



## Sermon, Sunday November 13, 2022

### “Taming the Tongue”

**SCRIPTURE: James 3:1-12** <sup>1</sup> Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. <sup>2</sup> For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. <sup>3</sup> If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. <sup>4</sup> Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. <sup>5</sup> So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits. How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! <sup>6</sup> And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. <sup>7</sup> For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, <sup>8</sup> but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup> With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. <sup>10</sup> From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. <sup>11</sup> Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? <sup>12</sup> Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

#### **Introduction: The perfect man in the Book of James.**

The importance of the spoken word cannot be overemphasized. There were midterm elections last Tuesday. When we vote for someone, we listen to the candidates in the election and decide who to vote for. In fact, during the election period, some candidates get into trouble because of what they say. On the other hand, some candidates win votes for being persuasive and good at speaking.

Today's text emphasizes the importance of our words. Dear brothers and sisters! Have you ever experienced difficulties due to a mistake in what you said? Or have you ever been hurt by what someone else said? I hope that through the words of James today, we will be able to reflect on the use of our words. Today's text says that a person who makes no mistakes in speech is a perfect person. So, how can we use our words correctly in our lives?

#### **Body: How to use speech well**

##### **1. We must be able to see the motives of our hearts and attitudes.**

Today's text James 3:1 says: “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.”

This verse tells us not to try to be teachers. The meaning of this verse is to realize what our heart's intention is in becoming a teacher. In fact, teaching someone means that I am superior to others. The Apostle James pointed out this proud heart of ours.

Also, most of what we teach others is through speech. However, if you speak a lot, you will inevitably make mistakes. In the end, the more you talk, the more mistakes you make and the more judgment you get for that.



However, the Apostle James says that those who do not make mistakes in what they say are perfect. **Today's text James 3:2 says: "For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle."** Conversely, if we can't control our speech, it means we can't control our bodies either.

In fact, most of the mistakes we make in our speech come from judging others. We need to guard against these minds and attitudes. So, for us to make sure there are no mistakes in our words, we must be able to reflect on our hearts and attitudes before using them. When we speak to others, we need to be careful to be considerate of them. Also, if our hearts and attitudes contain condemnation and evaluation of the other person rather than love, we should refrain from saying such things. So, how can we use words correctly in our lives?

## **2. Be wary of the use of negative speaking.**

The destructive power of words is too powerful. So, we should be wary of the use of negative speaking. The Apostle James, in today's text, compares the power of words to the rudder of a ship or a small spark that burns many trees. The power of words is so great that they move our hearts and minds just as a rudder of a large ship has the power to move it. It also moves the communities in which we belong. Furthermore, just as a small spark can burn an entire mountain, our negative words can hurt individuals and destroy communities and societies. So, we must be very careful with what we say.

By the way, if we can control our tongue, we can control our whole body as well. **The Apostle James says in today's text verses 3-4: "If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us by guiding their whole bodies. Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs."**

We can steer even the largest horses in any direction we want through the bit in their mouths. Also, a large ship can be steered in any direction with a small rudder.

In fact, compared to the size of our bodies, our tongues are very small. But this little tongue can control our entire body. This is the power of the tongue.

But the problem is that when we misuse our tongues, great tragedies happen. I want you to think about the wounds we inflicted on other people with our words. Also, consider the repercussions that a leader's reckless remarks can have on the community and society.

However, the biggest problem with using speech is that no human being can tame the tongue. (v.8) So, should we not speak, but only listen? Of course, listening is more important than talking a lot. But you cannot live without speaking. So, the important thing is that we know how to speak well. But this is by no means easy.

## **3. We must fill our hearts with gratitude and joy.**

It is important for us to use speech well and to be determined not to make mistakes. But that doesn't mean we always use our words well.

In fact, it is the tongue that speaks, but the place where the words come from is our mind. Therefore, if we are to speak properly, we must renew our mind, not our tongue. In other words, if our hearts are upright and pure, the words that come out of our mouths will be just and clean. Conversely, if our heart is dirty and evil, then dirty and evil words will come out of our mouth.

**Today's text verses 9-10 says to us. "With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth comes blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so."**



However, if our hearts are filled with gratitude and joy for the Lord and our neighbors, our words will also be words of gratitude and joy for the Lord and our neighbors. That is why we should be able to use speak well and to fill our hearts with gratitude and joy for the Lord and our neighbors, rather than deciding not to make a mistake. We pray that our hearts will be filled with gratitude and joy for the Lord and our neighbors.

### **Conclusion: Seek Wisdom for the Correct Use of Speak**

Now let's summarize today's sermon. Today, through the book of James, we have been thinking about the power and influence of speech. Reflecting on our hearts and attitudes before we speak is important to prevent mistakes in speech. We must also be able to admit that using speech correctly is difficult. We cannot tame our tongue. So, we must humbly seek the Lord's help.

**In Psalm 141:3 David prays: “Set a guard over my mouth, O LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips.”** David knew the power of speech, and he knew that he did not always speak correctly. We need the same humility as David and a heart to depend on the Lord.

**Also, Proverbs 18:21 says: “The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”** As in this verse, the power of speech saves and kills.

We should be more careful before using speech, and when using speech, we should use words that can give strength and courage to others rather than words that hurt others. To that end, I hope that our hearts will be filled every day with gratitude and joy for the Lord and our neighbors. Also, we must seek daily wisdom from the Lord that we may use our speech well.

