

The Power of our Words

James 3:3-12

Introduction:

1. Have you ever noticed how much attention our words get? Think about it. Words are important. Your parents have instilled this in us from the beginning how important words are. Have you ever heard this phrase: **If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all?** Or have you ever been corrected by your parents for saying a bad word or something mean about someone.
2. **Illus:** Mom washing my mouth out with soap because I said "This sucks."
3. Everyone puts emphasis on our words. Why?
4. **Words are powerful!** In fact, your life and my life has been shaped by the words that have spoken to us, over us, and about us. Words shape your childhood experiences. Words shape relationships. Words impact your self-confidence. Words impact what you believe about yourself.
5. **Words are so important because all of us have been impacted by words.** Why?
6. **WORDS CAN HURT.** That false statement – Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words will never hurt me. (started in Episcopal church, and I am thinking they got it all wrong).

7. **Illus:** Have you ever asked "when are you due" when she isn't due. Most only do this once. Or how about this one: you see a new born baby and you say she is so cute, and they respond, "it's a boy."
8. **SHOW PICS WHEN I TALK ABOUT THE BUTTONS - PAUSE, STOP, REWIND**.....Words can hurt, and once you say something or post something, you can never take it back. We are given a pause button and a stop button in life, but the one button we want that we don't have is a rewind button!
9. **James 3:3-12 Commentary** (picture of rudder after V. 4)
10. **Big Idea: Your tongue is a small part with a big influence**
11. If the tongue has the potential to have a big influence, we must watch our tongue.
12. Let's look at the power of the tongue:
 - I. **The source of our words** – Matthew 12:34
 1. **Matthew 12:34** says, "For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh."
 2. Jesus is saying that what is in your heart will come out of your mouth.
 3. **Your words are a tattletale on your heart.**
 4. If you would like to clean up your mouth, purify your heart.
 - II. **The danger of our words** – V. 5-8
 1. **The tongue can be like an unstoppable wildfire** (V. 5-6) - What you say cannot be taken back. The only buttons that you have in life is a pause button or a stop button. You don't get a rewind button. You don't get a

do over with your words. Once they are said, it is over. You cannot take them back. With social media, once it is posted, it is there, and it can never be taken back. Your words can be like a fire that cannot be stopped. They can destroy, they can kill, they can ruin relationships, and they can ruin your life.

2. **The tongue can be like an untamable beast** (V. 7-8) – Untamed beasts destroy what is in their path. They are vicious. They are hurtful. They can be destructive. James is saying that our words can be like that. They can have a similar affect on people.

III. The purpose of our words – V. 3; 9-12

1. **The tongue should direct people to Jesus** (V. 3) – The bit steers the horse, and the rudder guides the ship. Our tongues should be directing people or leading people to Jesus. In other words, when James likens our tongue to the bit and the rudder, he is challenging us to direct people to Jesus with our words. How?
2. **The tongue should glorify God** (V. 9-12) – If you are a believer, James says that it will be evident by the words that you speak. In other words, a person who claims to be a follower of Jesus but speaks like they are not is a true follower of Jesus. His reasoning is that a fountain cannot bring forth sweet and bitter water at the same time. Our tongue should glorify Him.

Conclusion:

1. Words are powerful!
2. Recap and let the Spirit lead