

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most difficult things for a Christian to do is to use his tongue properly. Today let us study a passage that will help us understand why it is important to do so, and how.

II. BIBLE READING

James 3:1 Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. 2 We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. 3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 4 Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. 5 Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. 7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, 8 but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. 11 Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? 12 My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water. (NIV)

III. DISCUSSION

A. Right Use Of The Tongue (vv. 1-5a)

1. Point out the power of the tongue when controlled. James gives us two examples to show how a small cause can produce a large result. What are these illustrations?
2. From these illustrations, what is the difference in the Christian's way of speaking, compared to that of other people?
3. What should we do so that our tongue can be controlled?

B. Wrong Use Of The Tongue (vv. 5b-12)

1. Verses 5b to 8 describe what can happen when our tongue is out of control. How dangerous is it?
2. Give examples from our daily lives on how an uncontrolled tongue can cause much damage like "getting a forest on fire", and how it is like "deadly poison".
3. Vv. 9-10 give us an example of how our tongue can be used improperly. What is it?
4. Vv. 11-12 give illustrations from nature to show how unnatural this is. What are they?
5. How do you think our Lord feels when we are using the same tongue in praising Him and cursing people?
6. Give examples of improper use of our tongues in our daily lives, and discuss why each is wrong.
7. As parents, the words we say influence our children a lot. Give examples of how improper uses of words influence our children negatively

IV. SUMMARY

1. Give examples on how to let our tongues be used in such a way that we glorify God and benefit people.
2. How do you react to these two propositions?
3. Make a rough inventory of the words you spoke yesterday. Are there more of improper use, or more of helpful words, the kind that glorify God and benefit people?
4. What will you do so that from now on, there will be more of the latter.

V. REFLECTION:

1. Since I became a Christian, has my speech been any different from what it was before?
2. Are the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart always acceptable to my Lord?