

James | The Duality of the Tongue (James 3:1-12)

Outline

Main Idea: The human tongue's power to bless and curse necessitates mastery; but no human being can tame their tongue

- A. Specific warning and universal fact (1-2)
 - a. Specific warnings: do not desire those privileges if you don't understand the weight of that position; Honor comes with accountability
 - b. If you control what you say, you exercise mastery over the whole body because the tongue exposes the heart

- B. Disproportionate power of the tongue (3-5a)
 - a. Analogies: Bit in the horse of a mouth/ Rutter on a ship
 - b. Tongue: small member of the body has tremendous power

- C. Danger that the tongue is untamable (5b-8)
 - a. The tongue as a fire: one small mistake, example of what our tongues are capable of doing

- D. Duality of the tongue (9-12)
 - a. Blessing and cursing
 - b. Examples without duality- spring and fig tree
 - c. Duality of the tongue found in scripture
 - i. Positive- righteousness, justice, wisdom, praise, kindness, allegiance to God
 - ii. Negative- Deceit, mischief, iniquity, oppression, flattery, boasting, slander, evil, lying, plot destruction

- E. Conclusion- since no human being can tame the tongue, we require a divine intervention to eradicate this sinful condition
 - a. Praise God for his power, mercy and willingness to do it for us
 - b. Isaiah 6:1-7

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Discussion Questions

1. James warns those eager to be in leadership that it comes with great accountability, especially when it comes to taming their tongue.
 - a. What are other positions that come with great honor but also great accountability, inside or outside of the church?
 - b. What does it look like to hold one another accountable for the way we speak?
 - c. How do you think the church would change if people took more seriously sin that comes from the way we talk?

2. The tongue is a small part that determines the direction of the entire body, and has the same ability as a spark to set fire to an entire forest.
 - a. Why is the tongue so powerful, despite its disproportionate size to the body?
 - b. What are "stains" that you see in the word as a result of evil in people's speech?
 - c. Confession: What are ways you have caused destruction with your own speech?
 - d. Application: How can you bear good fruit with your tongue as seen in scripture? (righteousness, justice, wisdom, praise, gentleness, healing, life, kindness, and allegiance to God)

3. If you do not begin with humble acknowledgment of the Lord's holiness compared to the sinful condition of our tongue in a world of destruction, nothing you try to do to tame your tongue will work.
 - a. How have you tried to tame your tongue in the past without asking the Lord to help you?
 - b. Confession: Who are the people that you are prone to loosen your tongue around?
 - c. Application: How can you be actively avoiding the hypocrisy of a dual tongue?