

Note: Unfortunately there was an error with the recording of the sermon. Jacques provided us with the notes instead. Thank you Jacques!

JAMES 3 – “True Christianity” – Jacques Genis

16 February 2020

Established that James was the physical Brother of Jesus, became a disciple after Jesus resurrection and became a central leader in the church in the early church. Focused on practical living. The book is not too concerned about what we believe but rather on HOW we live it out day to day. Practical righteousness. Important to remember, as we read often focus on individual, on ourselves, but focus a lot more communal, focused on what will improve the relationships within the spiritual family of God. Who do I need to be for this family to work and be healthy. Today, as we dive into Chapter 3, you will see that very clearly.

JAMES 3: 1 - 12: Practical Righteousness & the Tongue

v. 1 - 2

Teaching was a highly valued and respected role and profession in James' day. People ambition to become teachers in the church.

Caution - they will be judged more harshly

It will be come clear, but because words matter!

v. 2 - We all stumble in many ways. NLT - all make many mistakes. Amen. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We miss the mark, we are all in need of grace!

Then he says... Holds out two things.

One is the sheer difficulty in the task of controlling and taming your tongue!

Isn't that so true - wow how difficult is it to control our tongue. Ever said anything that immediately as the words leave your mouth, you feel regret? Yip.

The tongue is restless evil, full of deadly poison. Like a flame of fire. Many animals have been tamed but no one can tame the tongue.

In this week - speaking to one of the campus guys...Never gonna speak again, Just nod...don't you feel a little bit like that!
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It's hard. But we have to be careful, James is not implying that it's impossible. He is not implying rather remain silent. If you remember in Ch1:19 - said be quick to listen...**SLOW** to speak - wasn't don't speak at all

Ch 1:26 he said - If you claim to be religious but don't **control** your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless.

James has been talking about the tongue all along, now takes a deep dive - The whole thrust of the passage is to persuade us that it is imperative to learn to control our tongues.

This is important, circle back to v. 2b That word 'perfect' - does not necessarily imply sin less.

Teleios - Mature. Or complete. Having reached it's end.

James actually uses it in James 1:4 - mature and complete not lacking anything...
Used in Ch 2:22 as complete...

'Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is spiritually mature, complete...

Point is - your speech is an indication of your spiritual maturity. That is challenging...
If you use your tongue to lie, spread gossip, slander, use your words recklessly and react all the time - indicates not just an issue with your heart but reveals your spiritual immaturity.

Encouragement is not to keep quiet but to grow and learn how to control your tongue and use it in a way that is positive.

Why that important - v. 3 gets into that...

THE TONGUE IS POWERFUL, so watch out how you use it

Makes the point that the tongue like a bit you put in a horse' mouth or like a rudder that a captain uses to steer a ship - even though its so small it directs a powerful horse or a massive ship!

Likewise, the tongue is so small and yet it can affect the direction of your life AND the lives of others.

Illustration: Positive way or Negative way...

Positive

Young Man who's dad always told him that he will do great things. That told him that he believed in him.

Sports teams...see it so many times...coach speech at half time.

Penny Sparrow - few words uttered on Twitter in 2016 about Durban beach goers.
Or Justine Sacco, PR executive in 2014 - Going to Africa. Hope I don't get AIDS. Just kidding. I'm white.

It says in v. 5 & 6 - consider how a small spark can cause a massive fire that ruins vast expanses of healthy vegetation - the tongue is like that spark that can set the course of one's life on fire. It can ruin and devastate other's faith....harm relationships

Type of words that break down...

> Reckless or careless words

- react, lash out, say whatever comes into your mind
- Certain times - loss, someone says well at least they are in heaven with God; or I'm sure God thought you could handle this...reckless, careless words
- Or wow you picked up weight (maybe what they are trying to say is 'at last you look healthy' but not what will be received)

> Punitive words

- Sheesh who does something like that?
- I wish you were more like so and so.

