

James: Hold Your Tongue

James 3:1-12

A Warning of Words (v. 1-2)

- James begins to address the dangers of unbridled speech by warning against becoming teachers
- Since teaching involves speech, the most challenging aspect of the Christian life to control (v. 2-12), James warns that there is a greater danger of judgment
 - This judgment could either be from:
 - God: They can sin very easily by misrepresenting the truth, either intentionally or accidentally, leading others astray
 - Others: They are scrutinized more frequently because of the public nature of their role
- Our words have a huge impact on our spiritual condition
 - In fact, James claims that the ability to control our speech is the most difficult discipline in the Christian life
 - If we master our tongues (speech), we can master the rest of our body with ease
- James uses a series of analogies to demonstrate both the power & danger of speech (v. 3-12)

The Need for a Tamed Tongue (v. 3-5a)

- James uses two illustrations to demonstrate the principle of controlling one's tongue:
 - A bit in a horse's mouth
 - The rudder of a ship
- Both are small parts but can control things much larger
 - Just like the tongue

Dangerous Words (v. 5b-8)

- 3 analogies are used to warn of the dangers of the untamed tongue:
 - Fire: When uncontrolled, it destroys everything in its path
 - Animals: Can be tamed & helpful
 - But like a venomous snake, the untamed tongue strikes to harm those around it

The Duplicious Tongue (v. 9-12)

- Finally, James shows the problem of our duplicious use of the tongue
 - Duplicity: Dishonest talk or behavior, especially by saying different things to two people
 - Speaking out of both sides of our mouth
 - Speaking with a forked tongue
 - Praising God while cursing people He made
- He uses 2 images as illustrations:
 - Springs of water: They can be fresh (drinkable) or salty (not drinkable), but not both
 - Plants: The same plant cannot produce two different fruits
- We need to produce words of life that come from a heart made alive by Christ
 - The Holy Spirit can help us have self-control in this area (Gal 5:23)

So What?

- Do we have mastery of our tongues?
- Are we working with the Holy Spirit to have self-control in our speech?

Meditation Verse: *James 3:2*