

Thesis Statement: The purpose of this study is for the people of CSA to understand how to worship/honor/glorify God with the words they speak.

Intro:

Open your Bible to James chapter 3. It's there in James chapter 3 that we will learn how to worship, honor, and glorify God with the words we speak.

Maybe you're here tonight, and you struggle with gossiping or cursing. Or maybe the words you speak are getting you in trouble at work or at home with your spouse or friends. Others of you might not be saying the wrong things, but you're also not saying the right things either. You struggle to find the right words to say in certain situations

It's my hope that after this study, we all walk away encouraged and empowered to use our words wisely and in a worshipful manner unto the Lord.

Embarrassing Story.. Words are important...Choose God's word.

Let's begin reading there in James chapter 3, starting in verse 1.

Jas 3:1 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

Let's pause here real quick, because as a teacher, I'm already in the danger zone. I am subject to a stricter judgment. But so are all the other teachers here at Calvary South Austin. Right now, we have CM teachers and Youth teachers

expounding God's word at different age levels. We bear another level of responsibility because of the position we hold. Some of you are here tonight, and you're not teachers **yet**, but perhaps that is what God has in store for you.

I'd encourage you all to go through the Ingite series on our website under the NEW BELIEVER'S tab and listen to it. If you feel you have the gift of teaching, start applying it right where you are. And if the Lord sees fit to call you to be a teacher here at the church, just keep in mind that when we are dealing with the Word of God, we will be analyzed with a critical eye, as we should. It keeps us honest. Just know it comes with the position. Let's pick back up in verse 2 where James expands his talk beyond teachers to include the rest of the congregation.

Jas 3:2 For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

Let's stop there. In verse 2, the word STUMBLE means to offend, to err, to sin, or to trip. It's not the idea that you're continuing to live in sin, but rather you're running the Christian race, and you stumble into sin...the idea is you tripped up while running, but you catch yourself and keep running.

Also, notice how it says WE ALL STUMBLE in many things. If you're here tonight and you're struggling, you're not alone. James is tattling on all of us. He just called us all out, which is very cool, because too many people act like everything is A OK, all the time, and it's not. We are in a spiritual battle against our flesh.

And the truth is sometimes.. We stumble..But like Paul says, we forget those things behind us and move forward to the upward call of Christ.

Pro 24:16 For a righteous man may fall seven times And rise again, But the wicked shall fall by calamity.

We might fall, but with the help of The Holy Spirit, we rise again.

Now the word PERFECT in verse 2 can throw us off. I can be a prideful man, but I wouldn't call myself perfect. And you could read this and let yourself off the hook. Like, "well, nobody's perfect, but Jesus. I guess I can live unbridled."

The reality is that the Greek word used here for PERFECT does not speak of being without blemish. No, it actually could be translated as COMPLETE.

It's speaking about being a spiritually mature person. As in COMPLETELY grown up as opposed to babies, children, or even teens who are still growing. They haven't fully developed yet. They are not complete in their growth process.

However, one indicator that you are a spiritually mature Christian is that you are able to bridle your tongue.

We are not off the hook to accomplish this. We are all supposed to be growing into spiritual maturity. We are to grow more and more Christ-like. That is why we are looking at these verses tonight - so we can learn to tame the tongue.

Let's pick it back up in verses 3 & 4, where James begins to give us two of three examples of how powerful the tongue is. Let's read starting in vs. 3.

Jas 3:3 Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body.

Jas 3:4 Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.

Indeed, the tongue is a powerful tool. And part of taming the tongue is recognizing how powerful it is. A day at the beach is a fun day at the beach, as long as you respect the power of the ocean. If you don't recognize how powerful the ocean is, that day at the beach can turn deadly, quickly.

Here, James is giving us an understanding of the tongue's power.

Compared to a horse, a bit is small, but we can control and direct the horse with this tiny tool.

The rudder on a ship is also tiny in comparison to the size of a boat. But again, we can set the boat's direction with this tiny tool.

