

LESSONS FOR TEACHERS

JAMES 3:1

Text: James 3:1

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¹ My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

Introduction:

Up to this point in this series of messages “Moving Toward Maturity,” we have considered the Christian and His Battles, the Christian and His Bible, the Christian and His Brethern, the Christian and His Beliefs.

Now James begins to deal with the Christian and His Behavior.

He begins with sins of the tongue, and because teachers do a great deal of talking he begins with them.

Though he gets the teachers attention here the truths we see in this passage has lessons for each of us to learn.

Notice:

1. A DIVINE STANDARD (VS. 2)

James 3:2

² For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same *is* a perfect man, *and* able also to bridle the whole body.

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How true!

The person who can honestly say that he or she has never said anything wrong or out of place, James says they can consider themselves perfect.

A person who can control his tongue is able to control his entire body.

2. A DEVASTATING STATEMENT (VS. 3-12)

James 3:3-12

³ Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. ⁴ Behold also the ships, which though *they be* so great, and *are* driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. ⁵ Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! ⁶ And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. ⁷ For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: ⁸ But

the tongue can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.⁹ Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.¹⁰ Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.¹¹ Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet *water* and bitter?¹² Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so *can* no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

Our tongue can be brutal.

- Words can devastate

Proverbs 12:18

¹⁸ There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise *is* health.

Proverbs 18:8

⁸ The words of a talebearer *are* as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

Jeremiah 9:8

⁸ Their tongue *is as* an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: *one* speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait.

James 1:26

²⁶ If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion *is* vain.

- Words Can Divide

Proverbs 16:28

²⁸ A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.

Proverbs 17:9

⁹ He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth *very* friends.

Galatians 5:15

¹⁵ But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

James now presents an array of illustrations to prove his point.

James begins with an:

A. Unbridled Tongue

- Illustrations (vs. 3-4)

James 3:3-4

³ Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. ⁴ Behold also the ships, which though *they be* so great, and *are* driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

From nature (vs. 3) – How a beast is controlled

From navigation (vs. 4) – How a boat is controlled

- Application (vs. 5-6)

James 3:5-6

⁵ Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! ⁶ And the tongue

is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

We must get ahold of our tongue if we are going to avoid shipwreck.

The tongue can build up or break down.

The tongue can bless or become brutal.

B. Untamed Tongue (vs. 7-10)

James 3:7-10

⁷ For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: ⁸ But the tongue can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹ Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

The ability to bless God and berate man

C. Unredeemed Tongue (vs. 11-12)

James 3:11-12

¹¹ Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet *water* and bitter? ¹² Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so *can* no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

3. THE DESIRE SOUGHT

A. We must purpose to bring the tongue in harness

1 Peter 3:8-10

⁸ Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, *love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous*: ⁹ Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. ¹⁰ For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

B. We must pray for God's help

Psalms 19:13

¹³ Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous *sins*; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

Psalms 141:3

³ Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.

C. We must prepare our heart

Psalms 119:11

¹¹ Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Proverbs 15:1

¹ A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

Close:

Though we may not all be teachers, we still speak. May we not use tongue in such a way that would dishonor the Lord.