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JAMES

Chapter 03 SINS OF THE TONGUE

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. In chapter 2 – James made it pretty clear that the blessing for us as Christians is not just in the hearing, but in the doing!
1. ...That “faith” - needs to have “feet”. He said in **Jas 2:18 (NKJV) But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.**
 2. We know that salvation comes by the grace of God “through” faith, and what James has said, DOES NOT CONTRADICT that, but is a perfect complement to it!
 3. James believes that “saving faith” – brings about change in the life of the believer and that “change” has an outward expression.
 - a) A couple of those changes have already been expressed in the first 2 chapters - and those were our preferences and prejudices.
 - (1) James cited the rich and the poor, but I think we can expand that without violating what James is saying to us.
 - (2) Quite simply, we are NOT supposed to let our likes and dislikes prevent us from loving people the way the Lord would want us to.
 - (a) In Christianity – pride and prejudice – should have no place.
- B. In **chapter 3**, James is going give us a couple more things that need to change, and those are: **what we say** and **how we say it**.
1. I think as we get into our study, we will see that - when James speaks of the “sins of the tongue”, he is not picking on anyone in particular.
 - a) But it will be hard for any of us to get past this section of scripture without feeling a bit of conviction from the Holy Spirit.

II. **JAS 3:1 (NKJV) MY BRETHREN, LET NOT MANY OF YOU BECOME TEACHERS, KNOWING THAT WE SHALL RECEIVE A STRICTER JUDGMENT.**

- A. Have you ever said anything that you regretted later?
1. That’s kind of like asking if you ate yesterday, isn’t it?
 - a) Each and every time we open our mouths and say something - we increase our odds of saying something we regret.
 - (1) How much more so – for the teacher or the public figure!

George W. Bush (Video)

- (a) I believe that James is addressing teachers of spiritual things here, but even a school teacher will tell you that they have

said things they wish they could revise.

- b) It is a great honor to be a teacher of God's word – but along with that privilege comes some fear and trembling – considering we will be held accountable for things we teach.
 - (1) James even goes so far as to say, **let not many of you become teachers!**

III. **JAS 3:2 (NKJV) FOR WE ALL STUMBLE IN MANY THINGS. IF ANYONE DOES NOT STUMBLE IN WORD, HE *IS* A PERFECT MAN, ABLE ALSO TO BRIDLE THE WHOLE BODY.**

- A. If ANYONE can read this without indentifying with what James is saying - **he *is* a perfect man!**
 - 1. A man or woman that has mastered their tongue has mastered themselves!
 - 2. I love James' word pictures.
 - a) However - if you are not a horse person or been raised on a farm you might not fully understand the picture.
 - (1) A "bridle" is the leather "head-gear" that is placed in a horse's head to control them.



- (2) This bridle has attached to it - a metal "bit" that runs horizontal and fits into the back of the horse's mouth.



- (3) That in turn is attached to leather reins that run back to the rider.
 - (a) If the rider pulls on the right rein – the horse's head will pull to the right and he will turn right.



- (b) If the rider pulls on the left reign – the horse’s head will turn to the left and the horse will turn left.



- (c) If he pulls back in both – the horse will stop.
 (i) So when James says, **If anyone does not stumble in word, he *is* a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body**, he is talking about control – self-control, or perhaps even better - being controlled by God’s Holy Spirit.

IV. JAS 3:3-4 (NKJV) INDEED, WE PUT BITS IN HORSES' MOUTHS THAT THEY MAY OBEY US, AND WE TURN THEIR WHOLE BODY. 4 LOOK ALSO AT SHIPS: ALTHOUGH THEY ARE SO LARGE AND ARE DRIVEN BY FIERCE WINDS, THEY ARE TURNED BY A VERY SMALL RUDDER WHEREVER THE PILOT DESIRES.

- A. A horse is a massively strong and impressive animal compared to the size of a person, and yet even a small rider can control the animal.
1. We see that in professional horse racing – the jokey is small – but he controls the even smaller bit that controls this massive animal.
- B. But James steps it up a bit – he uses another figure of a ship. And a ship is much larger that even the horse – YET, it is controlled by a very small rudder.



This is the Titanic and we all know what happened to it!

1. Once again, it is a person that controls the rudder that controls the massive ship.

V. JAS 3:5-6 (NKJV) EVEN SO THE TONGUE IS A LITTLE MEMBER AND BOASTS GREAT THINGS. SEE HOW GREAT A FOREST A LITTLE FIRE KINDLES! 6 AND THE TONGUE IS A FIRE, A WORLD OF INIQUITY. THE TONGUE IS SO SET AMONG OUR MEMBERS THAT IT DEFILES THE WHOLE BODY, AND SETS ON FIRE THE COURSE OF NATURE; AND IT IS SET ON FIRE BY HELL.