In a similar fashion, we can direct the course of our lives with our tongue.

I think of King Solomon, in 1st Kings chapter 3 if you want to turn there... God visits him in a dream... and asks Solomon, "What shall I give you?"

Picking it up in verse 7...

1Ki 3:7 "Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in.

1Ki 3:8 "And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted.

1Ki 3:9 "Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"

1Ki 3:10 The speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

1Ki 3:11 Then God said to him: "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice,

1Ki 3:12 "behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you.

1Ki 3:13 "And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days.

Solomon's words, his tiny tongue, set the course of his life and not only his life, but the entire nation of Israel's course.

Pro 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

The tongue has the power of death and life. With our tongue, we can begin new relationships, new friendships, but with the same tongue, we've ended relationships. We've said things that we can't take back. Once you've said those words, they are out there, and when we've spoken the wrong words, sometimes the best we can hope for is forgiveness, and we need to use our tongue to ask for it.

The tongue is powerful and can direct the course of our lives, and we see examples of this in the scripture.. Like Ananias & Sapphira, his wife...

Turn over to Acts 5, we'll start in verse 1 when we get there... and while you turn there, I'll remind you what Jesus himself said in Matthew 5:37

Mat 5:37 "But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

Jesus was explaining to his audience that what they say they are going to do, they should do, and if they don't intend on doing it, then they shouldn't lie and say they will do it, but rather, they should just say NO to whatever it is. They shouldn't swear oaths to accomplish things, because the reality is they don't have the power to control unforeseen circumstances.

So as Christians, when we use our words to commit to something, we need to do all that we can to accomplish it. Let your yes be yes. This is one way our tongue can direct our course. Whatever things that we have committed ourselves to do, that is now the direction our life is going.

Now, here in Acts 5, we'll see a couple whose tongues get them in trouble for lying to God. You see, they acted as if they sold a property and gave all the proceeds to the church. They wanted to be seen as more spiritual than they were.

Act 5:1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.

Act 5:2 And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Act 5:3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?"

Act 5:4 "While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

Act 5:5 Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.

Act 5:6 And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried him out, and buried him.

Act 5:7 Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

Act 5:8 And Peter answered her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?" She said, "Yes, for so much."

Act 5:9 Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out."

Act 5:10 Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband.

Act 5:11 So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

Now I know this might sound harsh, but hear me out. How many wolves in sheep's clothing, that are fleecing the flock by asking them to give money to their ministry, so that they can own jets, and all this real estate.. How many of those charlatans would we have if the HS was still operating like this? I'm guessing not many.

This couple did not tame their tongue. Notice Sapphira had a chance to repent.. And chose not to. She double-downed on the lie.

Psa 101:7 He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who tells lies shall not continue in my presence.

The fact is, this couple lied to the HS and to the entire early church, and at that point in time, God was making sure that the early church was not gonna start

like that, on lies and we'll return to this story in a little bit, because we'll see how this one lie could've spread to the rest of the church.

Col 3:9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,

Col 3:10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

Part of taming the tongue includes refraining from lies and deceitfulness. And listen, don't get clever with it, don't tell half-truths.. Put off the old man and the old ways.. And walk in truth.

That's the power of the tongue. And there are examples of the power of the tongue bringing life.

Jas 5:16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Here we see that confessing our sins to one another, being accountable for our sins, coupled with praying for one another, can provide healing. Again, our tongue sets the course for our life. You can choose not to confess your sins and continue to deal with the consequences, or confess and be made whole.

By the grace of God, Sapphira had an opportunity to confess, but chose not to.

1Jo 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1Jo 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Remember, we all stumble in many things. God knows this and has paid for all our sins, past, present and future. Praise the Lord for that... but when we stumble, we need to confess our sins, to one another for accountability, but to God for the sake of our relationship with Him. When we don't we continue in that sin...but when we do, helps us to live righteously.