> Slanderous words (park off on this - slander is probably one of the most destructive forces)

PR 10:18 He who conceals his hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads ***slander*** is a fool.

- Slander is making accusations against someone **behind their backs**, so they cannot defend themselves or **correct mis-information**, to other people who **wouldn't know** if what you are saying is true or false.
- It's very **unfair** because you can damage, **undermine** or destroy someone's reputation WITHOUT them even knowing it.
- How does God feel about those who spread slander?

Eph 4:30-31 And do not **grieve** the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and ***slander,*** along with every form of malice.

1 Corinth 5:11 But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a **slanderer**, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

Slander is a **serious sin** in Gods eyes! But I thinks often one of those acceptable sins. Bible says - Do not **associate** or even eat with a slanderer!

- So while it is clearly wrong to slander someone, it is equally **WRONG** to **even Listen** to slander
- If someone tells you "this is just between you and I", "don't tell anyone, what I am about to tell you" ...**WALK away**
- Slander flourishes in secret, where the light would expose the lies, half-truths and mis-information being spread.
- IF someone is spreading slander you need to bring it to the leadership of the church

- We are fighting for unity between races, ages and personalities
- Slander will undermine and destroy what God is trying to do

Brothers and Sisters - the Tongue is a Small part of your body but how you use it has a massive impact on your life and the life of our spiritual community.

The same tongue has the power to build up or break down.

To heal or to hurt

To reconcile or divide

To encourage; motivate and inspire or dishearten, depress and dissuade.

Lets grow up, mature and learn how to control our tongues and use it in a way that builds up!

JAMES 3: 13 - 18: Practical Righteousness & True Wisdom

James 3:13-17

- Who is wise and understanding among you?
- Theme of wisdom come up in ch 1 - if any of you lack wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously without finding fault. Comes from God.
- Now who is wise and understanding?
- Ever wondered about that? How do I evaluate that? How does God evaluate that? Who is someone that I should be getting advice from, get counsel from - who should I spend time with so that I could grow wise as well?
- It's an important question - Proverbs 13:20 says walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm
- How would we normally answer that?

Were often impressed by titles or achievements, big trophies.

Were often impressed by belongings or someone's possessions

Were often impressed by knowledge or by lots of letters after someone's name

That is a worldly way to discern.

The worldly wise are often full of selfish ambition, eager to get on in life and envious of others.

- Envy and selfish ambition creates disorder and every evil practice

What does the bible say shows true wisdom?

- **"It is shown by a good life, by Deeds done in humility"**
- Humility is a big theme as well in the book of James - James 1:21 - humbly accept the word planted in you
- Next chapter dive deeper into this need for humility in our relationships in order to make this family work and be healthy
- James has just dealt with the tongue

- People can talk a good game, but we should look at how people live - that is how you evaluate who is truly wise.

(MSG) Do you want to be counted wise, to build a reputation for wisdom? Here's what you do: Live well, live wisely, live humbly. It's the way you live, not the way you talk, that counts.

- Wisdom that comes from heaven is pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy, impartial and sincere.
- Don't have time to go into everyone - great bible study to do to look at this.

v. 18 - Talk a little bit about peace making

- Peacemakers are highly valued in the bible - really some of the unsung heroes in the kingdom of God.
- Conflict is inevitable between people in a diverse spiritual community like ours
- What do peacemakers do? FIGHT for unity
- HOW? They practice Matt 5, Matt 7 and Matt 18 fellowship
- "Leave your gift at the altar"
- "Check for planks in your own eye, before trying to remove specks in your brothers eyes"
- AND, "talk between yourselves." Not **about** each other TO each other.
- IF you can't resolve it bring in a referee!

Peacemakers are highly valued in God's eyes. Jesus himself said:

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Matthew 5:9

Brothers and Sisters, lets heed James call.

Lets grow and become truly wise, lets tame our tongues and use it to build others up and lets be peacemakers. Amen.