

SINS OF THE TONGUE (James 3:1-12)

Introduction:

1. The Book of James was written by the Lord's brother (Jam. 1:1;Gal. 1:19).
2. James is inspired advice on practical Christian living.
 - a. It has been called the "Proverbs of the New Testament."
 - b. It bears a great resemblance to the Sermon on the Mount.
3. James has a great deal to say about the use of the tongue.
4. The tongue can be an effective instrument for good or a powerful tool for evil.

"If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless" (Jam. 1:26).

5. The use of one's tongue will determine his eternal destiny.

Discussion:

I. THE TONGUE IS A POWERFUL INSTRUMENT FOR GOOD OR EVIL.

- A. Man can tame almost anything but the tongue (Jam, 3:3,4,6).
 1. Strong horses are controlled by a small bit.
 2. Large sailing ships are controlled by a small rudder.
 3. A small spark can ignite a fire which burns a forest.
- B. The same tongue is used to praise GOD and to curse man who is made in the image of GOD.
 1. I once worked with a man who cursed and told filthy stories. I later learned he was a member of the church when he presided at the Lord's table at a congregation I visited.
 2. A well will produce either good water or bad but not both (Jam. 3:11).
 3. A fig tree does not bear grapes nor a grapevine figs (Jam. 3:12).
 4. Evil speech can not come from the mouth of a good person!
- C. We will be judged by our words for they reveal the condition of our hearts.

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the Day of Judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matt. 12:35-37).

II. THERE ARE MANY EVIL USES OF THE TONGUE.

A. False teaching is a great evil which will cause many to be lost.

1. One who teaches must take his responsibility seriously.

“My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment” (Jam. 3:1).

2. False teaching will cause both the teacher and those who follow him to be lost (Matt. 15:13,14).

B. Lying is probably the most common sin of the tongue.

“Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds” (Col. 3:9).

“...all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8).

C. Speaking evil of another is a wrong use of the tongue.

“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. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge” (Jam. 4:11).

1. Gossip is the most common way we speak evil of others.

2. Gossip is spreading rumors, or unsubstantiated tales of another which are usually told to his detriment.

3. Both the talebearer and one who eagerly listens are guilty.

4. Reputations are ruined, relationships are damaged, and contentions are caused by gossip.

5. There are three questions one should ask before passing on a story which is hurtful to another:

a. Is it true?

b. Is it necessary to repeat it?

c. Will it help or hurt if I pass it on?

- D. Cursing and filthy speech are the wrong uses of the tongue.**
- 1. GOD will judge those who use His name lightly (Exod. 20:7).**
 - a. Using euphemisms for GOD such as “Gosh,” “Golly,” and “Goodness” or “Gee,” and “Jeez,” for Jesus are just as wrong as using the Lord’s Name.**
 - b. Use of “omg” in texting or email is also blasphemy.**
 - 2. Stories that have to do with immorality or use crude language are not worthy of a Christian.**

“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers” (Eph. 4:29).

III. WHAT ARE SOME GOOD USES OF THE TONGUE?

- A. Teaching the Gospel is the best use of the tongue one can make (Matt. 28:19; 2 Tim. 4:2; Tit. 2:1-4; Heb. 5:12).**
- B. Praising GOD in song is a wonderful use of the tongue.**

“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to GOD, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name” (Heb. 13:15; Col. 3:16).
- C. Praying is a good use of our tongues (Phil. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:1,2).**
- D. Encouraging the weak is also a beneficial use of one’s tongue.**

“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all” (1 Thess. 5:14).
- E. We should strive to “Let our speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that we may know how we ought to answer each one” (Col. 4:6).**

Conclusion:

- 1. The greatest use one will ever make of his tongue is to confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of GOD (Rom. 10:8-10; Acts 8:37, 38).**
- 2. Christians must also confess their sins to be forgiven (1 John 1:1-9).**