

“Taming the Tongue”

James 3:1-12

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I. Introduction

- A. True Christianity is seen in how you walk
 - 1. It is also seen in how you talk
 - 2. James has pointed out that a Christian is:
 - a) Patient in trouble (Chapter 1)
 - b) Practices the truth (Chapter 2)
 - c) And now has power over the tongue (or speech)
 - 3. Just as our deeds are evidence of our faith, so also are our words
 - a) Jesus said, “...out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matthew 12:34)
 - b) Our words reveal what is in our hearts
 - c) The tamed tongue is a mark of maturity
 - d) “...but the tongue can no man tame” (v. 8)
 - 4. James warns us of the power of the tongue and the problems of the tongue

II. The Power of the Tongue (James 3:1-6)

- A. The power to direct (vv. 1-4)
 - 1. A warning about teaching (v. 1a)
 - a) Everyone wanted to say something or teach
 - b) “In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise” (Proverbs 10:19).
 - 2. The reasons for the warning (vv. 1-2)
 - a) “A stricter judgment” (v. 1b)
 - b) “We all stumble” (v. 2)
 - 1) Illustration- Peter (Isaiah 6)
 - 2) Only Jesus never sinned
 - 3) (1 Peter 2:22)
 - 3. Illustrations (vv. 3-4)
 - a) “Horses” (v. 3)
 - b) “Ships” (v. 4)
 - c) The power of the tongue to direct
 - 1) “Death and life are in the power of the tongue” (Proverbs 18:21)
 - 4. The good use of our tongue
 - a) To praise God
 - b) To pray
 - c) To proclaim the Gospel
 - d) To comfort and encourage
- B. The power to destroy (vv. 5-6)
 - 1. The bad uses of our tongue
 - a) To lie
 - b) To slander

- c) To curse
 - d) To backbite
 - e) To flatter
 - f) To criticize
 - g) To gossip
2. The tongue can be our strongest asset or our greatest liability

III. The Problems of the Tongue (James 3:7-12)

- A. It's untamable by man (vv. 7-8)
 1. "Their throat is open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness" (Romans 3:13-14).
 2. "They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips" (Psalm 140:3).
- B. It's inconsistent (vv. 9-10)
- C. It's contrary to nature (vv. 11-12)
 1. The tongue displays what you really are
 2. The fruit of our lips finds its source in the root of our souls

IV. Conclusion

- A. Be born again (a new heart)
 1. (Romans 10:9-10)
 2. (Philippians 2:11)
 3. (Isaiah 6)
- B. Be filled with the Spirit
 1. (Ephesians 5:18)
 2. A new power
- C. Be cautious
 1. Ask:
 - a) Is it true?
 - b) Is it kind?
 - c) Is it necessary?
- D. Be prayerful
 1. "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14).