

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **James 3:1-12.**
- B. Jesus said in Mt. 12:37, "By thy words thou shall be justified, and by thy words thou shall be condemned."
- C. All of us who have opened our mouth when we shouldn't know of the tremendous impact of Jesus words. James gives us further teaching so we might learn to control the most difficult part of our body.
- D. The structure of this lesson is quite simple, a verse by verse look at Jas. 3:1-12.

I. **JAMES 3:1-4.**

- A. Verse 1:
 - 1. 'Teachers' is translated 'masters' in the KJV and is short for schoolmasters, same meaning.
 - 2. The emphasis is to see the great responsibility in teaching, not to discourage us from doing this great work.
 - 3. We incur a stricter judgment because we shall be like the scribes of Jesus day if we are not careful (Mk. 12:38-40).
- B. Verse 2:
 - 1. All are guilty of sin, and we sin in many ways.
 - 2. We also teach some error, if not we would be inspired. This is why we study.
 - 3. Here James declares the tongue to be the most difficult part of the body to control.
- C. Verse 3:
 - 1. This begins three comparisons given by James about the tongue.
 - 2. A bit is a very small instrument but it is used to control the entire horse.
- D. Verse 4:
 - 1. The second comparison is to the rudder of a ship.
 - 2. It makes no difference as to the size of the ship, or the amount of outside force upon it, the rudder controls the ship according to the actions of the pilot.
 - 3. The tongue is the same way.

II. **JAMES 3:4-8.**

- A. Verse 5:

This is the third comparison, and it only takes a spark to start a fire.
- B. Verse 6:
 - 1. The tongue can encourage and propagate sin; if something is wrong at the start, the tongue can make it worse!
 - 2. Wrong use of the tongue will defile every aspect of our life. As an untreated cancer will spread and infect every part of our body.
 - 3. Its fuel is no good, coming from the source of eternal punishment.
- C. Verse 7:
 - 1. This verse and verse 8 go together stating that man has tamed all of the animals and subdued them, but cannot tame his own tongue.
 - 2. It is true that many times we are our own worst enemy. This is true when it comes to the tongue.
- D. Verse 8:

The tongue is likened to a caged wild beast, and something full of deadly poison (Mk. 7:25; 2Pet. 2:14; esp. Rom. 3:13).

III. **JAMES 3:9-12.**

- A. Verses 9 and 10:

1. James is stating a fact, not common to himself by using an editorial we.
 2. He further illustrates that we should not speak good of one and bad of another by using the analogy of a fresh water/salt water spring, which is impossible.
- B. Verse 11:
This is a rhetorical question with the obvious answer of "no."
- C. Verse 12:
1. The lesson is obvious that we should learn to bridle the tongue and not use it for evil.
 2. The analogy is carried further by his reference to a fig tree and a vine.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. It is not possible to completely tame the tongue but possible to bridle it (Phil. 4:13).
- B. Those things which are more difficult should be handled with care, patience, and as much effort as needed.
- C. By taming the tongue we can put the whole body in subjection to the will of Christ.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.