“Mightier than the sword, the pen may be; but the tongue is mightiest of all.”

— Wayne Gerard Trotman

- A. The human tongue is so small, but in many cases – IT CONTROLS the person instead of the person controlling the tongue!

1. Without fail every year we read stories of forest fires that are out of control and spreading so fast that people can barely get out of their homes fast enough to avoid injury.
 - a) And you know, often – they are started by a tiny little cigarette or a spark from a muffler.
 - b) James says that our tiny little tongue can set ablaze great forests!
 - (1) The word used for in **verse 6** that gets translated “**iniquity**” can also mean – *injustice, moral wrongfulness, unrighteousness, (and just plain) wrong!*
 - (a) It is just plain “wrong” when someone carelessly flings a cigarette out the window, or the camper doesn’t get his fire all the way out, and so many people suffer for their mistake!
 - (b) That one little “fire” takes on a life of its own and multiplies and divides and multiplies again until it is a force that can destroy anything and everything in its path!
 - (i) So it is with the tongue.
 - (ii) And James says that “this kind” of tongue is “**set on fire by hell**” - fueled by satan himself!

VI. JAS 3:7-10 (NKJV) FOR EVERY KIND OF BEAST AND BIRD, OF REPTILE AND CREATURE OF THE SEA, IS TAMED AND HAS BEEN TAMED BY MANKIND. 8 BUT NO MAN CAN TAME THE TONGUE. *IT IS* AN UNRULY EVIL, FULL OF DEADLY POISON. 9 WITH IT WE BLESS OUR GOD AND FATHER, AND WITH IT WE CURSE MEN, WHO HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE SIMILITUDE OF GOD. 10 OUT OF THE SAME MOUTH PROCEED BLESSING AND CURSING. MY BRETHREN, THESE THINGS OUGHT NOT TO BE SO.

“Not all tongues that wag - cohabit with a brain.”

— Donita K. Paul, DragonFire

- A. With this tiny little member of ours called the tongue - we bless our God and Father, and ...curse men. **10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing.**
1. Seems very inconsistent doesn't it? Not only is it inconsistent – it is wrong!
 - a) He gives us a few of examples from nature to prove his point.

VII. JAS 3:11-12 (NKJV) DOES A SPRING SEND FORTH FRESH WATER AND BITTER FROM THE SAME OPENING? 12 CAN A FIG TREE, MY BRETHREN, BEAR OLIVES, OR A GRAPEVINE BEAR FIGS? THUS NO SPRING YIELDS BOTH SALT WATER AND FRESH.

- A. The oceans have salt water, mountain streams have fresh and you can't get both from the same body of water!
1. The fig tree doesn't have olives on it and the grapevines don't have figs on them.
 - a) The fig tree has a purpose in life and it fulfills it.
 - b) The grapevine has a purpose in life and it fulfills it.
 - c) But the tongue...it forgets its purpose!

VIII. CONCLUSION

- A. **Jas 3:13-16 (NKJV) Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic. 16 For where envy and self-seeking *exist*, confusion and every evil thing *are* there.**
1. Come on James – tell us what you REALLY think!
 - a) He says that “**bitter envy and self-seeking**” ARE lies against the truth! In other words, they are inconsistent with the life of a Christian and speak contrary to the character of Christ.
 - (1) One kind of character (**good conduct and works done in the meekness of wisdom**) is consistent with being filled with the Spirit of God.
 - (2) And the other character (**bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, boasting** – that is flesh-based, evil and down-right demonic!
 - (a) Perhaps acceptable and even tolerated, but still wrong.
 - (b) And by-the-way, he says the “double life” of the tongue is very confusing.
 - (i) And indeed it is for folks trying to figure out if there is any truth in the Bible!
 - (ii) ...When they hear the things that come out of our mouths as Christians.

“The best time for you to hold your tongue is the time you feel you must say something or bust.”
— Josh Billings

- B. **Jas 3:17-18 (NKJV) But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality**

and without hypocrisy. **18** Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

1. How can it be said any better than that?
 - a) Wouldn't we rather have peace, gentleness, mercy and good fruit in our life as opposed to that which is earthy, sensual and demonic?
 - b) Again, that is kind of like asking if we ate yesterday. Of course we do.
 - (1) Then logically – we need to ask the Lord to take control of our tongues and may His praise be continually on our lips.
 - (2) **Heb 13:15 (NKJV) Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name.**
 - (3) **1Pe 3:10 (NKJV) For "HE WHO WOULD LOVE LIFE AND SEE GOOD DAYS, LET HIM REFRAIN HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL, AND HIS LIPS FROM SPEAKING DECEIT.**