

THE UNTAMED DESTROYER

James 3:1-12

Word association: Cat? Aspirin? School? TONGUE?

Response probably not focused on flesh in your mouth.

Probably related to **food or words!** Right?

When I tell you we're going to talk about the tongue, you expect to hear about our diet, or our conversation!

How does *our tongue* deal with the hard times of life?

When "pressure cooker" heats up & tension grows?

When someone cuts us off in traffic?

When someone hurts us deeply?

How do we use our tongue when the pressure rises?

James is dealing with Christians facing pressure because of faith.

He calls us to living faith--faith that's visible

Living faith endures pressure.

Living faith conquers temptation.

Living faith produces fruit

1 area where temptation arises in suffering: that's hard to resist=>**controlling our tongue.**

Living faith controls what we say.

Tongue is measure of authentic spirituality--of living faith.

Danger of teaching others 3:1-2 *"Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. ²We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he's a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check."*

It's dangerous to be a teacher, because **teachers are judged by our words.**

Nobody consistently lives up to the standard

We teach *others*, but we don't always live up to it!

The tongue is hardest body part to control!

We have hard time controlling our tongue--what we say!

Have you noticed how much God's Word says about how we use our tongue?

1:19 *"Everyone should be quick to listen, **slow to speak,** & slow to become angry;"*

1:26 *"If anyone considers himself religious & yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself & his religion is worthless."*

People who think they are religious ought to show it by the use of our tongue!

If we never say wrong thing, we really ARE perfect.

Those who teach others are judged more severely.

1 of stupidest things I ever said. Someone hears about it, & reminds me: *"you call yourself a teacher? You think YOU have a right to teach us?!"*

That's James' point!

How can we preach what we don't keep ourself?

Teachers will be judged more severely!

Biblical principle: *"to whom much has been given, of them much will be required!"*

That's scary! Don't put yourself in that position!

Don't seek it!

[What does James tell us about how we use our tongues? Begins with warning: **3-5** *"When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴Or take ships as an example. Although they're so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. ⁵Likewise 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!"*

BIG RESULTS FROM LITTLE THINGS

Though tongue is a small part, it does BIG things!

4 exx of little things that produce huge results:

Something big & strong controls something little.

1. **Bits control horses** 3

Horse is a big animal

It goes wherever it feels like & it's hard to stop

Put a bit in its mouth & we can control it

2. **Rudders control ships** 4

Ships are huge vessels.

Force of wind & waves moves huge vessels

Even in storm, tiny rudder controls huge ship;

3. **Tongues impact bodies** 3:5a

Tongue's small part, that does BIG things!

It can change direction of something much bigger.

Accomplishes more than hands, arms & legs combined

It can also destroy God's work.

4. Sparks ignite forests 5b

Tiny Spark can cause tremendous damage to forest.
Requires care to avoid destroying something valuable

We warn kids: "Don't play with fire!" –

James warns us: "Don't play with the tongue!"

Tongue's small part, that does BIG things!

Our tongue—what we say—can destroy work God's doing.

Destructive work of the tongue 6 *"The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of our body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell."*

Satan knows how to use our tongue!

–knows what it can do!—one of his most effective tools!

Satan knows how to use tongue to destroy God's people.

What precautions might we take to assure we don't collaborate with Satan in this destructive work?

"Satan is accuser of brethren, let's not do his work!"

Difficult to control tongue 7-8 *"All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles & creatures of the sea, are being tamed & have been tamed by man, ⁸but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison."*

We can tame fierce animals, but we can't control our own tongue.

It's an evil thing that no one can stop.

Tongue's 1 of best indicators of our spiritual condition.

Nothing is harder to control than the tongue.

People controlled by H.S. will have controlled tongue.

Inconsistent use of tongue 9-12 *“With the tongue we praise our Lord & Father, & with it we curse men, who have been made in God’s likeness. ¹⁰Out of the same mouth come praise & cursing. My brothers, this should not be. ¹¹Can both fresh water & salt water flow from the same spring? ¹²My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.”*

Tongue often contradicts itself.

We use tongue to praise God

-use tongue to tear down what God made!

We use same tongue to praise God & to curse people

Repeated use of tongue to harm others is a demon-stration source (fountain or spring) is contaminated.

Three illustrations from nature

1. Same fountain doesn't produce both fresh & bitter water.

2. Fig tree doesn't give olives; nor vine figs.

3. Salty source can't produce fresh water.

Our tongue reveals what's in our heart!

If our faith is genuine it will show up in the way we talk!

Better to have “lock jaw” than “hoof in mouth disease

Our tongue reveals what our heart conceals!

**If our mouth is critical of others,
it's because our heart is critical.**

**If our mouth speaks in anger,
it's because our heart is full of anger.**

Our tongue reveals what our heart conceals!

This is especially evident when times are hard.

Suffering brings out worst in us – BUT it IS IN US!

When we suffer, we complain & accuse others.

***Living faith motivates us to praise God
& to suffer with gratitude.***

Attitude apparent when ***apostles*** suffered (Acts 5, 7, 16)

***Until problem of the heart is fixed,
problem of mouth will never be controlled.***

How about us? What's coming out of our mouth?

When things are rough at work, ...

When our spouse criticizes the way we speak to kids

Does our faith make difference in way we speak?

James tells us it starts with the heart--

It's result of God's work in us! He changes the heart!

Our faith affects our speech.

Is Spirit of God controlling our tongue?

***Can people tell what God has done in our lives by the way
we talk?***