

Book of James



LESSON 5

Scripture

James 3:1-12

Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. 2 We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check. 3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 4 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. 5 Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. 7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, 8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. 11 Can both fresh water and saltwater flow from the same spring? 12 My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

The Big Idea

James begins with a warning that, “*Not many of you should become teachers*”. At the time, many false teachers were speaking not for God but for themselves. “Teachers” will be judged severely by God because they can sway the beliefs of many people, and therefore, must know the truth and not share their own opinions. They must also live a life that does not contradict their teachings.

James describes the tongue as a fire: it can be destructive, its effects are wide-ranging. The fact that man has fallen means that he's full of contradictions. In one breath he can

bles God and the next curse God's creation. James denotes that Satan uses the tongue to destroy us and those around us. It's more difficult to control than any other thing because it's never sufficiently at rest.

James strongly expresses, "My brethren, this ought not to be so." He is not saying that we can control our tongues in our own strength. We can't because evil is within us.

Jesus said, "It is out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." Our hearts have to be changed. We will have to give an account, not only for our actions but for our words as well. Our words are a part of us. They are a unique gift that God has given us as humans, so we will be judged for the words we say.

Man is sacred to God. In Genesis 1:27, the image of God in man is marred because of his fall. Yet even in his fallen state, man is still made in the likeness of God and when men curse other men, they are in reality cursing the God who made man.

It's fascinating that God would use speaking in other tongues as the outward evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit. The most unruly member of the body is the tongue, but God chose to use that tongue, saying that God will have control of it.

Conversation

1. You may not be a teacher, however, your words will have a great effect on others. What effect do your words cause?
2. Words truly have the power of life and death. What are your words producing?
3. Words spoken in anger may be remembered many years later. How can we guard our tongue?
4. Speaking in tongues is a sign of the Holy Spirit infilling, what else does the Holy Spirit do with our tongues?

Take Away

God made man, we need to be careful what we say about one another lest we destroy that which is sacred to God. When we say something evil, we can't take it back.

Parents need to say good things about their children, not only in private but in public.

Those things are life or death to that child. The Holy Spirit will help you and teach you to bring your thoughts and words under control.