to _____ others spiritually (James 3:1)

- James starts with a shocking warning:
  - "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness."
- In the early church, teaching was a position of high prestige, and <u>many wanted that</u> _____.
- James is not discouraging "_____", but he is giving a clear warning of accountability. (Matthew 12:36-37)
  - Greater <u>influence</u> always equals greater _____.
  - ***Before speaking into the lives of others, you must first make sure your own heart and life align with the truth you are sharing.***

#2-Be alert, we all _____ in many ways (James 3:2)

- James doesn't say, "you stumble." He says, "We all stumble." Even James, the brother of Jesus, struggled.
- James says only the "perfect", or <u>fully</u> _____, don't sin in what they say.
  - James reveals a secret about human nature: **the ultimate test of spiritual maturity isn't how long you pray or how many Bible verses you know. <u>It's your</u> _____.**

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#3- Little things steer <u>big</u> _____–Bits, Rudders, Tongues & Sparks (James 3:3-5)

- The tongue is small, like bits & rudders, it can <u>direct</u> big things like horses and ships.
  - A bit in a horse's mouth
  - A rudder on a ship
- The tongue is small, like a spark, it can _____ big things like a forest.
  - Sparks in the forest

TRUTH INTO ACTION

- Before you teach, examine yourself:
  - Examine your motives: Am I speaking to honor God or to impress people?
  - Examine your walk: Does my private life back up my public words?
- Recognize "we all stumble in speech in many ways" own your own short-comings and be quick to forgive and be reconciled to others.
- Watch out for the "the sparks of your tongue" they can burn down whole forests of relationships.



Please understand we want to help you know Jesus personally and journey with you in taking fresh steps of obedience daily for Jesus. We would love to pray with you and for you. Join us at the end of the service for prayer or send us your request on the Connect Card and we will lift them up throughout the week.

Table Talk -- Please take the time this week to process the table talk lesson in your community group or around your own kitchen table.

Warm Up: What are words of encouragement you've received that you've never forgotten?

Read James 3:1-4

1. Why does James warn that teachers will be judged more strictly? What responsibility comes with using words to guide others? See also Matthew 12:36-37; Titus 2:7-8; Proverbs 18:21.

2. James illustrates the tongue's power with images of a bit in a horse's mouth and a rudder steering a ship. Then he compares the tongue to a small fire that can set a whole forest ablaze (3-6).
    - How do James' illustrations of the tongue challenge the way we typically think about the seriousness of our words?

3. How does Proverbs 18:20-21 deepen your understanding of James' statement that the tongue has the power of life and death?
    - What kinds of words have the power to bring life to the people around you?
    - What kinds of words can quietly bring death into a relationship, family, church, or community?

4. What is one area of your speech that God is challenging you to surrender to Him?

5. Is there a way you have used your tongue, perhaps recently or years ago, that you need to repent of and seek someone's forgiveness for? How will you go about doing that today?

Prayer: The Bible clearly reads, "For we all stumble in many ways" reminding us of the power of the tongue to speak both life and death. Father, for all the words of "life" we speak thank you and for the words of "death" that come from mouths, help us to repent and take steps of obedience today. In your sweet name Jesus, Amen!