And that word CONFESS, it simply means to agree with God. That He is right and we were wrong.. About whatever topic. We are agreeing with Him.

So part of taming the tongue is telling the truth... even when we feel like lying.

Well, moving on lets look back at James chapter 3, starting in verse 5 we'll see James give us another example of the power of the tongue.

Jas 3:5 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!

Jas 3:6 And the tongue [is] a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

This is what Ananias and Sapphira did. Boasted about great things. But it was lies. And those lies defiled their whole body.

....But, if those lies went unchecked,,, it could've turned into a full-blazed forest fire of the early church. If the HS didn't put out the flames of hell right then and there, the whole Body of Christ, the early church, could've been defiled. So God dealt with it.

Ananias and Sapphira's fire was set through lying, but gossip is another horrible fire that can defile the whole church body.

You hear something juicy, and you feel like you gotta tell someone that crazy information you got... and you don't even take the time to see if it's true or not.

And if it is true, we should still ask ourselves does it need to be passed along?
And if it does need to be passed along, who does it need to be passed along too?

Pro 11:13 A talebearer reveals secrets, But he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter.

1Pe 4:8 NKJV - And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."

Listen just because someone sinned and you know about it, doesn't mean the right thing is to go about and tell people about it. Love covers a multitude of

sins. We're not gonna sweep things under the rug around here. But we are gonna handle it in the manner the bible tells us to.

Math 18, if your brother sins against you, go to him alone and tell him. If he receives it great; if he doesn't bring someone with you as a mediator, and if they still don't receive, bring it to the leaders of the church... and they deal with it.

Keep the people in the know as few as possible.

Pro 26:20 Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; And where there is no talebearer, strife ceases.

Sometimes you gotta be that wet piece of wood that doesn't catch fire. If you heard gossip, let it end with you. Don't be a part of the hell forest fire.

Eph 4:25 Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.

Eph 4:26 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath,

Eph 4:27 nor give place to the devil.

Eph 4:28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

Eph 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Eph 4:31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

Eph 4:32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

Verse 29 says to speak what is necessary for edification. Meaning speak those things that build each other up.

Part of taming the tongue is curbing corrupt words... while speaking kind and gracious words to one another, that help build someone up in the spiritual walk.

Pro 12:18 There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, But the tongue of the wise promotes health.

Before you speak to or about someone, ask yourself, " Is this going to pierce them as if I stabbed them with a sword? Or, is this gonna promote health to their spiritual walk?"

Eph 5:17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Eph 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

Eph 5:19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

If you want to speak words that promote others' spiritual health, speak the word of God to one another.

Does this mean our lives turn into a musical? Speaking Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to one another? I hope not. But I know I've been blessed when someone sends me a verse that ministered to them.. Or they know it'll minister to me. And I've sent out verses that I know will be encouraging to others who are going through various trials.

Let's pick it back up in verse 7....

Jas 3:7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind.

Jas 3:8 - But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

Well, throw in the towel. No man can tame the tongue. I've just wasted our time here tonight. My bad, y'all. Actually, what James is pointing out is that we've conquered all these creatures, but we can't seem to tame our tongue, in our flesh. In the natural man, the OLD MAN. Our flesh is powerless against the mighty evil tongue.

But not God. God is all-powerful.

Mat 19:26 "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

When we walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, we can truly tame the tongue.

Act 1:8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Because the believer has the Holy Spirit, we can walk in the power of the Holy Spirit and use our tongue to testify of what Jesus did for us. We don't have to surrender to the evil desires because Whom the Son set free is free indeed.

The same power that raised Jesus from the grave lives in me and empowers every believer to accomplish God's will. And we already saw that the will of the Lord is for us to speak in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to one another.

The tongue can only be tamed by the power of the spirit.

Luk 12:8 "Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God."

Luk 12:9 "But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God."

Luk 12:10 - "And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven."

Luk 12:11 - "Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say."

