

Sermon Notes

The Trouble with Our Tongue

James 3:1-12

“If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, the man’s religion is worthless.” James 1:26

The Tongue is the Test of Leadership

“Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.” (James 3:1-2 NASB)

The Tongue is Powerful

“Now if we put the bits into the horses’ mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! (James 3:3-5 NASB)

The Tongue is Destructive

“And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.” (James 3:6 NASB)

The Tongue Cannot Be Tamed

“For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh. (James 3:7-12 NASB)

Do I Have an Unbridled Tongue?

1. **Do I speak without thinking?** (Proverbs 13:3, 15:28, 16:23, 18:13, 25:8, 29:20, 10:19)
2. **Am I a know-it-all?** (Proverbs 12:23, 18:2)
3. **Do I ever lie?** (Proverbs 12:22, 12:19, 26:28, 29:5, 27:6, 24:24-25)
4. **Do I gossip about or slander others?** (Proverbs 20:19, 10:18, 16:28, 11:9, 12-13, 17:9)
5. **Am I ever harsh, angry or negative?** (Proverbs 15:1, 12:18, 17:20, 25:23, 18:6, 26:20)

For Further Thought and Discussion

Getting Started

1. What was helpful to you in this week's sermon? What didn't you understand?
2. Have you ever been hurt by something someone said? How has your tongue got you into trouble?

Going Deeper

3. Please read James 1:26. How does our ability to control what we say reveal our true spiritual condition?
4. Please read James 3:1-2. How does James apply 1:26 to selecting teachers and leaders?
5. Please read James 3:3-12. How does James illustrate the power of the tongue? The destructiveness of the tongue? The fact the tongue cannot be tamed?
6. Please read through the signs of an unbridled tongue in Proverbs. Do you struggle with any of these?
7. Do you think James is saying that the tongue is our problem or that our tongue reveals our problem? Why?

Application

What is one thing you can do this week to apply this passage?