

The Power of our Words (Jas 3)

I. OUR WORDS ARE POWERFUL IN THE WAY THEY AFFECT OUR PERSONAL LIFE

A. Our words can release life or death inside our heart as well as to others.

²¹ *Death and life are in the power of the tongue... (Prov. 18:21)*

⁶ *Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one. (Col. 4:6)*

⁴⁴ *Bless those who curse you...pray for those who spitefully use you... (Mt. 5:44)*

²⁸ *Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. (Lk. 6:28)*

¹⁰ *In honor giving preference to one another...¹⁴ Bless and do not curse. (Rom. 12:10-14)*

¹² *Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure... (1 Cor. 4:12)*

B. The most common way to grieve the Spirit is by our words. When the Spirit is grieved, He still loves us. However, we cannot receive from Him and participate with Him in the same measure.

²⁹ *Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit... ³¹ Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. ³² And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you. (Eph. 4:29-32)*

C. Paul called us to imitate God by walking in love by purifying our speech.

¹ *Be imitators of God...² and walk in love...³ Fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you...⁴ neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks....⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. (Eph. 5:1-6)*

II. THE RELATIONSHIP OF OUR SPEECH TO OUR ENTIRE LIFE

¹ *My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. ² For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. (Jas 3:1-2)*

A. James teaches that if we focus on our speech we can control all our physical appetites. James gave us very helpful insights into overcoming addictions. Many do not focus enough on this. Most translate "perfect" as "mature." It is the same word used in Jas 1:4.

- B. The teacher often focuses on getting the facts right but James points out that their greatest challenge is their speech outside the classroom.
- C. James uses three metaphors (the bit v. 3; rudder v. 4; small fire v. 5) to emphasize the truth that the tongue as a small member of our body is the key to controlling the much larger issues related to our body, life and relationships. James reveals the vast power of our tongues that is out of proportion to its size. Most frustration is an expression of our boasting in our greater insight.
- ³ Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. 4 Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. 5 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! (Jas 3:3-5)*
- D. The tongue releases a fire in our inner life as well as in our outer life.
- ⁶ And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. 7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. 8 But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. (Jas 3:6-10)*

III. SPEAKING IN DISHONORING WAYS AND THE JUDGMENT OF GOD

- A. Speaking in dishonoring ways about the saints brings division to the Temple of God.
- ² I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it...3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?...16 Do you not know that you are the Temple of God...? 17 If anyone defiles the Temple of God, God will destroy him. For the Temple of God is holy...18 Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise... (1 Cor. 3:2-3, 16-18)*
- ⁸ Let us not commit sexual immorality...10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened to them as examples... Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. (1 Cor. 10:8-13)*
- B. God requires humility that renounces grumbling and evil speaking against one another.
- ⁸ You be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. 9 Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! (Jas 5:8-9)*
- ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. 11 Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. (Jas. 4:10-11)*