

James 3:1-12
Explicit: Trammel the Tongue

Introduction: An Elaboration on James 1:26

1. The evidence all humans are flawed is right between the teeth (C.J. Mahaney)

Main Point: The tongue is an unbridled beast, wayward ship, fire, restless evil, and a deadly poison that no mere human can tame. The tongue of the Christian utters praises to God and curses His image. God only can trammel the tongue by the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

2. This passage is God's mercy toward us to warn us of His judgment on sinful speech
3. Jas 3:1-12 is a sermon on Prov. 18:21 (E. Alexander)
4. Deeds and Words display the Faith we have, or the lack there of – The tongue is the “Index of the Heart”

The Unsparring Judgment in the Teaching Ministry (vv 1-2)

1. *Brothers...* James loves the people he preaches to
2. Context of the Church in Jerusalem:
 - a. Persecution and Dispersion
 - b. Resettlement and Church Establishment
 - c. Problem in these congregations: Quarrels and Fighting, Misuse of the Tongue (**James 4:1**)
3. If you can see yourself doing anything else in the church, do that rather than become a teacher (Calling)
 - a. Gal 1 – Paul warns of false gospel
 - b. Jas 3:14 – Warning against being false to the truth
 - c. Judgment will be stricter for Teachers
4. The mature (perfect) Christian is one who has tamed the tongue – abnormal to us in an age of Self-Help
 - a. **See Isaiah 5-6**
 - b. Learn to Trammel the Tongue in the Home/Church
5. James does not say *Never Speak*, but be self-controlled in your speech = Master the Tongue

The Uneven Impact of the Tongue (vv 3-5a)

1. The Bit, Rudder, and Tongue: All are SMALL and guides the Larger Body
2. The tongue boasts of great things – not negative (we boast in God!)

3. The tongue is evidence of a mature heart
4. The tongue is the means to maturity
5. The tongue can bring healing, change lives – it can also destroy and harm

The Unrelenting Damage of the Tongue (vv 5b-8)

1. Move from Simile to Metaphor: The tongue is a Fire!
 - a. How we use our tongue in disagreement is vital
 - b. The smallest spark can cause a great fire – one small word of strife or dissension, a careless word
 - c. A tongue not trammed is a fiery beast that demands to be heard – restless and deadly
2. The source of the Untamed Tongue: Hell, Satan
 - a. All evil tongues are the Devil's bellows (John Trap)
 - b. The tongue can be used as the fiery darts of Satan
3. The imagery of the Garden of Eden
 - a. Adam and Eve: Dominion over the animal kingdom
 - b. The restless serpent used the forked tongue to lie
 - c. Satan is a restless being seeking one to devour
 - d. The animal kingdom, although fallen, can be tamed
4. The Hopeless Problem: No man can tame the tongue

The Unholy Unpredictability of the Tongue (vv 9-12)

1. Sunday Morning Christians can worship, and by Sunday afternoon, they fight with their spouse, curse the man who cut us off in traffic, or backbite and gossip in the church
2. The Point: A Christian, transformed by the Gospel, does not make a practice of blessing God and cursing individuals created in His Image! = Hypocrisy!
3. The tongue is created to bless God and edify people
4. The real issue is not the tongue, but the heart, unchanged by the Sovereign grace of God
5. The frightening Problem: No man can tame the tongue, The Law of God shuts the Mouth (**Rom 3:19**)

The Unlimited Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ

1. We can progress to maturity if we are born again, new creatures, forgiven by God's grace (**James 1:18**)
2. Jesus was silent before His shearers; one word of accusation or call for help, our words would damn us
3. Jesus died on the Cross for sins, including sins of the tongue