

LIVING HD



westview.org.za

WEEK 5

19–23 July 2021

WEEK 5 – TAMING THE TONGUE

MONDAY – The Teaching Tongue

Read: Please read James 3: 1-18



James 3: 1 *Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly.*

Teaching was a highly valued profession in Jewish culture, and many Jews who embraced Christianity wanted to become teachers. James warned that although it is good to aspire to teach, a teachers' responsibility is great because their words and example affect others' spiritual lives. This warning is true for all people who teach, e.g. ministers, teachers, parents, people in authority, and all who are disciples of the Kingdom of God.

As Jesus' half-brother, James must have grown up listening to Jesus and heard how Jesus spoke to everyone. How He taught in the temples, how He ministered to people in need and how He spoke when in

confrontation and even when Jesus was angry. But James must also have witnessed how people spoke to Jesus. Especially those who were His enemies.

James observed exactly how dangerous the tongue could be. The one moment many tongues in Jerusalem hailed Jesus as the King and within a few days those same tongues shouted in unison: "Crucify him! Crucify him!" (John 19: 6). It is no wonder therefore that James warned us, as disciples of Christ, that before we speak, to ask:

- Is what I want to say true? Is it necessary? Is it kind?



Prayer: Dear Lord, forgive me for the times I might have hurt someone by speaking with an undisciplined tongue. Help me to be attentive to the Spirit when I open my mouth and especially when I am in the position to teach others in Your name. AMEN

Song: Blessing and honour

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBcP1ICgUIM>

TUESDAY – The Uncontrolled Tongue



James 3: 3-4 *When we put bits into the mouths of horses we make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go.*

In the modern world where fake news is the order of the day and rumours are spread for ill gain, we are reminded by James that an uncontrolled tongue can spread havoc. And if he lived in today's world he would most likely have spoken about uncontrolled thumbs as well because texting is the modern way to communicate.

No wonder James used the examples of uncontrolled horses, ships and fires. If a horse, fire or ship becomes uncontrolled it only leads to trouble and even disasters. The uncontrolled fires in Australia last year come to mind; and the whole world was in awe of the total destruction that was caused. As a young boy starting horse riding I was glad that I could stop the horse when it just took off with me and I could eventually control it and calm my

panicking heart and shrieking voice. When an uncontrolled ship runs aground it often leads to destruction and loss of lives.

Similarly, an uncontrolled tongue can cause destruction. It can cause the destruction of a marriage, a family and friendships. It can start riots, conflicts and wars. It can divide groups and bring hate and domestic violence to bear.

It is very easy in today's world of free speech and fast modes of texting on many social media platforms to communicate without proper thought. James therefore urges us to discipline our tongues and thumbs because undisciplined words, messages and forms of communication only lead to some form of hurt, revenge, hatred or disaster.



Prayer: Dear Lord, please teach me to first count to ten if I have to reply to someone when I am upset. Give me the ability to discipline my tongue and my thumb when speaking and writing as well as to discipline my thoughts. AMEN

Song: Lord prepare me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AxB9VH3cCN4>

WEDNESDAY – The Unnatural Tongue



James 3: 9-12 *With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. Can both fresh water and saltwater flow from the same spring? My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.*

When one looks at a bunch of people, it is not easy to see who of them are Jesus followers and who are not. It will take a while to first study their behaviour if sight is all you must judge by. The quickest way to determine their allegiance will be to listen to them as James reminds us. Out of the same tongue people praise Jesus but also curse their brothers and sisters.

If you use foul language, spread rumours about others, bear false witness about someone or urge others to hate, you will not convince others easily that you are a disciple of Christ. Yes, your tongue will give your true self

away. In Luke 6: 45 Jesus teaches: "A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart."

True disciples of Jesus speak decently to others because they were created in God's image and deserve the respect that comes along with the privilege given to us. As Jesus' followers our speech and all forms of communication should mirror our praise of God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, our tongues, thumbs and thoughts should reflect that we are in awe of God.



Prayer: Lord Jesus, forgive me for the times that my words or writings did not reflect the fact that I am Your child. Help me to communicate in such a manner that it shows that I am created in Your image and therefore show steadfast love to my fellow brothers and sisters. AMEN

Song: Change my heart oh God

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqDG_2m8l-w

THURSDAY – The Unspiritual Tongue



Romans 8: 9 *You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.*



James 3: 15-16 *Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.*

James urges us to be wise and understanding people and to live good lives and demonstrate humility. To live by the Spirit. But if you harbour bitter envy and selfish ambition in your lives such “wisdom” does not come from heaven but from this world.

Such lives will manifest in your speech and actions. If you live a life filled with wisdom but every now and then let your deeds and words show that you are now harbouring earthly values your life slowly starts to regress. You move from a good person to a person longing for the things of this world and continue to regress to the demonic – doing things of the devil.

Once this happens you start to develop an unspiritual tongue and

your words better suit the devil than showing that you have Christ in your heart. Your words have moved from uncontrolled speech to unnatural speech and ended up in an unspiritual situation and therefore become an easy target for the devil. And it all started by losing control bit by bit.

The bit in your mouth cannot control your tendency to speed like a horse to regression, and you become as uncontrolled as a ship without a rudder, and your life becomes a disaster racing away like a wildfire. The only way to stop this regression is then to give way to heavenly wisdom to let you be guided back to the Lord like a horse being steered by the bit in his mouth or a ship responding to its rudder.



Prayer: Lord Jesus, protect me from capitulating to earthly pressures to regress and develop an unspiritual tongue. Develop in me the discipline to know You and say and speak like You do whenever I have to do so. AMEN

Song: Spirit of the living God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BagH-zTfnsQ>

FRIDAY – The Understanding Tongue



James 3: 13 *Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in humility that comes from wisdom.*

An understanding tongue is born out of Godly wisdom. Your tongue is a mirror of you! It reveals what your heart is full of. It shows who you belong to. It immediately displays your character, your beliefs, and your worth. The good news is that you can pray to God for wisdom and once granted, your tongue will reveal your understanding of who and what God wants you to be.

James ends this chapter and gives us a glimpse of what an understanding tongue filled with wisdom will reveal. Your speech will be pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere (James 3: 17).

A submissive tongue reminds of Matthew 5: 5: “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.” Jesus reminds us that we need not always speak up. There are times where you do not need to speak immediately and first find wisdom before you jump in with your opinion. Such a tongue allows you to be approachable to others. Allows others to know that you listen to their opinions and when an answer is required it will be given in love and with dignity.

An understanding tongue is a tongue of a person who belongs to the Kingdom of God and speaks with the sincerity and love of a true disciple of our Lord and Saviour.



Prayer: Dear Jesus, help me to develop an understanding tongue. Help me to be in constant conversation with You to determine Your will before I speak, write or text any words to others. Let my yes be yes and my no be no. Develop a meekness in me so that I may inherit everything that cannot be bought. AMEN

Song: My Jesus my Saviour

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_alauL2xKA