LIFE GROUP LESSON

THE BOOK OF JAMES - FAITH WORKS - WEEK OF NOV. 1

Goal: to understand there is power in our words; the words we speak can bring life … or the words we speak can bring death ... a sobering thought. Yet, hearts transformed by Jesus can and will speak words of life, not death.

Opening Discussion:

- Have you ever been deeply wounded by someone's words or unkind remarks?
- Have you ever hurt another person by speaking negatively or thoughtlessly?
- Have you ever intentionally lied about another person or spread gossip?

Introduction

If you have ever spread ugly words of ill-intent or curses that bring death, James says STOP. Consider carefully the potential damage being sown and repent. Followers of Christ should speak only words of life. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we can learn to tame our tongues and practice self-control. We have all made mistakes, and at times, spoken negatively and harshly. But James says be careful, for just as a tiny spark sets a whole forest ablaze, words have the power to get out of control and set a whole forest on fire, a fire set by hell itself. We must not excuse an uncontrolled tongue, but rather ask Christ daily to transform our hearts and shape our words to conform with his will. In this way, what we say will reflect a Savior who came to speak truth in love, set captives free, heal hurts, and redeem the lost and broken.

Read James 3:1-12

Notice this passage begins: "… not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly" (v1). Just as in the early church, there are people today who want the short-cut status, respect, and accolade of being known as a great teacher. James says, Think twice!

- What does Jesus say about this, according to Matthew's Gospel? Read:

"Don't let anyone call you 'Rabbi,' for you have only one teacher, and all of you are equal as brothers and sisters" (Matthew 23:8).

- Why should we be careful about elevating a mere human individual with accolade that may supersede the honor we give the Lord?

Teachers and pastors carry a heavy responsibility, and James says they will be judged more strictly.Thus, we should always respect our leaders, and pray for the ones God calls to teach, preach and lead in his church. The writer of Hebrews says: "Remember your leaders who taught you the word of God. Think of all the good that has come from their lives, and follow the example of their faith" (Hebrews 13:7). Leaders in the church are influential. All the more reason to assess our own hearts first, watch our words, and refrain from ever 'bad-mouthing' the Bride of Christ, Jesus' Church; for the Lord says:

"A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart" (Luke 6:45).

Read James 3:13-18

- Jealousy and ambition are not God's kind of wisdom. What is true wisdom from above, according to v17?
- Refer to the following Scriptures. What else can we learn about wisdom?

Job 28:23-28 Psalm 111:10 Proverbs 9:9-12 Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

James says, "If you are wise and understand God's ways, ***prove it*** by living an honorable life, doing ***good works*** with humility that comes from wisdom" (v 13, bold/italics added) – reminding us of James' admonition in his early remarks (see James 1:26-27; 2:17, 21-24). Word and deed go hand-in-hand, and it will be in the living of what we say we believe, that a watching world may very well be won over to Christ. If you have trouble controlling your words, and genuinely want to begin speaking words of life, consider the following steps:

1. Recognize the power of your words. Be aware of your words. Ask the Lord to cleanse your heart and help you speak life, truth, and love. Begin the day by praying –
"Take control of what I say, O LORD, and guard my lips" (Psalm 141:3).

2. Take your thoughts captive. Declare over yourself the words of the apostle Paul:

“We are human, but we don’t wage war as humans do. We use God’s mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ. And after you have become fully obedient, we will punish everyone who remains disobedient” (2 Corinthians 10:3-6).

3. Pray to receive the Holy Spirit’s outpouring in your life and home. Ask the Lord to prune and cleanse your home. Ask to bear fruit in alignment with the fruit of the Spirit:

“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives” (Galatians 5:22-25).

In Closing

Like waves upon the sea, God’s grace is ever moving and breaking upon the shores of our lives. We cannot stop the endless flow of God’s grace. May we praise him for that and surrender to grace. The words of our brother, the apostle James, are convicting. But may we know today, in this sacred moment, that we can experience a fresh start even now. May the wave of God’s grace wash over us as we pray—

Lord Jesus, thank you for speaking words of life over us. Please forgive any idle words we have ever uttered, and for your sake, redeem and reverse any damages we may have ever caused with our words. Fill us with your Spirit, for we want to speak words of life! Your word says that wisdom from above is first of all pure. Lord Jesus, you said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” … Lord, we want to see you … in our family, our friends, in the pleasant people, in the difficult people, in those we hold close to our hearts, and yes, in our enemies. Lord, help us to speak words from a treasury of a good heart. Lord, we want to plant seeds of peace, so that one day, we may reap a harvest of righteousness. For your glory and honor, and in you name we pray, Amen.

THE BOOK OF JAMES

faith WORKS

Text: James 3

Plain Truth:

Hearts _____ by Jesus, speak words of _____ not _____.

1. Recognize the _____ of your _____.

2. Take your thoughts _____ before you _____.

3. _____ to receive the _____ _____ giving _____, peace, gentleness and bold _____.

November 1, 2026