Luk 12:12 - "For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

We see here that not only will the Holy Spirit give us the power we need to tame the tongue, but He will also teach us what to say.

If you're one of those people who doesn't struggle with saying the wrong things, but you do struggle to say the right things, stop striving so much and start relying on the leading of the Holy Spirit. Stop worrying about messing up, and start trusting that the Holy Spirit wants to guide you to say the right things.

Listen, Jesus was the perfect communicator, and his disciples didn't always understand what He was saying. He was being led by the Holy Spirit to say what he said, and they didn't always understand him. It's ok. Just let the Holy Spirit lead you, and you'll say exactly what is needed to be said.

Especially when it comes to sharing your faith. Don't let the devil talk you out of sharing your faith for fear of messing up... Not sharing your faith is the mistake.

This Luke verse promises that God will give you the words you need to speak in that moment. You can trust Him. He's the one who wants to use you to share the good news in the first place.

Moving along lets pick it back up in verse 9...

Jas 3:9 -With it (the tongue) we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God.

Jas 3:10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

Jas 3:11 Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening?

Jas 3:12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.

Here we see the struggle that we have...with an untamed tongue. Blessing to God and curses to our fellow man. Verse 10 tells us this is wrong and we got to make changes.

In verse 9 James points out that we want to bless God with our words, but curse our fellow man that was made in the image of God. It doesn't make sense.

Yes everyone around us is a sinner. But every sinner around you was someone Jesus created, and died for. Every one of them. And we've been called to make disciples of them. Rather than cursing the lost man, we need to evangelize him.

In general, we are to treat others like VIP's...

Phl 2:1 Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,

Phl 2:2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

Phl 2:3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

Phl 2:4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

When we esteem others better than ourselves, we are treating them as if they are more important than us. It means we're gonna give them the VIP treatment.

If you have this in mind when talking to someone, it helps you tame your tongue.

You can't lose your temper when you're talking to a VIP, you can't talk down to someone you consider a VIP. You say things, more gently, etc. Esteeming others better than yourself, will help you tame your tongue.

James goes on to talk about how it doesn't make sense to bless and curse with the same tongue. It seems he's echoing something that Jesus said in Matthew chapter 12

Jesus speaking in Matthew chapter 12 starting in verse 33 it says..

Mat 12:33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.

Mat 12:34 "Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

Mat 12:35 "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

Mat 12:36 "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

Mat 12:37 "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Jesus was saying pretty much the same thing we read in James,, but then he says something scary in verse 36, that every idle word we will have to give an account for.

Yes we are saved. Yes all our sins are forgiven.. But.. let that still sink in. Jesus is watching what we say.

Pro 10:19 In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise.

Jas 1:19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

To those of us who talk alot, sometimes we gotta zip it and ask ourselves, is this just idle talk? Is this really edifying? If not, die to yourself and and only speak what you are being led to speak.

But to those who ***might not struggle*** with idle words..., do you speak up when it is time? Because Jesus says It's by your words you will be justified. You gotta speak up when it's time.

Pro 31:9 Open your mouth, judge righteously, And plead the cause of the poor and needy.

When it comes to sharing our faith...

1Pe 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

1Pe 3:16 having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

1Pe 3:17 For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

Maybe its not in your personality to speak boldly... die to yourself, to your comforts and be ready and willing to speak the right words at the right time.

Also, in this passage Jesus points out that it's a heart condition. It's the idea that what's in the well comes up in the bucket. Are you bitter in your heart? Are you fostering unforgiveness? It's gonna come out in your speech.

Our speech is supposed to spring forth blessings and NOT curses. We are to be a spring of fresh water... that brings life.

That is what God is calling us to do. We are to tame our tongue and use it to bless Him and others.

In wrapping up I'll remind you, that how we use our tongue is an indicator of where we are on our spiritual growth to maturity. None of us have arrived. We are all a work in progress, but seek to honor, worship and glorify God with your words. Lets pray.