

James Series – Chapter 3

Words of Wisdom

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Good morning! We are in part three of our series on James. Today we will take a look at chapter 3. Chapter 3 is similar to chapter 2 in that he covers two topics.

Words - Wisdom

When he talks about words he primarily is speaking about the human tongue and how powerful it is.

When he talks about wisdom, he is specifically talking about the difference between the two kinds of wisdom out there. One of them is heavenly and the other one is not.

As James launches into this teaching on the tongue, he begins very specifically instructing “teachers” that they will be judged more strictly by God. Then he broadens his thoughts to apply to everyone.

3 Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. ²We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

- 1. We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.**

Not everyone should be teachers.

We all stumble.

Perfect: holistically consistent, honest, pure, integrity.

Keep their whole body in check (bridal), their entire body.

Listen to the following verses. James puts a disproportionately large amount of time into his examples and illustrations concerning the tongue. Probably to emphasize the disproportionate power the tongue has in a person’s life considering its size.

³When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. ⁵Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts.

2. The tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts.

Bits in a horse's mouth.

Rutter of a large ship.

Notice the illustrations. A large animal like a horse, powerful and strong, completely controlled by a small bit in its mouth.

Or a gigantic ship able to cross oceans but ordered around by a tiny rudder.

It's the same with the tongue. It might be small, but tongue should be feared.

The fully mature person will notice the horse is started and stopped by the bit, and the ship is freed from port and park at the dock by the rudder.

It's not enough to simply remain silent but it is the mature person who knows when to speak and when to remain silent.

Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.⁶ The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

⁷ All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, ⁸ but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

Forest fire from a small spark.

Tongue must be tamed.

Full of deadly poison.

⁹ With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. ¹¹ Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? ¹² My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

3. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing.

A mouth with two purposes, praise, cursing. Fresh water and salt water.

Why is the tongue so dangerous? Jesus said in...

Matthew 12:34

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

Proverbs 18:21

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

The 70 Resolutions of Jonathan Edwards

31. Resolved: never to say anything at all against anybody; except when to do so is perfectly consistent with the highest standard of Christian honor and love to mankind; and except when it is consistent with the sense of greatest humility and awareness of my own faults and failings. Then, whenever I say anything against anyone, I will examine my words against the strictest test of the Golden rule.

We come from a culture that wants to say whatever we want; the bible says we are to say whatever he wants. We actually love this freedom, this right to spout off. Like an out of control horse violently thrashing, or a ship sail aimlessly out of control toward disaster. We lack the ability to say what we ought to say and not say what we ought not to say.

And James spends all this time in this letter talking about the tongue and we've just spent this service time talking about the tongue and many of us won't do a single thing different about the way we speak when we leave this place. It's not a rebuke, I just think it's true. Without some loving prodding,

I could, I think, give you an exercise to do. It would be a biblical exercise. Make a list this week of the ungodly things that come out of your mouth: complaining, slander, gossip, rude, profanity, lying, angry outburst.

Then make a list of the Godly things that should come out of your mouth: encouragement, scripture, worship, prayer, peace, concern, and sometimes nothing at all.

Then I would say take that first list and stop doing that and take that second list and start doing that. 😊

If you spend time with just you will start to talk like him, (Acts 4:13 they had been with Jesus). Have you ever wanted to sound like him? Have you ever wanted your words to comfort like his, or heal like his? Have you ever been desperate that your words would be life and hope?

(Transition into baptism)

That's why today is such an awesome day to do baptism. Because baptism is about surrender. It's about new life. It's about committing yourself to spend the rest of your life with Jesus, so that in all things you might become more like him.